



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

A Programme for a Partnership Government Annual Report 2019



Prepared by the Department of the Taoiseach
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A Programme for a Partnership Government

Annual Report 2019

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Programme for Government Foreword

The opening words of the *Programme for a Partnership Government* recognises that our government, comprising Fine Gael, members of the Independent Alliance, and independent ministers is unlike any other established since the foundation of our State. It set out how, in a new, different and unique political environment, we would work in a spirit of partnership to deliver our ambition for Ireland.

We are now three years into our five year programme. In that time we have made significant strides.

- There are more people working now than ever before.
- People's incomes are growing and their tax burden is falling.
- There have been consistent reductions in poverty and deprivation.
- The benefits of our economic recovery are being spread throughout the country.
- We are investing in housing, transport and public infrastructure.
- We are reforming and improving public services like education and childcare.

Despite that, we know that things are far from perfect. Much more progress is needed in many areas, and often the pace of the change and reform is too slow. This is most evident when it comes to homelessness. We are determined to reduce the numbers of people, in particular children, in emergency accommodation. The causes of homelessness are complicated but are linked to the collapse of our house building sector and the severe supply shortage associated with it. The only solution is increased supply of housing, both homes for people to buy and also social housing. The fact that in 2018 more houses were built than any year in this decade, and almost one-in-four of them was a newly constructed council house, is a major step forward. We will maintain this momentum in the years ahead.

Given that our Programme for Government predated the UK's decision to leave the European Union, it did not feature in the document. However, it has been a major focus of every part of government's work since then and that will stay the case in the time ahead.

We have an ambitious programme of work to complete over the remainder of our term: continuing the implementation of the Programme for a Partnership Government and the various policy initiatives that we have brought forward to supplement it like, Project Ireland 2040; Rebuilding Ireland; Global Ireland 2025; Sláintecare; First5; Future Jobs Ireland; the forthcoming Climate Action Plan; and others.

Three years ago we set our ambition to ensure:

- a fair society based on a strong economy;
- thriving communities in urban and rural Ireland;
- an Ireland that looks after its people from the time they come into the world to the time they leave;
- an Ireland where everybody is given the opportunity to succeed, where nobody is left behind; and
- an Ireland where people have the peace of mind that comes from feeling safe and secure in their lives.

We are on the right track to achieve those goals.



Leo Varadkar TD

May 2019

Improving people's lives. Progress over the last three years.



2,600
NEW GARDAÍ



8,422
HOUSES BROUGHT
INTO ACTIVE HOUSING
STOCK IN 2018



18,072
NEW DWELLINGS WERE
COMPLETED AT THE END
Q4 2018 (SOURCE: CSO)



2,281,300
NUMBER IN EMPLOYMENT
AT THE END OF 2018
(SOURCE: CSO)



70,313
TEACHERS AND
15,900
SPECIAL NEEDS
ASSISTANTS



128,800
NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED AS
OF THE END OF 2018, DOWN
FROM 199,300 AT THE START
OF 2016. (SOURCE: CSO)



132,900
JOBS HAVE BEEN
CREATED OUTSIDE
OF DUBLIN



€20
STATE PENSION HAS
INCREASED FROM €222 IN
2016 TO €242 IN 2019

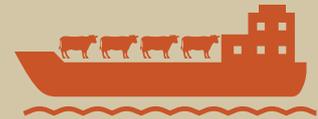


113

BILLS HAVE BEEN ENACTED OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS



THE GOVERNMENT HAS MOVED FROM DEFICIT TO SURPLUS FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2007



€13.6bn

TOTAL AGRI-FOODS EXPORTS IN 2018



74%

OF PREMISES HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND, UP FROM 50% THREE YEARS AGO



A GENERAL GOVERNMENT BALANCE OF 0.0 PER CENT OF GDP WAS RECORDED IN 2018



30,300

NUMBER OF CHILDREN SUPPORTED IN THE 2018/2019 UNIVERSAL CHILDCARE SUBSIDY PROGRAMME



7%

INCREASE IN THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE FROM €9:15 IN 2016 TO €9:80 IN 2019



8,492

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF NURSES AND MIDWIVES OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS.



1,091

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF DOCTORS AND DENTISTS

Main Highlights

Housing and Homelessness

- Budget 2019 committed €2.3bn allocation for housing programmes.
- In 2018, there were 5,135 sustainable exits from homelessness to independent tenancies.
- Home Building Finance Ireland was launched in January 2019.
- The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund launched with a provision of €2bn to 2027.
- In 2018, the HAP target of c. 17,500 was met, with 17,926 new HAP tenancies established.
- NAMA has directly facilitated the delivery of 9,700 new residential units from 2014 to 2018.
- The Land Development Agency was established.
- The Department published the National Vacant Housing Reuse Strategy.
- 1,765 vacant social units returned to productive use in 2018.
- To end-February 2019, 10,481 Help-to-Buy claims were approved.
- At the end of 2018, 423 homes delivered through the rapid delivery programme.
- 27 family hubs are operational nationally with over 650 units of emergency accommodation.
- Two cost rental pilot projects advanced in Dublin.
- A National Implementation Plan for 'Housing First' launched.
- The Government approved the nomination of the State's first Planning Regulator.
- The Residential Tenancies (Amendment)(No.2) Bill 2018 was published in December 2018.

Creating a Social Economy – Jobs and the Economy

- In March 2019, the Government launched Future Jobs Ireland 2019.
- €300m Brexit Loan Scheme launched to provide working capital to eligible businesses.
- "Future Growth Loan Scheme" to provide long-term strategic investment loans to businesses.
- All regions saw a decrease in their unemployment rate in the year to Q4 2018.
- In 2018, the number of people classified as long-term unemployed decreased by 9,900.
- The number of people in employment increased in six of the eight regions Q4 2017- Q4 2018.
- LEO client companies created 3,656 new jobs (net) and trained 34,938 participants in 2018.
- Total employment in IDA's client companies at 229,057 with 14,040 (net) new jobs in 2018.
- In 2018 Enterprise Ireland saw the creation of 18,846 new jobs among its client companies.
- Exports from Ireland in 2018 reached a new record high of €316bn, 12% increase 2017 value.
- 62 Ministerial led trade missions occurred in 2018 with 73 planned for 2019.
- The national minimum wage increased by 25 cent to €9.80 per hour from January 2019.
- The Youth Employment Support Scheme launched in October 2018.
- In March 2019, €100m was invested in six new Science Foundation Ireland Centres.
- 9,200 students supported through the Back to Education Allowance scheme in 2018.
- The earnings disregard for Working Lone Parents increased by €20 to €150 per week.
- The maximum weekly rate of all weekly social welfare payments increased by €5.
- The *Employment Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2018* commenced.
- Entry point to the higher rate of income tax for all earners increased by €750.
- Third rate of the Universal Social Charge reduced from 4.75% to 4.5%.

Rural Development

- €21.3m funding provided for 224 projects under 2018 Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
- Town Centre Living Initiative launched with 6 pilot towns receiving funding of €100,000.
- 224 projects worth over €20m approved under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.
- CLÁR programme funded 389 small infrastructure projects to the value of €11.8m.
- Over €20m approved for improvement works under the Local Improvement Scheme in 2018.
- Funding for the Walks Scheme doubled from €2m to €4m in Budget 2019.
- €38m in LEADER funding allocated to 958 local development projects since May 2018.
- The new Community Enhancement Programme launched and supported over 3,000 projects.
- Credit Union lending grew 7% to €4.7bn in the year to December 2018.
- Revenue from overseas visitors exceeded €5bn in 2018, up 5.6% on 2017.
- €86m approved for 84 projects under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.
- Over €2m allocated in 2019 to support the work of the Atlantic Economic Corridor Initiative.
- €483m invested in regional and local public roads in 2019, a 16% increase over 2018.
- In 2018, 1.75m or 74% of 2.4m premises have access to high speed broadband.
- The Community Services Programme provided more than €40m to around 400 organisations providing local employment, facilities and services through a social enterprise model.

Health

- National Oral Health Policy published.
- Enacted the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018.
- Introduction of standardised packaging for sale of cigarettes and tobacco products.
- Government approved the Human Tissue Bill for publishing.
- 217 Community First Responder Groups put in place.
- Inpatient/Day Case Action Plan published to improve waiting lists.
- Additional funding of €20m to National Treatment Purchase Fund under Budget 2019.
- Contract awarded for the establishment of a Patient Safety Advocacy Service.
- Completion of Commencement Order and Regulations for Open Disclosure.
- Establishment of Sláintecare Programme Office and appointment of Executive Director.
- €6.5m in additional funding provided for drug and alcohol services.
- In 2019, the BreastCheck service extended to include women up to 68 years old.
- In 2018, the number of people waiting for a hospital procedure reduced to 70,200 by the end of the year from a peak of 86,100 in July 2017.

Disability, Mental Health and Older People

- In Budget 2019 Disability Allowance and Carer's Allowance increased by €5 per week.
- Medical card earnings disregard for persons on Disability Allowance increased to €427 pw
- Comprehensive Employment Strategy and National Disability Inclusion Strategy published.
- 10 tenancy sustainment officers appointed to assist people with a disability.

- Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability assisted 9,400.
- In 2018, circa 23,000 people were supported under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme.
- The Budget for Home Supports Services in 2018 was approx. €417m.
- The charge per prescription item reduced to €1.50 for Medical Card holders over 70 years old.
- The monthly Drugs Payment Scheme threshold has also been reduced from €134 to €124.
- Enacted emergency legislation related to involuntary detention to amend Section 15 of the Mental Health Act.
- €84m provided for Mental Health Services in 2019.
- Published mid-term review of National Dementia Strategy and progressed key actions.
- HIQA registration of residential designated centres for people with disabilities achieved.
- 155 residents moved from congregated settings to more suitable long-term care settings.
- 19,000 participants approved under the Senior Alert Scheme in 2018, an increase of 56%.
- €12m allocated in 2019 to provide services to 1,500 young people with disabilities and autism who will require continuing health-funded supports on leaving school.

Children and Youth

- The Childcare Support Act puts a system of child supports on a statutory footing.
- Some 185,000 children availed of one of the three funded early learning and care programmes.
- Almost 39,000 children benefited from targeted supports for lower income families.
- A non-means tested universal subsidy of up to €1,040 per year for children under three.
- New paid parental benefit scheme to provide 2 weeks of paid leave to both parents.
- In 2018, €6.87m in capital funding allocated to pre-school providers nationwide, contributing towards the creation of over 2,000 new childcare places.
- Funding for Tusla increased in 2019 by €30m to just over €786m.
- Tusla published a new Child and Youth Participation Strategy for 2019-2023.
- Tusla launched a new child-friendly website, ChangingFutures.ie.
- First 5, Ireland's first ever cross-Departmental strategy to support babies, young children and their families launched.
- Value of the Home Carer Credit increased from €1,200 to €1,500 in Budget 2019.
- The LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 launched in June 2018.
- A Reform and Development Programme for Garda Youth Diversion Projects launched.
- The first national day of creativity for children and young people, took place in June 2018.

Education and Training

- The Action Plan for Education was published in March 2019.
- Government expenditure on education and skills is at its highest ever level of €10.8bn.
- Over 1,300 additional posts in both primary and secondary schools will be funded in 2019.
- There will be 70,313 teachers and over 15,900 SNAs employed in our schools.
- Primary level operates on a general average of 26 pupils to every 1 teacher.

- The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 enacted.
- The Technological Universities Act, 2018 enacted.
- Springboard+ 2019 courses will be open to people irrespective of employment status.
- €142m provided in 2019 to support over 7,000 new apprenticeship registrations.
- An allocation of €49.9m provided in 2019 to support 5,000 new trainee enrolments.
- The roll out of the Digital Learning Framework to all schools commenced in September 2018.
- €11.9bn for the education and training sector to build new schools and modernise others.
- Provision of circa. 40,000 school places (includes additional and replacement.)
- Over 600 prefabs replaced, construction/modernisation of 48 PE Halls at post-primary level and 82 General Purpose rooms at primary level.
- Over 200 modern science laboratories provided to support the delivery of the reformed science curricula and the roll-out of Computer Science as a leaving certificate subject.

Crime Prevention

- Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing approved by Government.
- Garda numbers increased to over 14,000 at end 2018.
- The budget for An Garda Síochána increased to €1.76bn for 2019.
- 600 Garda recruits entering training in 2019 as well as 100 Garda Reserve.
- By end Q1 2019, 311 Gardaí were redeployed to frontline policing duties.
- Additional 42 staff sanctioned for the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission.
- Armed Support Units established in each of the six Garda Regions.
- Operation Hybrid: 290 searches, 86 arrests, 11 charges and 37 firearms seized.
- New Garda HQ's at Kevin Street (Dublin), Galway and Wexford completed and are operational.
- €10m allocated for purchase and fit-out of Garda vehicles in 2019.
- In excess of €5.6m is set to return to the State as a result of actions by the CAB in 2018.
- Joint Agency Response to Crime programmes engaging with 120 prolific offenders.
- 20 grant applications approved under the community-based CCTV scheme.
- Funding of €465,000 available in 2019 for Muintir na Tire to promote community safety.
- The consolidated and comprehensive Domestic Violence Act, 2018 enacted.
- The Action Plan for Online Safety launched in July 2018.
- The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act provides for minimum mandatory sentences.

Justice and Equality

- Funding of €1.71m approved to support 57 victim support services across the State.
- The Istanbul Convention combatting violence against women ratified by Ireland.
- The people voted to remove the offence of blasphemy from the Irish Constitution.
- 2,389 persons admitted under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme by end April 2019.
- Over 9,300 persons granted Irish citizenship by naturalisation from May 2018-April 2019.
- Labour market access granted to qualified protection applicants.

- 530 family members granted status to live with family members in Ireland.
- Daily Expenses Allowance paid to adults seeking asylum increased by €17.20 to €38.80 pw.
- Overall deportation orders rose to 1,186 in 2018 from 931 in 2017.
- 1,088 women completed programmes supporting their returning to the workforce.
- By end 2018, the average representation of women on State Boards had increased to 41.5%.

Agriculture and Marine

- Total agri-foods exports in 2018 were €13.7bn.
- Opening of the Chinese beef market in 2018 and access to markets in Qatar and Kuwait to export Irish beef, poultry and sheepmeat.
- Live exports of cattle increased by 30% in 2018 compared to 2017.
- As at the end of 2018, €1.015bn was paid on Agri-Environment measures.
- Total grant in aid to Bord Bia for 2019 was €46.6m.
- €6.4m paid to farmers in respect of the Organic Farming Scheme.
- Budget 2019 provided a Brexit Resilience Package of €78m for the Agri Food sector, including a Beef Environmental Efficiency Pilot scheme and €44m of direct aid for farmers.
- Balancing payments of €1.1bn under 2018 Basic Payment Scheme issued to 121,000 farmers.
- €250m allocated in Budget 2019 for the Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme.
- Fodder Import Support Scheme introduced in August 2018 with a budget of €4.25m.
- Over 18,000 farmers are now participating in the Knowledge Transfer Schemes.
- To date, 8,000 payments issued under the TAMS II valued at €117.5m.
- Forest area is estimated to be 11% of total land area and at its highest level in 350 years.
- Over 13,000 farmers received almost €68m in forestry premium payments in 2018.
- Seafood exports totalled €578m.
- €41m invested in Ireland's seafood sector through a suite of 18 schemes.
- €260m in fish quotas secured for 2019.
- The maximum weekly rate of both Farm Assist and Fish Assist increased by €5 in the budget.

Climate Change and Energy

- Over 2,500 tonnes of illegally dumped material removed in 2018.
- In 2018, €4.5m was provided to support international climate action.
- €5m capital funding for the rollout of the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat in 2019.
- 5,789 Electric Vehicle Purchase Grants paid 2011–March 2019, totalling some €26.8m.
- €20m invested in the rollout of 50 high powered charging hubs on motorways/national roads.
- Funding of up to €77m capital announced for seven projects under the Climate Action Fund.
- The Social Housing Retrofit Programme improved energy efficiency in 4,453 Local Authority homes.
- 20,040 homes benefitted from the Better Energy Programme from May 2018 to March 2019.
- In 2018, the Warmer Homes Scheme was upgraded to include more property types.

- €1bn ten-year programme of investment in Flood Relief Schemes announced in 2018 and 118 new projects have been added to the Flood Relief Programme.
- Sovereign Green Bond issuance raised €3bn to be allocated against green expenditure.
- At year-end 2017, public sector bodies improved energy efficiency by 24% of the 33% target for 2020 delivering over 3.5 million tonnes in carbon emission savings.
- From January 2019, Government Departments and public bodies no longer purchase single-use plastics for use within their offices.

Investing in Society

- €8m invested in ICT infrastructure in the Public Library Service in 2018.
- The new public library strategy, *Our Public Libraries 2022 – Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities* was published in June 2018.
- Funding for the Free Travel and Free TV license Schemes increased by €5m each.
- 127 Primary Care Centres operational throughout the country, 18 opening in the past year.
- 10-year strategy to support community and voluntary sector close to completion.
- €20m approved for improvement works under the Local Improvement Scheme in 2018.
- Funding of €38.027m provided for frontline services under SICAP in 2018 assisting 31,967 individuals and 2,558 groups in local communities.
- The Community Enhancement Programme supported 3,000 projects with funding of €13m.
- In 2018, €3.5m allocated to volunteering supporting infrastructure nationwide.
- 19,000 participants approved under the Seniors Alert Scheme in 2018, an increase of 56%.
- The first National Community Weekend held over the May Bank Holiday weekend in 2019.
- The National Sports Policy 2018–2027 was launched in July 2018.
- Total funding for the arts and culture sector in 2019 will increase by €22.6m to almost €190m.
- ‘Action Plan 2018-2022’ for the Irish Language 20-Year Strategy was launched in June 2018.
- The Gorey to Enniscorthy project to be open to traffic in Q2 2019.
- Construction on Naas Bypass Widening Scheme to be completed in 2019.
- Construction commenced on the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin project in early 2019.

Ireland and the World

- Ensured Ireland’s objectives in the Brexit negotiation were fully met.
- Passage of a cross-Departmental Bill to deal with a no-deal Brexit in the Oireachtas.
- Six *Getting Ireland Brexit Ready* events held around the country.
- Ireland’s new Policy for International Development, ‘A Better World’ launched in 2019.
- Ireland’s campaign bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council launched July 2018.
- In 2018, Ireland celebrated 60 years of unbroken UN peacekeeping service.
- Overall Irish Official Development Assistance in 2019 forecast to reach almost €817m.
- In 2018, the Passport Office issued 862,000 passports.
- €2.7m to organisations working on peace and reconciliation on both sides of the Irish Border.

- €2.5m provided for the North West Development Fund.
- €4.6m has been allocated to Culture Ireland for the promotion of Irish arts globally in 2019.
- Three new fixed wing utility aircraft for the air corps are in production.
- A fourth new Offshore Patrol Vessel for the Naval Service has been delivered.
- Ten armoured logistic vehicles have been procured for military personnel serving overseas.
- During 2018, 13.5% of all Cadet Inductions into the Defence Forces were female.
- Increased annual grant of €100,000 for the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel.
- In June 2018, Global Ireland, Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025 was launched.
- Embassies in New Zealand, Colombia, Jordan and Chile and the Consulate General in Mumbai, Cardiff and Vancouver have opened.

Making a Partnership in Democracy work (including Political and Constitutional Reform)

- By year end the average representation of women on State Boards had increased to 41.5%.
- Since May 2018, this Government has passed 48 Acts and published 46 Bills.
- The Judicial Appointments Commission Bill passed by Dáil Éireann in 2018.
- 341 Private Members Bills published in Dáil and Seanad since May 2016 with 9 enacted.
- Confidence and Supply arrangements extended.
- The pilot Equality Budgeting initiative outlined in Budget 2018 expanded in 2019.
- The Referendum on the Eight Amendment took place on 25 May 2018 and passed.
- In October 2018, the Referendum saw a change to the Constitution in relation to blasphemy.
- €1.1bn committed under Public Service Stability Agreement to unwind emergency legislation.
- The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2018 established a new Parliamentary Budget Office and the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisers on a legal footing.



Housing and Homelessness

Housing and Homelessness

Under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan, the Government is committed to meeting the housing needs of over 138,000 households to the end of 2021. 18,072 new homes were built in 2018 - a 25% increase on 2017. December 2018 construction figures showed almost 5,000 new social housing homes being built across 291 sites. This delivery was facilitated by a €2 billion investment - up 47% on 2017. This will increase to €2.4 billion in 2019. Other published indicators which increased when compared to 2017 included planning permissions (up 41%); Commencement Notices (up 28%); and Registrations (up 8%).

Social Housing Output figures show that 27,103 new households had their housing needs met under Rebuilding Ireland in 2018. 8,422 new homes were brought into the active social housing stock through builds, acquisitions, voids and leasing programmes in 2018.

The Land Development Agency, established in September 2018, has access to 8 sites with near-term delivery potential for 3,000 new homes and an additional potential for 7,000 more. Of this total, 4,000 are intended for delivery as additional social and affordable homes.

New legislative provisions for an Affordable Purchase Scheme commenced in June 2018. Where a particular demand for measures to support affordable housing is identified, funding of €310m to 2021 was allocated for enabling infrastructure via a new Serviced Sites Fund. The first tranche of funding was announced in December 2018 and provided €43m which will enable the delivery of over 1,400 affordable homes on local authority lands.

At the end of Q4 2018, there were 43,443 households in receipt of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) support. The 2018 target of 17,500 was met, with 17,926 new HAP tenancies established. Budget 2019 increased the Exchequer funding for the HAP scheme to €422m. Additionally, 1,700 tenancies were provided support via the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

As of end of 2018, approximately 13,300 tenancies have been provided additional support under the National Tenancy Sustainment Framework which allows for pricing flexibility when providing rent supplement. The focus of this Framework is that people are allowed to remain in their current tenancy and avoid homelessness where rents are in excess of prevailing rent limits. An arrangement is also in place with Threshold for areas where supply issues are particularly acute i.e. Dublin, Cork, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow and Galway City.

Budget 2019 provided an allocation of €146m - an increase of over 25% on 2018 - for the provision of homeless services by local authorities. In 2018 there were 5,135 sustainable exits from homelessness to independent tenancies - an increase of 8% on 2017. Capacity in family hubs was increased in 2018 by 20%. Currently, there are 27 family hubs in operation offering accommodation for 650 families. 200 additional permanent emergency beds were provided in the Dublin region over the course of Winter 2018/19. A further 150 temporary emergency beds were provided in the Dublin Region under the Cold Weather Initiative. In April 2019, An Post launched Address Point, a ground-breaking, free personal postal address and letter collection service for people who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation.

A National Implementation Plan for Housing First was launched in September 2018 with a target total of 663 additional Housing First tenancies. Targets have been set for each local authority for the period 2018-2021.

Increasing Supply

- The Land Development Agency (LDA) was established in September 2018 and is a commercial State body working with and supporting local authorities, public bodies and other interests to harness public lands as catalysts to stimulate regeneration and wider investment and to achieve compact, sustainable growth, with a particular emphasis on complex regeneration projects and the provision of affordable housing.
- On establishment, the LDA had access to an initial tranche of 8 sites that have near term delivery potential for 3,000 new homes and an additional potential for 7,000 new homes. Of this total of 10,000 new homes, 4,000 are intended for delivery as additional social and affordable homes and the balance as additional new supply to meet the high levels of demands in the wider housing sector.
- Budget 2019 committed a €2.3bn allocation for housing programmes - an increase of €470m, or 26%, on 2018.
- Implementation of Rebuilding Ireland - the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness - is overseen through Cabinet Committee D, meetings of Cabinet Ministers and supporting Senior Officials Groups. Of the 168 actions in the Plan it was reported that as at Q4 2018, 108 actions were complete.
- In 2018, 21,458 new homes became available to live in. 18,072 of these were new build apartments or houses.

- Home Building Finance Ireland (HBFI) was launched in January 2019 to provide finance at commercial rates for small and medium sized developers with viable residential sites within the State. The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund will provide €750m in funding to HBFI to finance up to 7,500 residential units over the coming years.

Establishment of Land Development Agency (Housing)

Drawing on best practice in Austria and the Netherlands in particular, the Land Development Agency (LDA) was established on the 13th of September 2018. The Agency is a commercial state body and national centre of expertise, working with and supporting local authorities, public bodies and other interests, to harness public lands as catalysts to stimulate regeneration and wider investment and to achieve compact, sustainable growth, with a particular emphasis on complex regeneration projects and the provision of affordable housing.

On establishment, the LDA had access to an initial tranche of 8 sites that have near term delivery potential for 3,000 new homes and an additional potential for 7,000 new homes. Of this total of 10,000 new homes, 4,000 are intended for delivery as additional social and affordable homes and the balance as additional new supply to meet the high levels of demands in the wider housing sector for housing for both rental and purchase purposes.

- From the start of 2014 to end 2018, the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) has helped to deliver over 9,700 residential units directly and 3,400 indirectly. 3,000 units are either under construction or with funding approved for construction. Planning Permission has been approved or submitted for an additional 7,000 units.
- The Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) has provided a c. €50m debt facility which is being utilised to fund construction of essential enabling infrastructure at the Cherrywood Strategic Development Zone in South County Dublin. The ISIF facility is funding infrastructure such as roads, water, waste water and utilities which will unlock the planned development of approximately 4,000 units at Cherrywood.
- ISIF has agreed with Cork County Council the terms of investment in a commercial joint venture which will provide a design, build and finance service for enabling infrastructure on strategically located residential development sites of scale, often in multiple ownerships. The joint venture is expected to commence operations during Q2 2019.
- Given that the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness did not recommend that the VAT rate on new residential property be reduced, it was decided that a more effective aid to home purchasers was through the income tax system. For this reason the Help to Buy incentive was introduced. One of the main aims of the incentive is to make mortgages more accessible to first-time buyers.
- To end-February 2019 10,481 Help-to-Buy claims were approved. The estimated total value of approved claims to date is in the order of €152.8m.
- 20 local authorities have populated their vacant site registers with 384 sites (up from 13 authorities with collectively 230 registered sites in March 2018).
- Details of some 1,700 hectares of land in local authority and Housing Agency ownership have been published on the Rebuilding Ireland Housing Land Map, with the potential to deliver some 42,500 homes nationally. The recently established Land Development Agency will increasingly play an important role in the active management of these lands and the wider publicly owned land bank.
- Enhancements to the Derelict and Vacant Sites Levies have been put in place via the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 including giving planning authorities the possibility of applying a lesser period than the existing standard five-year default period when granting planning permissions incentivising the earlier activation of planning permissions.
- By the end of May 2019, 30 Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) public infrastructure projects had been approved for funding of €195m. One LIHAF project is now completed and ten LIHAF projects have been approved to commence construction, to date. In addition,

another four projects are through the procurement phase and are expected to go to construction phase by the end of Q2 2019. The remaining projects are in various stages of the development process and are expected to finish procurement and commence construction of infrastructure works during 2019 and 2020 in order to deliver the approximately 20,000 housing units by 2021.

- The housing delivery on sites for 2018 was slightly above the target of 600, with 679 housing units being delivered on LIHAF associated sites.
- Increased funding was made available in 2018 for enabling infrastructure projects through the new €2bn Urban Regeneration and Development fund and the €1bn Rural Regeneration and Development Fund announced under Project Ireland 2040.
- A €310m Serviced Sites Fund for the provision of affordable housing has been allocated providing for up to €50,000 per affordable unit in the form of infrastructure funding.
- The Construction Status Report is a full compendium of live local authority and Approved Housing Body (AHB) new-build activity across the period 2016-2021. This Report details that 6,334 units have already been delivered during 2016, 2017 and to end Q4 2018; a further 4,992 are on site and under construction; and 2,569 more are at the final pre-construction stage.
- Recent analysis from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) has indicated

that, by October 2018, accommodation for 5,531 students had been delivered since July 2016 and construction is under way nationally to accommodate a further 4,825 students.

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) are being prepared by each of the three Regional Assemblies, to give more detailed expression of the National Planning Framework (NPF) at the regional level. These strategies will guide the regional implementation of the objectives of the NPF, including compact growth and higher urban densities.
- The Government approved the nomination of the State's first Planning Regulator on 18 December 2018, following an open competition by the Public Appointments Service (PAS), a Ministerial Order to formally commence the Office of the Planning Regulator is expected to be signed shortly.

Social Housing

- For 2018, the HAP target of c. 17,500 was met, with 17,926 new HAP tenancies established. Additionally, 1,700 tenancies were provided support via RAS.
- At the end of Q4 2018 there were 43,443 households in receipt of HAP support. Budget 2019 increased the Exchequer funding for the HAP scheme to €422m. This allows for the continued support of existing HAP households and also enables an additional 16,760 households targeted under Rebuilding Ireland to be supported by HAP in 2019, as well as continuing to support the roll-

out of the HAP Place Finder Support Service across the country.

- At the end of 2018, and excluding the additional discretion available to homeless households in the Dublin Region, 26.6% of households were benefiting from the flexibility to exceed the rent limits, with the average level of payment being 16.2% beyond the rent limits.
- A raising of the threshold for the single-stage approval process for social housing construction projects is currently being examined in the context of a review of the Public Spending Code.
- Work has been undertaken by the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), with assistance from funding granted under the Innovation Fund to support 6 AHBs to access private finance.
- The 2018 report on Housing Delivery shows that some 1,765 vacant social units were returned to productive use in 2018.
- In 2018, the Enhanced Long-term Social Housing Scheme was launched. Targeted at new builds or new to the market properties, the objective is to encourage larger levels of private investment in social housing while ensuring that the resulting leasing arrangement is off-balance sheet in respect of Government expenditure. The Enhanced Leasing Scheme as well as the Standard Long-term Leasing scheme are now fully rolled out nationally across local authorities and available on an open basis.
- The Housing Agency has a €70m rolling fund to purchase vacant properties from banks and investment companies. As of end of February 2019, bids have been accepted on 806 properties with a total value of €144m. Contracts have been signed on 646 of these properties with 629 purchases closed. Bids are pending on a further 398 properties. The process of selling the properties on to AHBs is underway. To date, 290 properties have been sold on to AHBs and the Agency will receive €60.7m for these units.

Rental

- Under cost-rental models, rents are linked to the cost of building and managing the property, rather than to a proportion of the market rent. There are currently two cost rental pilot projects being advanced in Dublin (at Enniskerry Road in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and Emmet Road in Inchicore). These pilot projects will deliver 50 and 330 cost rental homes respectively.
- Under the Strategy for the Rental Sector, standards regulations were to be amended to allow for unfurnished lettings in the case of long leases with the objective to provide incentives for landlords to offer long term leases. Revised regulations have been prepared and are expected to be approved and published in Quarter 2 2019.
- By the end of 2018, a total of 1,260 applications had been received from property owners under the Repair and Lease (RLS) scheme; 89 homes had been brought back into use and were

tenanted; and a further 43 agreements for lease had been signed.

- The Buy and Renew Scheme was introduced to facilitate local authorities in acquiring and remediating vacant properties that may be suitable for social housing. Through this support mechanism, local authorities have delivered circa 340 new social homes in 2018 bring the total at end 2018 to 350.

Supports

Strengthening tenants' rights

The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2018 is currently before the Oireachtas. The primary provisions in this Bill strengthen Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) enforcement by:

- making it an offence for landlords to implement rent increases that contravene the law around RPZ rent limits (4% per annum);
- providing powers to the RTB to investigate and prosecute or sanction landlords who implement such increases; and
- allowing the RTB to initiate an investigation without the need for a complaint to be made.

- The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2018 was published in December 2018. This Bill will strengthen Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) enforcement by making it an offence for landlords to implement rent increases that contravene the law around Rent Pressure Zone rent limits

(4% per annum); providing powers to the RTB to investigate and prosecute or sanction landlords who implement such increases; and allowing the RTB to initiate an investigation without the need for a complaint to be made. The Bill also extends the minimum notice periods that landlords must give tenants prior to terminating a tenancy.

- The Finance Act 2018 provided for an accelerated increase to 100% of the amount of interest that may be deducted by landlords in respect of loans used to purchase, improve or repair their residential property.
- As at end February 2019, 10,481 Help-to-Buy claims were approved. The estimated total value of approved claims to date is €152m.

Mortgage Arrears

- A report on the uptake and the outcomes of the Abhaile scheme was published in Q1 2019. The report revealed that while sustainable solutions can take time to put in place, the vast majority of Abhaile solutions enable people to remain in their homes. In 64% of court review cases legally aided by Abhaile, the court decided to impose the personal insolvency arrangement proposed by the borrower.
- A public consultation on the thresholds and processes for Personal Insolvency Arrangements was published in March 2017. It is anticipated that a draft report with recommendations for reform of the Personal Insolvency Act, including the thresholds and processes for Personal Insolvency Arrangements,

will be submitted to the Minister for Justice and Equality by the end of May 2019. The finalised report will then be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

- The Consumer Protection (Regulation of Credit Servicing Firms) (Amendment) Act 2018 came into operation in January 2019. The Act requires the regulation of loan owners by the Central Bank of Ireland.
- The Central Bank introduced an Addendum to the Consumer Protection Code which came into effect on 1 Jan 2019. This provides for a series of mortgage transparency and switching measures. For example, lenders are to provide a guide on mortgage switching to personal consumers which will include information on how the consumer can access information on any alternative interest rates offered by their lender.
- The Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) is a statutory code. The Central Bank carried out a review of the CCMA in 2018. The key finding of that review was that the CCMA is working effectively and as intended for borrowers who engage with the process. The Review proposed no changes to the Code.
- The latest Central Bank Residential Mortgage Arrears and Repossessions Statistics show that there were 63,246 private dwelling homes accounts in arrears out of a total stock of 728,168. This is a decrease of 2% from Q3 2018 to Q4 2018. This represents the 21st consecutive quarter of decline up to December 2018.

Homelessness

- The rapid delivery programme for houses has 40 projects that will deliver approximately 1,100 units by 2021. At the end of 2018, 423 homes had been delivered.
- There are currently 27 family hubs operational nationally, offering over 650 units of emergency accommodation for families. 22 of these are in Dublin, with one each in Cork, Kildare, Limerick and Louth. Further such facilities are being planned for delivery in 2019.
- Development of temporary modular and portable hubs will continue with family hubs consisting of clusters of temporary prefabricated modular homes, with on-site supports. Two pilot projects are being developed in Galway and Louth.
- At the end of Q4 2018, over 6,100 households had been referred to HAP from local authority homeless services.
- In 2018, there were 5,135 sustainable exits from homelessness to independent tenancies. This is the largest number of exits achieved in a single year and is an increase of 406 (8.6%) on the 4,729 exits achieved in 2017.
- Budget 2019 provided an allocation of €146m, an increase of over 25% on the 2018 allocation of €116m, for the provision of homeless services by the local authorities.
- Capital Funding of €48.5m was provided in 2018 for the delivery of additional emergency accommodation facilities.



Creating a Social Economy - Jobs and the Economy

Creating a Social Economy - Jobs and the Economy

After a decade-long journey, the headline budget deficit was eliminated last year. A general government balance of 0.0 per cent of GDP was recorded in 2018, which represents an overachievement on the previous budget projection of a small deficit of 0.1 per cent of GDP. The Exchequer also recorded a €0.1 billion (cash) balance last year, the first underlying surplus since 2006. Based on SPU 2019, a general government surplus of 0.2% of GDP is projected for 2019. Thereafter, an improving general government position is projected over the forecast horizon.

Employment figures are overall very positive, with 50,500 jobs created in the year from Q4 2017 to Q4 2018. This brings total employment to 2,281,300. The Employment Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2018 strengthens the regulation of precarious employment.

The higher rate of income tax for all earners was increased by €750, raising it from €34,550 to €35,300 in the case of a single worker. The third rate of the Universal Social Charge (USC) was reduced from 4.75% to 4.5% to give a further targeted benefit to low and middle level incomes. These changes have reduced the marginal rate on incomes up to €70,000 to 48.5% and fewer people on incomes around the national average have any income subject to the 40% rate of income tax.

The Government continued its engagement at EU level to achieve national and EU policy outcomes that are supportive of our enterprise, competitiveness and innovation agenda. During 2018, Minister Humphreys, and Ministers Breen and Halligan represented Ireland's interests at the Competitiveness Council and the Foreign Affairs (Trade) Council.

The Trade Mission programme is part of the government's wider commitment to diversifying Ireland's exports markets – a strategy brought into sharper focus by Brexit. The Government is keen to ensure that new opportunities are created for Irish companies wishing to expand their presence or indeed introduce their products to new markets. The number of Ministerial led Trade Missions has increased in 2018 including a major trade and investment mission to China in November 2018, where deals worth over €50m were announced.

In 2018, Local Enterprise Offices approved €18,211,040 in grant aid for 1,259 applications and supported the progression of 171 clients into Enterprise Ireland, enabling these businesses to continue their scaling journey. The €60m Regional Enterprise Development Fund is a competitive Fund that has been rolled out by Enterprise Ireland to support collaborative and innovative projects that can sustain and add to employment at a national, regional and county level. At the end of 2018, 42 projects from around the country, in all regions, secured €60m in total funding over two competitive calls.

The pilot Online Retail Scheme launched in 2018 and is designed to support the retail sector to develop their online capability in order for them to expand their market reach nationally and internationally and enhance their competitiveness. The Scheme launched with a fund of up to €625,000, which was later doubled to €1.25m as part of the Department's 2019 Budget. Minister Humphreys announced the eleven successful applicants from Call 1 on 01 March 2019. A second call will issue later this year.

Future Jobs Programme 2019

In March 2019, Future Jobs Ireland 2019 was launched. This is the new multi-annual framework to ensure our enterprises and workers are resilient and prepared for future challenges and opportunities. This is a whole of Government approach, which will form a key part of Ireland's economic agenda over the medium term. It focuses on five pillars, namely: embracing innovation and technological change; improving SME productivity; enhancing skills and developing and attracting talent; increasing participation in the labour force; and transitioning to a low carbon economy.

Supporting Jobs and Enterprise

- Using seasonally unadjusted data, 200,500 jobs were created between Q1 2016 and Q4 2018, surpassing National Employment Targets. 132,900 of the jobs created were outside Dublin.
- The seasonally adjusted national unemployment rate for April 2019 was 5.4%. At the end of 2018, only two regions had an unemployment rate more than one percentage point greater than the State average. All regions saw a decrease in their unemployment rate in the year to Q4 2018.
- The Pathways to Work target to move 50,000 long term unemployed people into jobs by 2020 was achieved by end 2017. Building on this success, a supplementary target of 20,000 has now been set, to be achieved by 2020.
- The introduction of a new Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) was launched in October 2018. The scheme is targeted at young jobseekers aged 18-24 years of age who are long-term unemployed or who face barriers to employment. YESS aims to provide jobseekers with the opportunity to learn basic work and social skills in a supportive environment while on a work placement. Participants on the YESS will work for 24 hours per week for a take home payment of €229.20 per week.
- The CSO estimates that between April 2017 and April 2018, 28,400 Irish emigrants returned to Ireland. As the economy continues to grow and approaches full employment, this trend is likely to continue.
- Total employment in the IDA's client companies now stands at 229,057 with 14,040 net new jobs added in 2018. Every region in Ireland has seen foreign direct investment (FDI) employment gains and there are now over 132,000 people employed in 681 IDA client companies located outside of Dublin, with 56% of all net new FDI jobs created last year based in regional locations.
- In 2018 Enterprise Ireland (EI) reported the creation of 18,846 new jobs among its client companies with 61% of these jobs created outside Dublin. EI-supported companies now employ 215,207 people – the highest number in the history of the agency.
- In March 2019, the Government launched Future Jobs Ireland 2019, a new multi-annual framework to ensure our enterprises and workers are resilient

and prepared for future challenges and opportunities. This is a whole-of-Government approach, which will form an important part of Ireland's economic agenda over the medium term. Future Jobs Ireland focuses on five key pillars, namely: embracing Innovation and technological change; improving SME productivity; enhancing skills and developing and attracting talent; increasing participation in the labour force; and transitioning to a low carbon economy.

Regional Enterprise Plans (Business)

Co-ordinated by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, nine Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs) have been developed for: Midlands, South-East, South-West, Mid-West, West, North-West, North-East, Mid-East and Dublin. These plans reflect the new challenges, strengths and opportunities that each of the regions currently face, and seeks to strategically elevate areas where they could support enterprise development in their region through collaborative actions.

The principle behind the REPs is collaboration between regional stakeholders on initiatives that can help to realise the region's enterprise development potential. These stakeholders include, among others: Local Authorities, the LEOs, the enterprise agencies, the Regional Skills Forum, tourism bodies, and private sector 'enterprise champions'.

- The most recent CSO figures state that the proportion of people aged between 18 and 59 in jobless households reduced from 9.9% to 9.5% between Q2 2017 and Q2 2018 (from 15.9% in 2012).
- The back to education allowance scheme provided 9,200 students in 2018 an opportunity to enhance educational and skills levels to enable them to better access to emerging labour market needs.
- Long-term unemployment has fallen from almost 10% in 2012 to its current level of 2%. This was achieved through the roll-out of JobPath to engage more systematically with the long-term unemployed; through targeted wage subsidies under JobsPlus; and through reserved places for long-term unemployed jobseekers on employment and training programmes.
- Working in conjunction with the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), NAMA has facilitated a number of very significant property transactions over the past few years which have enabled companies such as Google, Facebook, Eli Lilly, Kerry Group, Novartis, LinkedIn, BSKyB, AdRoll, Scottish & Southern Electricity, Airbnb, Bristol Myers Squibb, and Yahoo to establish or expand their operations in Ireland.
- Other notable recent transactions that have enabled FDI include the sale of a 37 acre site to Intel in Leixlip, Co. Kildare (adjacent to the existing Intel plant) and the sale of a site in Newbridge, Co. Kildare to Lidl (in order to facilitate development of a larger national distribution centre).

Supporting SME's

- Under Budget 2019, a new €300m Future Growth Loan Scheme was established, for loans of up to 10 years, as a means of addressing a lack of availability of long term loans in the marketplace with terms of over 7 years. The Future Growth Loan Scheme makes up to €300m of loans available with a term of 8-10 years. This scheme is available to eligible businesses in Ireland and the primary agriculture (farmers) and seafood sectors to support strategic long-term investment.
- A new Pilot Online Retail Scheme administered by EI is targeted at Irish retailers to enable them to strengthen their online offering to effectively compete internationally and develop a wider customer base overall. The Scheme offers funding for research, strategy development, consultancy costs, implementation and training. The total fund is €1.25m.
- The Local Enterprise Offices have a target to support 1,000 businesses with funding as part of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme to help small/micro businesses to develop their online capabilities in 2019.
- Microfinance Ireland's Q1 Report 2019 shows that since its inception Microfinance Ireland has provided €29.6m in loan approvals to small businesses, which supported 5,028 jobs. There was a strong regional spread with loans granted in all 26 counties and 79% of the loans provided to microenterprises outside Dublin.
- The Key Employee Engagement Programme (KEEP) was introduced in

2018 and extended in the Finance Act 2019. It allows SMEs to provide key employees with a financial incentive (share options) linked to the success of the company. This reduces the tax payable on any gain by between 15% and 19% and also improves the cash-flow position for the employee investor.

- In March 2019, €100m was invested in six new Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Centres for Research Training. The SFI Centres for Research Training programme - the first postgraduate training programme run by Science Foundation Ireland -, will provide training for 700 postgraduate students in areas of nationally and internationally identified future skills needs of digital, data and ICT.

Brexit Supports

- Enterprise Ireland has a broad range of supports to help companies prepare for Brexit including the Brexit Scorecard, Be Prepared Grant, Advisory Clinics, Agile Innovation Fund, Operational Excellence Offer and Market Discovery Fund. Recently launched EI supports including online Customs Training and Act On Consultancy. In addition, the Local Enterprise Offices recently launched their customs training offering which is available to all companies. Furthermore, the suite of enterprise supports in place cover a range of potential Brexit impacts. These range from liquidity support through short term and longer term loans, to restructuring aid for businesses in severe operating difficulties, including an EU State aid approved Rescue and Restructure Scheme to deal with sudden shocks and an expanded network of overseas offices and in-market supports to

help firms diversify markets and to consolidate market share in the UK where appropriate.

- In 2018, the €300m Brexit Loan Scheme was launched. This loan guarantee scheme supports eligible businesses with up to 499 employees to address working capital challenges brought about by Brexit. Finance under this scheme is easier to access, more competitively priced, and at more favourable terms than other similar offerings. The maximum interest rate is 4%.
- EI's exchequer pay provision for 2018 included an extra €1.3m to recruit an additional 18 Brexit-related staff.
- In 2019, the IDA is continuing with the first phase of their building programme with two facilities currently under construction in Limerick and Waterford. There are also buildings planned for Dundalk, Galway, Athlone and Carlow.
- In 2017 and 2018, Government held meetings with the European Commissioner for Transport and the European Coordinators for the North Sea – Mediterranean TEN-T Core Network Corridor to discuss the impact of Brexit on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). Ireland has called for an early review of the TEN-T Network at EU Working Party level. Particularly in the context of Brexit, we have repeatedly raised the issue of Ireland's increased peripherality within the EU and the need for the TEN-T Network to ensure accessibility and connectivity in all regions of the Union.

Low Income Supports

- Changes were introduced to the

Jobseekers Benefit scheme from January 2019 to allow recipients to take up subsidiary seasonal or casual employment and to earn €7,500 a year without it impacting on their rights to Jobseeker's Benefit. Since 1 June 2018, those attending JobPath are permitted to undertake a placement on Community Employment (CE) or Tús and maintain their engagement with the JobPath provider. This change ensures that jobseekers can benefit from the job-seeking support of the JobPath service while also availing of a part-time work placement provided by Tús or CE.

- A maintenance disregard of €95.23 per week for housing costs, with the remainder assessed at 50%, was introduced in March 2019 for the Working Family Payment to bring it in line with other social assistance schemes.
- The Back to Work Family Dividend has been retained. The payment value has increased from €31.80 to €34.00 per child under 12 and €37.00 per child aged 12 and over in line with the increase in the payment for qualified children announced in Budget 2019.
- Work is underway to make legislative provision for Jobseeker's Benefit to be extended to the self-employed by the end of 2019.
- In line with the recommendation from the Low Pay Commission, the national minimum wage was increased by 25 cent to €9.80 per hour from 1 January 2019.
- From 1 January 2019, the weekly income threshold for the higher rate of employer's PRSI increased from €376 to

€386. This follows a recommendation of the Low Pay Commission to ensure that the increase in the hourly minimum wage does not lead to work disincentives for workers, in particular those seeking to work full-time.

- On Christmas Day 2018, President Michael D. Higgins signed the *Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018*. It was commenced on 4th March 2019.
- The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 has six key elements:
 - » Day 5 statement of core terms: Employers must give employees their core terms of employment, including daily and weekly hours of work, within five days of starting work.
 - » Restricting zero hour contracts: The Act prohibits zero hour contracts in most circumstances, except in situations of genuine casual employment and where they are essential to allow employers to provide cover in emergency situations or to cover short-term absence.
 - » New minimum payment for employees called in to work but sent home again without work: The Act provides for a new minimum payment for low-paid workers who may be called in to work but sent home again without the promised work or any meaningful compensation.
 - » Banded Hours provisions: The Act introduces a new right for employees whose contract of

employment does not reflect the reality of the hours they habitually work. Such employees will be entitled to be placed in a band of hours that better reflects the hours they have worked over a 12 month reference period.

- » Strengthened anti-penalisation provisions
- » Simplification of trainee rates under National Minimum Wage legislation

Sound Public Finances

- In 2018, the Exchequer recorded a €0.1 billion (cash) balance, the first underlying surplus since 2006. Based on these figures, we are likely to over-achieve on the general government deficit of 0.1% of GDP currently projected for 2018. Based on Budget 2019, a balanced position of 0.0% of GDP is projected for 2019. Thereafter, an improving general government surplus is projected over the forecast horizon.
- The National Surplus (Reserve Fund for Exceptional Contingencies) Bill 2018 was published on 24th October 2018, and passed Dáil Second stage on 31 January 2019. Dáil Committee Stage concluded on 28 March 2019. The Bill is currently awaiting scheduling for Dáil Report Stage. This fund is part of the Government's policy to stabilise the public finances and increase the State's resilience to external economic shocks.
- NAMA commenced redeeming its €1.6bn of subordinated debt in 2018. As of end February 2019, €0.5bn of subordinated debt has been redeemed and NAMA expects to redeem the remaining €1.1bn by March 2020.

- A comprehensive and transparent process has been established to identify appropriately skilled candidates for Bank Director nominations by the Minister to the three banks in which the State holds a shareholding. On April 1 2019, the first appointees under this new process were selected to join the board of AIB Group plc.
- Budget 2019 provided for the available resources to be divided between expenditure and taxation measures on a ratio far in excess of 2:1.
- Budget 2019 saw an approximate 4:1 distribution between public spending and tax reductions. Projected expenditure of €59.3bn on the delivery of public services in 2019 is €7.5bn billion above the 2016 level.
- A significant component of the increase in expenditure in both 2018 and 2019 is capital investment in public infrastructure. Capital investment increased by €1.4bn in 2018 and will increase by a further €1.3bn in 2019. From 2018 to 2019, this represents an increase of 22%.
- The SME Credit Demand Survey April - September 2018 revealed that the Irish SME environment remains favourable. For the seventh consecutive year there has been an increase in reported number of companies making a profit and 51% of SMEs report that women either own or are part owners of the company.

Taxation

- The three-year tax relief for certain start-up companies was reviewed in 2018 and was extended in Budget 2019 to run for a further three years. The

relief will be available to qualifying new businesses that commence trading up to the end of 2021.

- The Earned Income Credit was increased by €200 in Budget 2019 bringing it to €1,350 per year from 2019.
- The Category A Capital Acquisitions Tax Threshold that applies to inheritances/ gifts from parents to their children was increased by €10,000 to €320,000 in Budget 2019

Changes to income tax policy over the three budgets

While prioritising measures that maintain a broad base, and in order to increase the reward for work and support enterprise and employment, the Government have:

- Reduced the level of personal taxation, especially for low and middle earners.
- Increased the value of the Home Carer Credit from €1,000 to €1,500 over three Budgets.
- Increased the value of the Earned Income Tax Credit from €550 to €1,350 over three Budgets benefiting self-employed persons.
- Carried out a number of comprehensive reviews of existing tax incentives to ensure their continued relevance, and efficiency and effectiveness of performance.

- Substantial progress has been made on the implementation of Anti-Tax Avoidance Measures. New Controlled

- Foreign Company (CFC) rules and an amended Exit Tax were introduced in Finance Act 2018 and the existing long-standing General Anti-Abuse Rule (GAAR) already meets the required Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD) standard.
- The Exit Tax will tax unrealised capital gains where companies migrate or transfer assets offshore such that they leave the scope of Irish tax. CFC rules are intended to prevent the shifting of profits to subsidiary companies in low-tax or no-tax countries.
 - In September 2018 published the Corporation Tax Roadmap was published which outlines the significant actions Ireland has taken and the actions Ireland plans to take in the coming years in relation to Corporation Tax.
 - The non-indexation of income tax credits and rate bands in general was a base-broadening aspect of Budget 2019 and two targeted income tax credits were also increased: the Home Carer Credit from €1,200 to €1,500; and the Earned Income Credit, from €1,150 to €1,350.
 - The Budget 2019 package was comprised primarily of an increase of €750 in the point of entry to the higher rate of income tax for all earners and a reduction in the 4.75% rate of USC to 4.5%. The ceiling of the 2% rate of USC was increased to €19,874.
 - The Minimum Excise Duty on a packet of 20 cigarettes was increased to €7.18. The measure is expected to yield an additional €4.8m in 2019.
 - The public consultation on transfer pricing is underway and legislation is intended to be brought forward for Finance Bill 2019.



Rural Development

Rural Development

As part of Project Ireland 2040, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund was launched in 2018 and aims to promote rural renewal in order to enable towns, villages and outlying rural areas to grow sustainably as vibrant places to live and work. With a total budget of €1bn over the period to 2027, 84 projects were announced with support of €86m from the first call for applications to the Fund.

The Third Progress Report on the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development has been published setting out initiatives across Government which are supporting the economic and social progress of rural Ireland.

Supports for the revitalisation of towns and villages were provided through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, which approved 224 projects for funding of €21.3m in 2018, bringing to over 670 the total number of projects supported by this Scheme since the second half of 2016. In addition, a pilot scheme - the Town Centre Living Initiative - was launched in six towns in October 2018. The aim of the scheme is to encourage these towns to identify initiatives which will encourage more people to choose to live in the centre of rural towns.

The CLÁR programme is a targeted investment programme which provides funding for small scale infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered the greatest levels of population decline. Under the 2018 CLÁR programme, 389 projects were approved funding of €11.8m. Over 1,250 projects have been approved for funding under CLÁR since the programme was relaunched in 2016.

Broadband Officers are now located in every local authority driving improvements in mobile phone and broadband coverage in their areas. Overall, work progressed on the National Broadband Plan procurement process over 2018, with the Government approving the appointment of a preferred bidder to the National Broadband Plan on 7 May 2019. This step means that Ireland becomes one of the first countries in the world to ensure that those in rural areas, including school children, health professionals, businesses, and employees have the same digital opportunities as those in urban areas. It means that 1.1 million people in rural Ireland will be able to avail of the range of new opportunities that high speed broadband has, and will deliver, including flexible and remote working, smart farm opportunities, digital learning, smart health, and cloud-based services and connected devices. The availability of high-speed broadband in all parts of the country will help to diversify the rural economy, and it will significantly increase the attractiveness of regional locations for investment.

The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) Taskforce and its sub-groups support economic development and job creation along the western seaboard. AEC Officers are established in each of the 10 local authorities along the corridor.

A further 224 projects worth €20.3m were approved under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme in 2018. Walks Scheme funding doubled from €2m to €4m in Budget 2019 and expressions of interest have been invited for suitable trails to join the Scheme. Some 958 projects were approved for LEADER funding of €38m since the beginning of May 2018, marking a substantial increase in activity under the programme. Over €30m has been approved for improvement works to private roads in rural areas since the beginning of 2018 under the Local Improvement Scheme, bringing the total investment to over €47m since the reintroduction of the scheme.

Regional Jobs

- There are 31 Local Enterprise Offices nationwide, operating in partnership with EI and the local authorities. In 2018, 3,656 new jobs (net) were created by Local Enterprise Office-supported companies.
- Regional employment continues to grow strongly: 3 out of 5 (62%) people entering employment from Q1 2015 to Q4 2018 are in regions outside Dublin.

Rural Development

The Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

As part of Project Ireland 2040, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund was launched in 2018 and aims to promote rural renewal in order to enable towns, villages and outlying rural areas to grow sustainably as vibrant places to live and work. With a total budget of €1 billion over the period to 2027, 84 projects were announced with support of €86m from the first call for applications to the Fund. These include Mountain Biking projects across six different counties, the Ardee Castle Project in Louth, the Great Southern Greenway in Limerick and the Athenry Bia Innovator in Galway.

- The Western Development Commission has been allocated just over €2m in 2019 to support the work of the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative and to maximize the use of the Western Investment Fund which provides financing for micro-enterprises and SMEs in the Western region.
- In excess of €64m has now been awarded to almost 1,900 LEADER projects under the new LEADER Programme. In 2018, the level of funding approved at €38m was more than double the amount approved in 2017. It is expected that 80% of the Local Action Groups project budgets will be allocated by the end of 2019.
- More than 800 local development projects have been approved for LEADER funding of almost €24m towards enterprise development, job creation and the development of sustainable community infrastructure across rural Ireland.
- In Budget 2019 an additional €2.75m was allocated to EI for the creation of new 'Regional Innovation and Technology Clusters' via the Institutes of Technology, building their facilities, expertise and supportive capabilities as drivers of global enterprises in and across the regions.
- 2018 the CLÁR programme allocated €11.8m to support over 380 small-scale infrastructural projects in disadvantaged rural areas.
- In 2018, €3.5m was allocated to support the regeneration of Dublin's North East Inner City. This includes funding 50 posts under a Pilot Social Employment Initiative, which supports groups that undertake valuable work in the area.
- The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) supports

the most disadvantaged individuals and communities in our society. In 2018, SICAP exceeded its national targets, supporting 31,967 individuals and 2,558 community groups.

The Project Ireland 2040 Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund is a key part of Project Ireland 2040. With €2 billion allocated to it up to 2027, the fund will help to rejuvenate significant but underused areas in Ireland's five cities and other large towns.

The first allocation of €100m was made in December 2018. There was a huge range of projects fund across Ireland. From transforming the former school on Rutland Street within the North East Inner City as a community hub to support for large scale strategic sites on both sides of the river in the Cork Docklands Regeneration areas; Regeneration for O'Connell Street and projects in the city centre of Limerick; and public realm and riverside enhancement for the Abbey Quarter in Kilkenny.

- Funding for the Rural Walks scheme was doubled in Budget 2019 from €2m to €4m to allow expansion to proceed. Just under €53m has been made available for the construction of Greenways between 2019 and 2021, with just under €14m available in 2019.
- The current phase of the National Revaluation Programme, known as Reval2019, will conclude in September

2019. At that stage, all properties liable for commercial rates will have been revalued in 23 of the 31 local authorities. The final phase of the programme, encompassing business properties in the 8 remaining local authorities, is scheduled to commence in late 2019 and to be concluded in the final quarter of 2021.

- Under the CLÁR programme, 389 projects with a total of €11.8m were approved for funding in 2018.
- Over 1,200 projects have been approved for funding under CLÁR since the programme was re-launched in the second half of 2016.
- 224 rural towns and villages across the country benefitted from over €21m in funding under the 2018 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This brings the number of projects approved under the scheme since 2016 to more than 670 with €53m being allocated to these projects.
- The Town Centre Initiative (Pilot Scheme) was launched in October 2018 with 6 towns receiving funding of €100,000.
- The Planning and Development Act 2000 (Exempted Development) Regulations 2019 were signed in January 2019 and provide for an exemption from planning permission for large-scale peat extraction activity coming under a consent system operated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The development of a new regulatory framework for smaller scale peat extraction will shortly be initiated and progressed.

The town and village renewal scheme

Ireland's towns and villages are the focus of the social, commercial and civic life of their wider communities. The significant deterioration of many small towns and villages throughout the country is clearly visible in the form of empty shops, abandoned buildings, vacant lands and a generally poor environment to live in or visit. Targeted action is needed to arrest this decline and harness the regeneration potential of our towns and villages to support economic recovery. This new scheme to support town and village regeneration is part of a concerted effort by Government to support rural development.

224 rural towns and villages across the country are benefiting from over €21 million in funding under the 2018 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This brings the number of projects approved under the scheme since 2016 to more than 670 with €53 million being allocated to these projects.

Examples of projects include the renovation and extension of the aviation museum in Shannon, County Clare, the development of a creative hub in Moville, County Donegal and the redevelopment of Kilkullen Market Square in County Kildare.

Rural Accessibility and Broadband

- The Government is investing more than €6.3bn in the national road network over the next decade under the Project Ireland 2040.

Project Ireland 2040 funds

A major innovation of Project Ireland 2040 was the creation of the €4 billion Project Ireland 2040 funds for rural development, urban regeneration, climate action and innovation. Rather than allocating funding in a 'business as usual' way to Government Departments, money will be allocated competitively to the best projects, which leverage investment from other sources thereby ensuring that the impact of this investment goes much, much further. The funds are to be open to applications from state agencies, local government, business, educational institutions, chambers of commerce, and others, but the ideal applications will be collaborative efforts that break down barriers and silos.

- The ten year plan will support the planning and design and building of over 20 major road construction projects, including those critical to linking the regions. Progress includes: work on the Naas Bypass Widening Scheme nearing completion; and a rolling programme of improvements on the N56 schemes - Dungloe to the Glenties and Mountcharles to Inver.
- Details of a €483m investment programme for 2019 for regional and local roads has been announced seeing

- a 16% increase in funding compared to 2018.
- A total of €7.4m was provided to regional airports for safety and security-related projects and activities in 2018.
- €7.25m was provided to support the operation of services on the Donegal/Dublin and Kerry/Dublin routes as part of the Public Service Obligation Air Services Scheme.
- A process for an independent economic evaluation of the Western Rail Corridor phase 2 between Athenry and Claremorris has commenced. The study will take 5 – 6 months to complete and will include a comprehensive public consultation exercise.
- €483m is being invested in regional and local public roads in 2019 - a 16% increase on 2018 - to allow approximately 2,400kms of regional and local roads to be maintained and 2,150kms to be strengthened.
- Ring-fenced funding was introduced for drainage works to help promote increased network resilience. The amount available for drainage works has been doubled in 2019 to €20m.
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland's work has ensured that 1,000km of cable ducting along national roads and motorways is available to support fibre broadband rollout across the country.
- In response to the catalysing nature of the National Broadband Plan, by the end of 2018 over 1.75 million or 74% of all premises in Ireland had access to high speed broadband services through commercial operator investment.
- The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce published its 2018 review in February 2019 noting advances over a twelve month period including the publication of a national outdoor mobile phone coverage map by ComReg; the establishment of a Working Group to explore the feasibility of developing a standardised policy for utilising State assets for telecommunications infrastructure; and the publication of a report of a Focus Group to provide guidance with respect to categories of location where high-quality, reliable mobile coverage should be made available as a priority.

Post Offices and Community Banking

- The new brand - An Post Money - will bring together an expanded range of financial services including credit cards, personal loans, current account (debit card) and multi-currency Foreign Exchange card; delivered across the Post Office network and digitally through anpost.com. In December 2018 An Post issued a Request for Information seeking prospective partners to provide a mortgage service with a move to the mortgage market planned for 2020.
- A report on the assessment of the public banking model in an Irish context was published in July 2018. In January 2019, an independent evaluation commenced to consider whether the objectives of community banking could be furthered in Ireland through other delivery mechanisms.
- Government funding of €80,000 was allocated to roll out a pilot scheme called Digital Assist which sees ten

rural post offices across the country kitted out to assist citizens with online Government interactions. The pilot was operational from October 2018 to April 2019 and will provide data and insights in relation to the provision of Government services to citizens.

- Credit Union lending grew to €4.7bn in the year to December 2018 - an increase in loans of 7% year-on-year. The sector has also seen growth in SME & Mortgage Lending, with €99m commercial loans outstanding at December 2018 and €173m in home loans (increases of 25% and 13% year-on-year respectively).
- The amount of Credit Unions with enhanced online capabilities is increasing, as is the use of digital marketing. The Central Bank has approved 51 Credit Unions for Member Personal Current Account Services - a suite of services which include debit cards. As of end of February 2019, the number of Credit Unions signed up to participate in the Personal Microcredit Scheme is 111 at 272 locations. This represents almost 50% of credit unions.
- Work is underway preparing proposed legislative changes to the Credit Union Act 1997 to increase the monthly interest rate cap on Credit Union loans from 1% to 2%, as recommended by The Credit Union Advisory Committee.

Plans for the River Shannon and Beara Breifne Way.

- Revenue from overseas visitors exceeded €5bn in 2018, with overseas visitor numbers in excess of 10.6m.
- Fáilte Ireland estimated that tourism supported the employment of 260,000 people in the economy.
- Passenger traffic at airports had another record year in 2018 with 36.9million passengers using our State and regional airports, up more than 6% on 2017.

Tourism

- The tourism experience, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, has received initial investment designed to help develop visitor experiences and tourism infrastructure. The next phase of development includes Tourism Master



Health

Health

This Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens and providing high quality healthcare when needed. Budget 2019 delivered the highest ever Health budget of €17 billion, a €1.05 billion increase over 2018. This unprecedented investment will make a real difference to the service we can deliver and allow the health service to deliver better access. Budget 2019 allows for additional frontline staff for the health service, across many healthcare sectors, including; primary and community care, mental health, and disability sectors.

We also recognise the need to deliver a major programme of reform to ensure meaningful and sustained improvement in the health service over the coming years. Sláintecare is a ten-year programme to transform our health and social care services. The Sláintecare Report set out a vision for the future of healthcare and over the last 12 months the Government has made substantial progress in turning this vision into reality. Published last August, the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy provides the framework for a system-wide reform programme. It sets out the direction for the next ten years and actions to be taken in the first three years of the Sláintecare implementation process. The focus is on establishing the building blocks for a significant shift in the way in which health and social care services are delivered in Ireland through the provision of four over-arching goals and ten high-level strategic actions. These include changes and improvements to health services, and a range of measures to strengthen structures, governance and accountability.

Our health and social care services as currently designed cannot meet the growing demands being placed on them. Our population is changing rapidly, bringing with it changing healthcare needs. There is overwhelming consensus that a transformation is needed in the way we deliver care and that this must be planned, managed and delivered within a coherent system wide reform programme. Like other countries, the Irish health system needs to radically change if it is to properly meet the health needs of the population.

An Executive Director led Sláintecare Programme Implementation Office is leading and driving health and social care reform. Budget 2019 provided over €200m of additional funding to support a range of additional services and priorities proposed in the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy. A detailed Sláintecare Action Plan for 2019 sets out detailed timeframes for 239 deliverables to be progressed in 2019 and firmly establishes a programmatic approach to the delivery of the Sláintecare Strategy.

The €10.9 billion provided in the National Development Plan over the next ten years provides a real, long-term opportunity to improve our health services, drive down waiting lists, increase bed capacity, reform pathways of care and modernise how we deliver health services.

Construction of the new National Children's Hospital is underway and it will be the first acute digital hospital in Ireland. Capital investments in health, over the coming decade, will support existing Government priority projects and commitments and will support the Sláintecare reform programme, especially including delivering the shift to primary care and the development of eHealth records as part of the wider eHealth strategy.

Health and well-being

- Implementation of the National Maternity Strategy is ongoing, with €4.15m development funding in 2018 used to increase capacity through recruitment of additional midwives, consultants, theatre staff, Ultrasonographers and Quality and Safety managers.
- In 2019, the BreastCheck service has been extended to include women up to 68 years old. Further expansion will see all women up to 69 years old included in the service by 2021.
- The implementation framework for the National Strategy and Policy for the Provision of Neuro-Rehabilitation Services in Ireland was published on the HSE website in February 2019.
- The National Oral Health Policy - Smile agus Sláinte - was launched in April 2019. Under the Policy, all children up to 16 years will receive eight oral healthcare packages including examinations, assessments, advice, prevention interventions, emergency care and referral as appropriate. Oral healthcare packages will also be provided for medical card holders over 16 years. The packages will be provided in a primary care setting by oral healthcare practitioners contracted by the HSE. It is proposed that there will be a phased implementation of the policy over the period 2019-2026.
- The HSE Primary Care Eye Services Review Report including recommendations was published in June 2017. €1m has been allocated towards its implementation. Further steps towards its implementation will be considered in the context of the Health Budget for 2020 and future years.
- The Rare Disease Plan is now firmly embedded in the work of the HSE Clinical Programme for Rare Diseases. This Clinical Programme is now under the governance of the recently established office of the Chief Clinical Officer.
- The National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026 aims to improve survival rates by focusing on prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and quality of life. The first Implementation Report on the National Cancer Strategy (published February 2019) sets out the progress achieved on the implementation of the 52 recommendations of the Strategy and the degree to which the key performance indicators are being met.
- In September 2018, the Office of the Ombudsman published a progress report on developments in end-of-life care in Irish hospitals, identifying improved education and training in end of life care for staff in both acute hospitals and residential centres; improved physical facilities for dying patients and their families; and greater emphasis on the provision of information for patients and their families on all aspects of end of life.
- The Treatment Benefit scheme (dental, optical and aural services) was extended to self-employed contributors in 2017. There were 1.27m claims for the Treatment Benefit scheme at a total of €92.3m in 2018. This represents almost double the claims received in 2017 and nearly 3 times the expenditure.

- The Order has been signed to commence 23 sections of the Public Health Alcohol Bill. Commencement will take place over 3 years beginning November 2019. It is the first ever piece of legislation which addresses alcohol as a public health matter. It sets out a number of important measures regarding price, availability, marketing, and advertising and labelling, aimed at reducing the harm that alcohol causes in our society.

Primary Care

- The Government intends to extend GP care without fees to children aged between 6 and 12 years on a phased basis, starting in 2020. Legislative changes will be required to give effect to this extension.
- The agreement reached with the IMO in April 2019 in relation to GP contractual reforms includes a commitment to engage with the Department and HSE on the development of contractual and resourcing arrangements for this service.
- Nationally, there are 127 operational primary care centres, 18 of which opened in 2018. There are approximately 80 additional sites at various stages of development, of which a further 9 are expected to open in 2019.
- The number of therapists in Primary Care (Occupational, Speech and Language, Physio) at the end of December 2018 was 1,652. This is an increase of 27.11 Whole Time Equivalents (WTEs). The HSE's National Service Plan for 2019 contains the provision for the recruitment of 170 community nursing and therapy posts, including 40 additional Occupational Therapy posts.
- There has been a huge expansion in the number of training places on GP training programmes in recent years. In 2018, 193 places were filled - an increase of around 60% since 2009.
- The agreement on GP contractual reforms includes a Chronic Disease Management Programme for General Medical Services/GP Visit Card patients, which will commence in 2020 and will be rolled out to adult patients over a 4-year period. The chronic diseases covered will include Diabetes Type 2, asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and cardiovascular diseases.
- Enhanced supports for rural GP practices have been introduced with improved qualifying criteria and an increased financial allowance of €20,000 per annum. 257 GP practice units encompassing 347 individual GPs are now in receipt of financial supports under this framework - a significant increase on the 167 GPs who received a rural practice allowance prior to the introduction of this measure. The agreement on GP contractual reforms will increase the rural practice allowance by 10% in 2020.
- The agreement on GP contractual reforms includes targeted funding of €2m annually to provide additional support to practices in deprived urban areas which will contribute to making general practice more sustainable in areas with particular socio-economic challenges.

Emergency and Acute Services

- The average number of available in-patient beds increased by 188 over 2017 to 10,893 in 2018. A capacity programme for 2019 has been agreed, which provides for the following increases in capacity:
 - » 78 additional beds, including the 40-bed modular build in South Tipperary General Hospital and the 30-bed ward in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda
 - » 75 acute beds and 70 community beds as part of the Winter Plan 2018/19, of which 60 acute beds and 19 community beds have already opened.
 - » preparation of 202 beds, of which 16 are critical care, by Q4 2019 with a view to bringing this extra capacity into operation in the first quarter of 2020.
- Work has been initiated on a review of Urgent Care Centres, Minor Injuries Units, Medical Assessment Units and similar unit utilisation as part of the Service Redesign Programme under the Sláintecare Action Plan for 2019.
- There has been a year-on-year increase in funding for ambulance services. In 2019, total funding for the National Ambulance Service increased to €168.6m.
- Expansion of the community first responder scheme is continuing, with 217 groups now operating nationally.

Health System

Implementation of Sláintecare

We know that our health and social care services as currently designed cannot meet the growing demands being placed on them. Our population is changing rapidly, bringing with it changing healthcare needs. There is overwhelming consensus that a transformation is needed in the way we deliver care and that this must be planned, managed and delivered within a coherent system wide reform programme. Like other countries, the Irish health system needs to radically change if it is to properly meet the health needs of the population.

The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and the Sláintecare Action Plan 2019 set out actions that will lead to the development of a new system of health structures and governance comprising a leaner national centre with responsibility for national planning, strategy and standard setting, complemented by regional integrated care organisations with responsibility for the planning and delivery of services at a regional level.

An Executive Director has been appointed to lead the newly established Sláintecare Programme Implementation Office which is tasked with leading and driving health and social care reform. Budget 2019 provided over €200m of additional funding to support a range of additional services and priorities proposed in the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy.

- The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and the Sláintecare Action Plan 2019 set out a number of actions that will lead to the development of a new system of health structures and governance comprising a leaner HSE national centre with responsibility for national planning, strategy and standard setting, complemented by regional integrated care organisations with responsibility for the planning and delivery of services at a regional level.
- The HSE published its National Service Plan (NSP) 2019, confirming the level and type of health and social services to be delivered within the allocated budget of €16.05bn a 5.6% increase on 2018.
- In June 2018, Ireland joined the BeNeLux A Initiative on Pharmaceutical Policy and is participating in a number of other EU platforms exploring possible areas for cooperation including information sharing, horizon scanning and possible price negotiations and joint procurement.
- In 2018, the number of people waiting for a hospital procedure was reduced to 70,200 by the end of the year from a peak of 86,100 in July 2017, representing an 18% reduction in overall numbers waiting. The Scheduled Care Access Plan 2019, published in March, targets a further reduction in waiting list for hospital operations and procedures to 60,000 and for first outpatient appointment to 509,000. Funding to the National Treatment Purchase Fund has increased to €75m to tackle waiting lists in 2019.
- 2018 saw an increase of 867 nurses employed, bringing the total number of WTE nurses to 37,644 at year end.

The Government accepted the findings of the Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC) concerning the recruitment and retention of Nurses and Midwives and Consultants.

- A Report of the Independent Review Group established to examine Private Activity in Public Hospitals is expected shortly.
- Three “Leading Care” programmes have been introduced by the Health Service Leadership Academy with approximately 330 participants to date. This figure is set to increase by a further 100 participants who will commence the programmes by the end of April 2019.

Patient Safety and Regulation

- The contract for the new independent Patient Advocacy Service was awarded in December 2018. This service will support those wishing to make a complaint about their experience of the public health service; and provide support to patients who may have been affected by a patient safety incident. The service is scheduled to become operational in the public acute hospital sector in the second half of 2019 and extend to community services in 2020.
- The Department of Health has commissioned the Health Research Board to carry out an evidence review on the international experience of compensation schemes for vaccine injuries. This report is due to be finalised shortly and its recommendations will be considered with a view to establishing the best means of putting in place such a scheme.
- Draft heads of Bill are expected to

be finalised by end June 2019 and then submitted to the Mental Health Commission for detailed review. The proposed legislative reforms will strengthen the protections for people detained without consent in approved centres.

- In June 2018, Government announced the establishment of an Expert Group to review the law of torts and the current systems for the management of clinical negligence claims. The Interim Report of the Expert Group was published in October 2018 with the final report expected in June 2019.
- The Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB) (Amendment) Act 2019 came into operation in April 2019. The PIAB facilitate fair and objective assessments of damages in personal injury cases.
- On May 1 2019, Government approved the publication of the General Scheme of a Human Tissue (Transplantation, Post-Mortem, Anatomical Examination, and Public Display) Bill in accordance with the General Scheme. Work has commenced on drafting the Bill.
- The Pre-Legislative Scrutiny Report on the Health Information and Patient Safety (HIPS) Bill by the Oireachtas Committee on Health recommended that the Bill be split into more discrete themes. The patient safety elements of the HIPS Bill are now being progressed in a separate Patient Safety Bill.
- The Patient Safety Bill includes provisions for the mandatory open disclosure of serious incidents. The General Scheme of the Bill has been approved by Government and has completed pre-legislative scrutiny by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health.
- Part 4 of the Civil Liability (Amendment) Act 2017, which provides the legal framework to support open disclosure came into effect in September 2018. The Civil Liability (Amendment) Act 2017 (Prescribed Statements) Regulations 2018 also came into effect in September 2018.
- In February 2019, the Government approved the preparation of a General Scheme of the National Research Ethics Committee Bill which will deal with the research ethics elements of the HIPS Bill. This approval also included the decision not to proceed with the information parts of the HIPS Bill until the new National Health Information Policy Framework is finalised and an assessment made of the legislation required by the new Framework.



Disability, Mental Health and Older People

Disability, Mental Health and Older People

Building on the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, a research project into the living costs of disabled people has been commissioned with a request for tenders issued in March 2019. In June 2018, as part of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, the 'Ability Programme' was launched which is a pre-activation programme for people with disabilities. Funding of €16m was given to 27 projects across the country.

A Consultation was held on personalised budgets under the Task Force on Personalised Budgets. The requirement that work must be of a rehabilitative nature in order to avail of a means disregard for Disability Allowance has been dispensed with in the *Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Act 2018*. HIQA registration of residential designated centres for people with disabilities has been achieved.

The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), provides supports for children with a disability to access the ECCE programme. AIM has provided 5,140 children with 7,430 targeted supports across 2,309 pre-school settings in the 2018/2019 year to date. It won the 'Citizen Impact' award at the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards in late 2018. €12m has been allocated in 2019 to provide services to 1,500 young people with disabilities and autism who will require continuing health-funded supports on leaving school.

The maximum personal rate of pension increased by €5 per week for 637,340 pensioners aged 66 and over - for themselves and 72,640 dependents. There was also a €5 increase for 684,700 weekly welfare recipients including carers, widows, people with disabilities, lone parents, jobseekers, Maternity and Paternity Benefit recipients, Farm and Fish Assist recipients and Community Employment participants. Qualified adults and people receiving reduced rates of payment will receive proportional increases.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee report on the Future of Mental Health Care was published in October 2018. Emergency legislation to amend Section 15 of the Mental Health Act was also enacted in October. A policy approach and project plan for Adult Safeguarding Policy was agreed. The implementation plan of Connecting for Life in conjunction with National Office of Suicide Prevention was further progressed. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service waiting lists were reduced. Many recommendations from Youth Mental Health Taskforce have been implemented. The National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital Capital Project at Portrane is continuing.

Measures introduced in Budget 2019 include an increase in the value of the Home Carer Credit from €1,200 to €1,500. The Budget for Home Supports Services in 2018 was approximately €413m. An additional week of fuel allowance over the winter months was provided, with 373,800 households benefiting. While the funding for the Free Travel Scheme and Free TV Licence Scheme increased by €5m each. Additionally, a 100% Christmas bonus was paid to over 1.2 million recipients of social welfare payments in December 2018.

Over 9,400 households benefited from the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability in 2018. A Winter Plan was published in preparation for the challenges experienced across the health service during the winter period. Over 19,000 participants were approved under the Seniors Alert Scheme in 2018, an increase of 56%.

Disability Services

- 155 people with disabilities transitioned from institutional settings to community-based living in 2018. The transition of a further 160 people will be supported in 2019.
- The Task Force on Personalised Budgets published their report in July 2018. The report sets out how personalised budgets could work as a funding mechanism for people with disabilities, providing greater choice and control over the services and supports they receive. To assist with the final design, demonstration projects will be rolled out in 2019.
- €12m is being allocated by the HSE in 2019 to provide appropriate services and supports to approximately 1,500 young people with disabilities and autism who will require continuing health-funded supports on leaving school or rehabilitative (life skills) training this year.
- An additional €10m in funding provided 12 new respite houses for disability services and a wide range of community-based alternative respite projects in 2018.
- One of the initiatives under the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011-2016 was the establishment of Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) in all housing authority areas, to achieve a coordinated and integrated approach to meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities at local level. Each HDSG has prepared a local Strategic Plan for its own City/County area, to develop specific local strategies to meet identified and emerging need over the next five years. Building on the commitment given in the Programme for Government to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities, the NHSPWD has been affirmed in Rebuilding Ireland and extended to 2020 to continue to deliver on its aims.
- The streamlined application process for the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with Disabilities is currently in the final stages of development. Over 9,400 grants were paid in 2018, supporting people to remain in their own homes through funding of almost €65m. The 2019 allocation has increased to €71.25m and it is expected that up to 11,800 households will benefit from the grants.
- The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 was launched in July 2017 with a range of actions aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities in a practical sense and create opportunities to fulfil their potential. A recent review of the strategy noted in December 2018 that of the 114 actions in the Strategy 13 have been completed with a further 71 on track.
- One of the key priorities of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy is to increase the statutory target of persons with disabilities employed in our public services from 3% to 6% on a phased basis by January 2024. To give effect to this commitment, legislative proposals are currently being progressed through the Oireachtas as part of the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.
- A wide range of work-related supports

are available for people with disabilities, including people with mental health difficulties, which they or their employers, where appropriate, can access while in receipt of income support payments. These include the Wage Subsidy Scheme, the EmployAbility service and employment support grants for people with disabilities.

- The availability of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment for people with severe and enduring mental health issues is being extended to all Mental Health Services in each Community Healthcare Organisation. Funding will be provided from the HSE Service Reform Fund (SRF) and the HSE's Clinical Programmes for 27.5 IPS employment specialists for a three year period.
- The requirement that work must be of a rehabilitative nature in order to avail of a means disregard for Disability Allowance or Blind Pension was dispensed with forms part of the *Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Act 2018*.
- As part of Budget 2019, the maximum rate of weekly social welfare payments, including Disability Allowance and Carer's Allowance, increased by €5 per week from end-March 2019. This builds on a similar increase in Budget 2017 and 2018. There was also a €2.20 increase for each qualified dependent child under the age of 12 and €5.20 for each qualified dependent child aged 12 and over, effective from end-March 2019, building on a €2 increase in Budget 2018.
- The medical card earnings disregard for persons in receipt of Disability Allowance will be increased from €120 to €427 per week to assist persons with a disability to take up or remain in employment.
- The EmployAbility service delivers assistance with the identification and take-up of supported employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Contracts are now in place for 2019 with 23 companies to deliver an EmployAbility service on behalf of the Government.
- The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) continues to provide supports for children with a disability to access and meaningfully participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. It has provided 5,140 children with 7,430 targeted supports across 2,309 pre-school settings in 2018 and 2019 (to end March).
- A further 1,150 free training places are being made available to pre-school practitioners in September 2019 under the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) higher education programme to ensure their pre-school services are inclusive and accessible to children with disabilities.
- Almost €28m has been allocated under the Accessibility Retro-fit Programme to improve older existing public transport infrastructure facilities for people with disabilities.

Mental Health

- €84m will be provided for Mental Health Services in 2019, bringing the total available funding for Mental Health to €1bn.

- The Refreshed Vision for Change policy for Mental Health is near completion and the overarching framework for the report supports creating access to services through self-referral, primary care teams and community mental health teams.
 - There are now 70 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) teams, and 3 Paediatric Liaison Teams. Funding has been provided for 114 new Assistant Psychologists and an additional 20 Psychologists recruited to HSE Primary Care.
 - There has been an increase in the number of training places for undergraduate (130) and post-graduate (30) nurses, which will see additional Psychiatric Nurses within Mental Health Services. Funding has also been provided for 10 Advanced Nurse Practitioners in CAMHS who are currently in training.
 - Considerable work was carried out in 2018 on the continued expansion of the seven day Mental Health Service. Continued development of e-mental health and digital technologies includes a number of pilot programmes for tele-counselling; a dedicated mental health telephone number and crisis text messaging service.
 - The National Clinical Programme for the assessment and management of patients who present to emergency department following a self-harm act is delivered in 24 out of 26 emergency departments across the country. The clinical programme is also being rolled out to the 3 National Paediatric Hospitals in Dublin.
 - Jigsaw, a registered charity, is a network of programmes to support the provision of early intervention and psychological services for young people who are experiencing mental health difficulties. There are currently 13 Jigsaw sites located across Ireland designed to make sure every young person has somewhere to turn to and someone to talk to. Two more sites scheduled to open in 2019.
 - The HSE have organised national stigma reduction activities which included workplace activities and a *Pleasetalk* campaign aimed at Third Level Students. The HSE also part funds the See Change organisation, which is dedicated to ending mental health stigma. The annual Green Ribbon campaign aims to positively change people's attitudes to mental health problems.
 - Construction of the new 170-bed National Forensic Mental Health Service complex in Portrane Co. Dublin is to be completed in 2019 and expected to open mid-2020.
 - The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) was rolled out nationally to facilitate people residing in HSE mental health facilities to have meaningful choice in where and with whom they live, security of tenure and independent living with appropriate supports that is not a medical led model.
- Older People**
- On average throughout 2018, approximately 23,000 people were supported under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme (Fair Deal) and time spent on a placement list for funding

release did not exceed four weeks throughout the year.

- In 2018, the Government agreed proposals to change the treatment of farms and businesses under the Fair Deal Scheme. The three year cap may be extended to farms and businesses which will be operated by a family member for six years. Legislation is in preparation to bring the changes into effect.
- At the end of December 2018, 201 people were in receipt of a dementia-specific intensive homecare package and 421 people with dementia had benefitted from a package since late 2014. The nationwide Dementia Understand Together campaign is continuing to place dementia in the public consciousness and create inclusive and supportive environments for people with dementia.
- Some €843m was provided in 2018 for services in the home and community, including almost €417m for Home Support Services; €263m for short stay residential and respite care; €25m for transitional care; and €27m for day care.
- The Budget for Home Supports Services in 2018 was approx. €417m. Over 17 million home support hours were provided to 50,500 people, which is an increase of 754,000 hours and 500 more people compared to 2017. 235 intensive home support packages provided 360,000 home support hours for people with complex needs.
- A single funding stream for home support services has brought together the funding for home help and standard home care packages to operate as a single home support service. The application and decision-making processes are now being streamlined and service users are being facilitated to move to changed levels of service as their assessed needs change, without the need for an additional application process.
- The Sláintecare Implementation Strategy 2018 commits to the introduction of a statutory scheme for home-care in 2021.
- Total expenditure on the Seniors Alert Scheme in 2018 was €6.98m. In 2018, application approvals were up 56% on 2017 with over 19,000 participants approved. For 2019, €2.3m has been allocated with an additional provision also being provided under the Dormant Accounts Fund for this programme.
- In April 2019, the charge per prescription item was reduced from €2.00 to €1.50 for Medical Card holders over the age of 70. The monthly Drugs Payment Scheme threshold has also been reduced from €134 to €124.
- As part of the Roadmap for Pensions Reform 2018-2023, the Government intends to introduce Automatic Enrolment by the end of 2022. It will see employees without personal retirement savings automatically enrolled into a quality-assured retirement savings system, with freedom of choice to opt-out.
- Budget 2019 provided for increases of €5 per week in the maximum rate of weekly social welfare payments including the State pensions.

- Funding for the Free Travel Scheme was increased by €5m (from €90m to €95m) in 2019. This is to meet the increased numbers eligible for the scheme and to encourage new operators into the scheme so as to broaden coverage to more remote parts of rural Ireland.



Children and Youth

Children and Youth

In November 2018, First 5, a whole-of-Government strategy for babies, young children and their families was launched. The publication of First 5 realises a key commitment in the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures framework and marks a major milestone in policy development for the youngest members of society. First 5 is a ten-year plan (2019-2028) to improve the lives of babies, young children and their families. The Strategy commits to major initiatives on family leave, children's health services, parenting supports, child-friendly communities and Early Learning and Care services among a broad range of actions.

As part of Budget 2019, an extra €127m was provided for Early Learning Care, School Age Childcare and youth services, bringing the total investment by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in services for children, young people and families to €1.5bn for 2019. Budget 2019 represented a significant step in ensuring access to high quality, affordable Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare with annual investment now rising to €574m.

The National Childcare Scheme, launched in March 2019, is the first statutory scheme of its kind in Ireland. It aims to improve children's outcomes, support lifelong learning, reduce child poverty and reduce the cost of quality Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare. Under the forthcoming Programme Support Payment, over €19m will be made available to Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare services from June 2019.

In February 2019, the School Age Childcare Regulations which are an important milestone in the development of quality, accessible and affordable School-Age Childcare in Ireland, set out requirements for school-age services, which must register with Tusla.

The 2019 Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Capital programme was also announced, amounting to €6m in total. This funding will enable providers to create additional places and improve the quality of their service.

As part of Budget 2019, a new social insurance based paid parental leave and benefit scheme was announced. This new scheme will support parents during the first year of the child's life by providing two weeks of paid leave at the same rate as Maternity Benefit and Paternity Benefit - €245 per week to both parents, and will allow parents more flexibility in managing a work life balance.

In April 2019, Tusla – Child and Family Agency launched its new Child and Youth Participation Strategy for 2019-2023. The Strategy is a central part of Tusla's on-going commitment to the participation of children, young people and parents in the decisions that affect their lives.

In March 2019, Tusla – Child and Family Agency launched a new child-friendly website, ChangingFutures.ie to help young people to better understand the work that Tusla does. Changing Futures is a uniquely youth-driven project, created and developed entirely by young people – including the name, logo, look, design and content. Young people were involved at every stage of the website development.

There have been a number of important developments in the area of children and youth affairs over the last year. In June 2018, the launch of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 was the first of its kind in the world and was a significant achievement. Its mission is to ensure that all LGBTI+

young people are visible, valued and included.

In February 2019, Government approval was given to draft amendments to revise the privacy provisions in the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016. The revised scheme will provide for contact with all birth parents to ascertain whether they have any objection to the birth information being released.

A 12% increase in funding was announced in March 2019 for the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme. This funding will bring the overall allocation for the scheme to over €2m and will provide small volunteer-led youth clubs with greater capacity to reach more young people during 2019.

An increase in funding was announced for 2019 from €250,000 to €450,000 for children's play and recreation facilities across Ireland. Every year funding is provided to local authorities to fund the development of playgrounds across the country. In 2018, playgrounds across 26 counties were funded by the Government.

Early Years and Childcare

- The Home Carer Credit was increased by €300 in Budget 2019. This brings the value of the credit to €1,500 per year.
- As part of Budget 2019, the Government announced the introduction of a new social insurance based paid parental benefit scheme. Due to commence in November 2019, this new scheme will support parents during the first year of the child's life by providing two weeks of paid leave to both parents.

First 5 Strategy

In November 2018, First 5 was unveiled, Ireland's first ever cross-Departmental strategy to support babies, young children and their families. The ambitious ten-year plan will deliver a broader range of options for parents to balance working and caring. It is a whole-of-government strategy for babies, young children and their families and identifies a range of measures to support parents. Access to Early Learning and Care provision is important for parents who work inside and outside the home.

- Since commencement of Early Years Education inspections in April 2016, a total of 1,889 inspections have been conducted in services delivering funded pre-school under the ECCE Programme and free preschool education nationally. This represents approximately 45% coverage of the eligible cohort of early years services.
- In 2018, Tusla were provided €9.5m as part of the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme to fund and expand existing schemes such as the Area-Based Childhood Programme.
- The National Childcare Scheme will launch in October 2019, with payments being made from November.
- The new National Childcare Scheme will replace the multiple current support schemes with a single, streamlined and user-friendly scheme.
- Under the new National Childcare Scheme, parents applying for an income-related subsidy can choose to have their income assessed automatically through the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Employment and Social Protection. This reduces the paperwork burden on parents and providers and significantly increases the speed of applications and subsidies awarded
- The Childcare Support Act 2018 provides for both income-related financial support, allowing the targeting of support towards parents who face the greatest financial difficulty in affording early learning and care for school-age children, and non-income related financial support, allowing a level of support for all parents with children of a prescribed age who use registered services.
- The new income assessment process for determining eligibility will allow the targeting of supports towards those with the greatest need, particularly families seeking to enter the labour market but who have a low or moderate level of income.
- Since September 2018, all children are

eligible to avail of two years of universal pre-school, benefiting 107,000 children.

- Arising from expansions to the ECCE Programme in September 2018 (to help prepare young children further for starting school and raise the school starting age to 5 years) the number of junior infants starting school at 5 years of age has increased from 38.3% in 2016/17 to 43.4% in 2018/19.
- In the 2017/2018 programme year, almost 40,000 children availed of a non-means tested universal subsidy of up to €1,040 per year which is available for children until they become eligible for the ECCE programme.
- Work on preparing a Workforce Development Plan for the early learning and care and school age childcare workforce will begin in 2019. It will identify actions to help meet the target of achieving a graduate-led workforce with at least 50% graduates by 2028, and with a 30% target to be reached by end 2021.
- The Government is continuing the Learner Fund into 2019, encouraging further education, training, and continuing professional development across the Early Learning and care sector. Specific funding was made available in 2018 for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in key areas such as first aid training. 1,300 qualifications of staff were validated in 2018; and a National Child-minding Coordinator has been in place since Q1 2019 to assist with developments within childminding.
- Extensive funding has been dedicated to training through the Access Inclusion

Model, including development of a new training programme in sensory processing.

- A financial incentive for higher quality provision is built into the ECCE/free pre-school programme, through a higher capitation payment for services with graduate room-leaders (currently €80.25 per week per child) than for services without graduate room-leaders (currently €69 per week per child). Over 50% of ECCE rooms now access the higher levels of capitation. To further improve quality, capitation rates in ECCE increased by 7% in September 2018.
- New school age childcare regulations were published in December 2018 requiring all school age childcare services to be registered with Tusla and have a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children.
- In November 2018, a dedicated parenting support policy unit was established to lead on the work of coordinating policy direction relating to parenting support.

Protecting and Supporting the Next Generation

- A new Youth Employability Initiative, launched in 2018, is engaging with young people between 16-24 with a view to developing their personal and social competencies and ultimately preparing them for entry into the workforce.
- A Reform and Development Programmes for the Garda Youth Diversion projects has been launched in partnership with the University of

- Limerick and 15 selected local projects. An additional €500,000 was provided in Budget 2019 for pilot family support and for preventative work with children aged 8 to 11.
- The Work to Learn Programme is a Garda Youth Diversion work experience initiative for young people, which provides them with the opportunity to gain important skills and to develop as individuals. There are 20 projects taking part in the Work to Learn Programme for 2019.
 - Ireland's first Bail Supervision Scheme for young offenders, which offers an alternative to remanding a child in detention, has been running on a pilot basis over 2 years, supporting 45 young people and their families. It is currently undergoing an evaluation and has been extended to the end of 2019.
 - The Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2019, to be published by end July 2019, will provide for a new Guardian ad litem service to be established within an executive office of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
 - Funding for Tusla will increase in 2019 by €30m to just over €787m.
 - A pilot 'One House' centre has been announced for children who have been sexually abused. Beginning operation in Galway in mid-2019, this child-friendly centre will provide the combined services of An Garda Síochána, Child Protection and Therapeutic services in one location.
 - The School Returns Database has been upgraded to help reform the monitoring of child benefit payments.
 - A pilot programme for a hot meals scheme was established in Our Lady of Lourdes National School in Inchicore, Dublin in January 2018. Research shows the value of the provision of adequate and nutritious meals for a child's health, learning, attention and educational achievement. From September 2019, under a year-long pilot scheme hot dinners will be provided to 7,200 children in up to 36 DEIS primary schools in the most deprived areas across the State.



Education and Training

Education and Training

Government expenditure on education and skills is at its highest ever level. In 2019, the Education budget is €10.8 billion, an increase of €674m or 6.7%. This includes the highest ever capital allocation for education - €941m, a €196m increase on 2018. There are now 86,000 teachers and SNAs in our schools. The staffing schedule at Primary level operates on a general average of 26 pupils to every 1 teacher (26:1) which is historically the lowest ever allocation ratio at primary level.

The Government is committed to the long term provision of excellent facilities in our schools. €11.9 billion was announced in September 2018 for the education and training sector to build new schools and modernise existing ones under Project Ireland 2040. The capital investment in 2018 and 2019 will deliver approximately 40,000 school places (includes additional and replacement); replace over 600 prefabs; construct/modernise 48 PE Halls at post-primary level and 82 General Purpose rooms at primary level. The enhancement and modernisation of PE facilities in schools will also facilitate community usage of these facilities. Over 200 modern science laboratories will support the delivery of the reformed science curricula and the roll-out of Computer Science as a leaving certificate subject.

The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 will achieve a more structured, fair and transparent decision making process by schools regarding enrolment and amongst other things, removes the role of religion in school admissions for virtually all primary schools; requires all schools to publish their admissions policies; provides for the Minister to require a school to open a special class for children with special educational needs where the National Council of Special Education deems it necessary; and provides for Irish medium schools to give priority to Irish speaking children.

The Technological Universities Act, 2018 provides for the development of a new Technological University model. The TU4Dublin consortium comprising the Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown and Institute of Technology Tallaght (to be named Technological University Dublin and known as TU Dublin) became the first Technological University with TU Dublin formally coming into existence on 1st January 2019.

In 2018, 9,200 students were being supported through the Back to Education Allowance scheme (BTEA). This provides people with a second chance education that will improve their prospects of securing employment.

Education Action Plan

- The Education budget increased by €674m (6.7%) to €10.8bn in 2019 bringing Government expenditure on education and skills to its highest ever level.
- Over the three Budgets encompassed by the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019, annual investment in education has risen by nearly €1.7bn, an increase of over 18% on 2016 levels.
- Schools will receive a 5% increase in capitation from September 2019. Over the course of the school year 2019/20, an additional €10m will be allocated to primary and post primary schools, of which €4m will be allocated in 2019.
- Budget 2019 provided for €57m in additional current funding for the higher education sector. This is in addition to separate funding that has been provided for salaries and pensions, amounting to an additional €41m in 2019.
- The budgetary allocation for higher education capital expenditure has increased from €30m in 2018 to €90m in 2019.
- For the current school year, the staffing ratio at Primary level operates on a general average of 26 pupils to every 1 teacher (26:1) which is historically the lowest ever allocation ratio at primary level.
- €11.9bn was announced in September 2018 for the education and training sector to build new schools and modernise existing ones over the next 10 years under Project Ireland 2040. Construction activity in 2018 and 2019 will involve over 130 large-scale projects and circa. 280 smaller scale projects under the Additional Accommodation Scheme, including the replacement of over 600 prefabs and the provision of over 200 modern science laboratories to support the delivery of the reformed science curricula and the roll-out of Computer Science as a leaving certificate subject.
- Under the Summer Works Scheme (announced in late 2018) the Government is funding a total of 307 school projects with projected expenditure of €40m in 2019.
- A new Summer Works Scheme is open for applications for projects to be delivered from summer 2020 onwards, including upgrades to car parks and bus lay-bys. This new scheme will include an obligation on schools to sign up to a system of online reporting of energy use through the Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland

Education Inclusion

- Over 1,300 additional posts in schools will be funded (including 950 additional SNA posts and 372 teaching posts) to cater for growth in student population and additional special classes. As a result of this year's allocation, there will be 70,313 teachers and over 15,900 SNAs employed in our schools.
- The retention rates to Leaving Certificate for DEIS schools has risen to 85% for the students who started school in 2011, up from 84.4% from 2010. The gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools is 8.5% is now half of what it was for the 2001 cohort (when there was a 16.8% gap)

- At 94.2%, Ireland ranks 2nd highest across the 28 EU member states regarding the average number of adults aged 20-24 who have completed upper secondary education. This is significantly ahead of the average EU figure of 83.3%.
- A demonstration project to provide in-school and pre-school therapy services has been developed and is taking place over the course of the 2018/19 school year. The purpose of the project is to test a model of tailored therapeutic supports by providing speech and language and occupational therapy within 'educational settings'.
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) sanctioned psychologist numbers have grown from 172 WTEs in 2016 to 204 WTEs in the course of 2019 following further appointments approved in Budget 2019.
- A new programme 'EXPLORE' has been launched and is focused on the over 35s with low digital skills who are in manufacturing type employment. It aims to increase participation in Lifelong Learning and offer an opportunity to upskill for those already in employment.
- Funding has been secured from the European Social Fund for the Defence Forces Employment Support Scheme. An interim review of the scheme was completed in 2018 which recommended one course per year.
- The LGBT Youth Strategy was published in June 2018 is committed to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment in our schools and right across society for every LGBTI+ young person.
- Springboard+ 2019 courses will be open to people irrespective of their employment status. Level 6 courses will remain free to all participants. Returners (homemakers) and those in receipt of certain allowances, including Jobseekers Benefit, will continue to be able to access courses free of charge. For employed participants on courses NFQ level 7 - 9, 90% of the course fee will be funded by the Government, with participants required to contribute just 10% of the fee.

Promoting Excellence and Innovation

- To date, 592 newly appointed Principals have engaged with the Professional coaching service since its introduction in 2017. Since the introduction of team coaching in 2019, 49 schools have engaged with this service.
- A new Post Graduate Programme in School Leadership was introduced in September 2017 for teachers aspiring to senior school leadership positions. There have been two tranches to date with a total of 508 participants. A third tranche will begin in September 2019.
- The Schools Excellence Fund DEIS project expanded in 2018 to include an additional ten clusters of schools comprising approximately twenty-five schools and early years settings. There are now twenty clusters working to secure improved learning outcomes through the adoption of innovative and creative approaches to teaching and learning.

The School Excellence Fund

The Schools Excellence Fund has been expanded to include leadership. The new scheme announced in October 2018 will fund up to 250 schools to work together on innovative projects to improve school leadership and includes an expansion of the coaching service available to school leaders. Leadership within the school can make a massive difference – developing best practice, building morale and encouraging innovation.

- Lithuanian has been introduced as a Junior Cycle Short Course and Korean as a Transition Year module from September 2018. Mandarin Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese will be offered as Leaving Certificate curricular subjects from September 2020.
- Delivery of Leaving Certificate Computer Science in 40 post primary schools and Leaving Certificate Physical Education in 64 post primary schools continues during 2018/2019, with a comprehensive programme of continuing professional development being provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers. National rollout of these subjects will commence in September 2020.
- A pilot P-TECH programme has been launched in Dublin's North East Inner City. P-TECH is a new 6-year education model that seeks to integrate third-level modules and workplace experiences alongside second-level schooling with the aim of enabling students to

earn a third-level qualification and technological and digital skills to enter the workforce.

Access and Choice

- The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 was signed into law by the in July 2018 to ensure a more structured, fair and transparent decision making process by schools on enrolment.
- The Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity Process aims to assist in achieving the target of 400 non-denominational and multi-denominational schools by 2030.
- In 2018, 2 former Catholic schools continued to serve their local communities under new multi-denominational patronage as Community National Schools and one new multi-denominational primary school was established under the patronage divesting process.
- All of the 4 post-primary schools and 13 primary schools to be established in September 2019 will have a multi-denominational ethos.
- Work on the drafting of the Education (Parent and Student Charter) Bill is currently being progressed to ensure better local decision making by a board of management and accountability to parents.

Meeting Future Skills Needs

- The Action Plan for Education 2019 was published in March 2019.
- Some of the actions that will be delivered in 2019 include:
 - » Implementing Languages Connect - Ireland's Strategy for Foreign

Languages in Education 2017-2026. The number of Foreign Language Assistants available to schools increased from 110 in 2017/18 to 139 in 2018/19.

- » Progressing implementation of the STEM Education Policy Statement 2017- 2026 and the Implementation Plan 2017-2019, including developing a work plan to increase the numbers of women participating in STEM
- » Launch a STEM advertising campaign aimed at pupils and students, teachers, school leaders and parents to promote and drive participation in STEM subjects

Implementation of the Foreign Language Strategy

Better foreign language skills are essential to Ireland’s future development. In 2017, the Government approved and began implementing Languages Connect, Ireland’s Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026. Among the actions underway are:

- Lithuanian has been introduced as a Junior Cycle Short Course and Korean as a Transition Year module from September 2018.
- Mandarin Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese will be offered as Leaving Certificate curricular subjects from September 2020.
- The number of post-primary schools in the Foreign Language Assistants scheme and uptake of the Erasmus programme are increasing.

- In February 2019, the Munster Technological Universities Consortium (comprising of Cork IT and IT Tralee) applied for Technological University designation and this is currently under consideration.

Technological Universities Act and implementation

The Technological Universities Act, 2018 provides for the development of a new Technological University model. The TU4Dublin consortium comprising the Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown and Institute of Technology Tallaght (to be named Technological University Dublin and known as TU Dublin) became the first Technological University with TU Dublin formally coming into existence on 1st January 2019.

In February 2019, the Munster Technological Universities Consortium comprising of Cork IT and IT Tralee applied for Technological University designation, which is currently under consideration. Progression of the Technological University for the South East, which consists of Waterford IT and IT Carlow is a priority for the Government.

- An allocation of €142m has been provided in 2019 to support over 7,000 new apprenticeship registrations and ten new apprenticeship programmes.
- An allocation of €47.9m has been provided in 2019 to support 5,000 new traineeship enrolments and 10 new traineeship programmes.

- During 2018, 155 companies, employing 21,143 employees attended 17 Enterprise Ireland Spotlight on Skills Workshops to help identify their critical skill needs.
- The recruitment process in relation to the first ICT Apprenticeship Scheme for Government Departments and Offices is underway. It is a two year full-time programme offering participants an opportunity to develop a career in ICT in some of the largest organisations in the state.
- Some 200 schools are participating in the Digital Learning Framework programme. €110m in Digital Infrastructure has issued to date to schools.
- In April 2019, the Gaeltacht e-hub initiative was launched to facilitate interschool collaboration using digital technologies to broaden subject choice for learners.



Crime Prevention, Justice and Equality

Crime Prevention, Justice and Equality

In January 2019, the Department of Justice and Equality commenced its Transformation Programme to restructure the organisation and implement a new operating model over a nine-month timeframe, aiming to create a Department that is agile, evidence-based and open, while remaining loyal to traditional civil service values of integrity, impartiality and professionalism.

In September 2018, the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) was published. In December 2018, the Government published 'A Policing Service for the Future' - a 4 year Plan (2019 – 2022) to implement the CoFPI Report. The implementation of this plan is being overseen by a dedicated Programme Office in the Department of the Taoiseach. It is intended that the outcome of the reform programme will be a high performing policing service that operates to the highest ethical standards and is equipped, enabled and empowered to respond to the needs of the community.

An additional 600 trainee Garda will be recruited in 2019, on top of 800 new Gardaí in 2018, bringing the total number of Gardaí above 14,000. €342m, including €217m under the Capital Plan, is being invested in Garda ICT infrastructure between 2016 and 2021 to enable Gardaí to deploy the latest technologies in the fight against crime and to support the ongoing reform process. A capital allocation of €10m is available to An Garda Síochána for the purchase and fit-out of Garda vehicles in 2019.

Funding of €1.71m has been approved for the Victims of Crime Office funding programme in 2019 to support 57 victim support services across the State. The Istanbul Convention was ratified by Ireland on 8 March 2019, International Women's Day. The purposes of the Convention are to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2019, which provides for presumptive minimum mandatory sentences for convicted sex offenders who carry out repeat serious sexual offences, was enacted on in February 2019 and will be commenced in due course.

Up to January 2019, Operation Hybrid has resulted in 86 arrests made, 11 charges brought, 37 firearms seized (in relation to murder offences), 290 searches carried out, 17,000 lines of enquiry established, and more than 73,220 high visibility checkpoints implemented with significant support from Armed Support Units. The Criminal Asset Bureau's (CAB) allocation for 2019 of €8.6m has resulted in increased activity, with money returned to the State as a result of CAB actions set to exceed €5.6m for 2018, up from €4.3m in 2017.

The creation of a National Security Analysis Centre (NSAC) has been approved as part of the implementation of 'A Policing Service for the Future'. This will be headed by a National Security Co-ordinator within the Department of the Taoiseach.

Legislation to increase the number of judges in the Court of Appeal by six, to sixteen, is currently before the Oireachtas. Additional criminal trial capacity in the Circuit Court has also been provided for in 2019 to ensure its ongoing capability to effectively dispose of criminal trial work.

Crime Prevention

- In December 2018, the Government published 'A Policing Service for the Future' – a 4 year Plan (2019 – 2022) to implement the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland. The implementation of this plan is being overseen by a dedicated Programme Office in the Department of the Taoiseach, as recommended by the Commission.
- The creation of a National Security Analysis Centre has been approved as part of the implementation of 'A Policing Service for the Future'. This will be headed by a National Security Co-ordinator within the Department of the Taoiseach.
- The Action Plan for Online Safety, launched in July 2018, sets out five goals and 25 specific actions to be implemented over an 18 month period. Achievements in 2018 include the creation of an Online Safety Hub; the establishment of a new National Advisory Council for Online Safety (NACOS) to advise Government on internet safety policy issues; the establishment of a new Cybercrime area of responsibility in the Department of Justice and Equality; the development of dedicated advice Hubs for Youth, Parents and Teachers; new digital capacity and resources for primary schools and public libraries; and mental health initiatives including media campaigns and text messaging supports.
- Garda numbers increased to over 14,000 at end 2018, an increase of over 1,000 since the end of 2016, including approx. 200 trainee Gardaí who

attested to date in 2019. A further 600 Garda recruits will enter training during 2019.

Implementation of A Policing Service for the Future

In December 2018, the Government endorsed the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, accepting all 157 key recommendations. A four year high level plan 'A Policing Service for the Future' was also published which sets out the approach to implementation of these recommendations. This work is being overseen by a dedicated Programme Office in the Department of the Taoiseach, as recommended by the Commission.

The objective in 2019 will be to put in place the key building blocks to ensure that all priority actions are commenced. Examples include building a human rights compliant mentality within the Garda organisation, a new learning and development strategy, and a review of the Garda discipline system. The Plan for 2019 also includes a focus on improving the working conditions of Garda personnel through the deployment of ICT systems to reduce paper work and through addressing long-standing issues of concern including the rosters, the uniform and wellness supports. Commitments to deliver a total of 15,000 sworn Garda Members and 4,000 Garda Staff by 2021 remain on track and will continue to progress during 2019.

- 99 Garda Reserve recruits commenced training at the Garda College at end March 2019, delivering on the target set out under 'A Policing Service for the Future'. A comprehensive strategic review of the Garda Reserve is currently underway.
- From the beginning of 2017 to end Q1 2019, approximately 340 Gardaí were redeployed to frontline policing duties in communities across the country. A net total of 600 garda staff will be recruited in 2019, facilitating a redeployment of 500 Gardaí to frontline policing duties by year end.
- Staffing levels in Criminal Assets Bureau rose to 88 by end 2018 and is expected to reach 91 by Q2 2019. The Bureau brought 30 new Proceeds of Crime proceedings before the High Court in 2018 and provisional figures indicate that the money returned to the State as a result of CAB actions is in excess of €5.6m for 2018.
- The Government has increased the budget for An Garda Síochána to €1.76bn for 2019. €342m, including €217m under the Capital Plan, is being invested in Garda ICT infrastructure between 2016 and 2021 to enable Gardaí to deploy the latest cutting edge technologies in the fight against crime and to support the ongoing reform process.
- €10m has been allocated to An Garda Síochána for the purchase and fit-out of Garda vehicles in 2019.
- A Government allocation of €100m enabled 3 new Garda Divisional Regional headquarters to be constructed and made operational in Dublin, Wexford and Galway.
- 20 grant applications have been approved under the grant-aid scheme to assist community groups establish community-based CCTV systems involving approved funding of more than €500,000.
- The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission received an additional €600,000 in 2018 as well as sanction to recruit an extra 42 staff.
- Operation Hybrid was established to co-ordinate the response to violent crime in Dublin and address public concerns about community safety. As of January 2019, there have been 86 arrests made, 11 charges brought, 37 firearms seized (in relation to murder offences), 290 searches carried out, 17,000 lines of enquiry established and more than 73,220 high visibility checkpoints implemented with significant support from Armed Support Units.
- Approx. 100 extra Gardaí were assigned to the specialist units within Special Crime Operations in 2018. Armed Support Units have been established in each of the six Garda Regions to provide an armed response capacity and capability on a Regional basis to support and supplement the national Emergency Response Unit.
- In 2019, funding of €1.71m was approved for the Victim of Crimes Office to support 57 victim support services across the State.

Courts and Law Reform

- The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2019, providing for presumptive minimum mandatory sentences for convicted sex offenders who carry out repeat serious sexual offences, was enacted in February 2019.
- Government approved the drafting of the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Bill 2019 to prevent risks associated with the use of virtual currencies for terrorist financing and other related safeguarding measures.

Immigration and Refugees

- Over 9,300 persons were granted Irish citizenship through naturalisation between May 2018 and April 2019.
- Over 1,000 investigations of residence card applications were initiated in 2018 to tackle illegal immigration, including marriages of convenience.
- 68 EU citizens involved in illegality / criminality in the State in 2018 had removal orders made against them.
- The number of Deportation Orders made in 2018 rose to 1,186 compared to 931 in 2017.
- As end April 2019, 2,389 persons have been admitted to Ireland under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.
- Ireland accepted 58 persons from search and rescue missions in 2018, including 4 unaccompanied minors, and 41 unaccompanied minors under the Calais Special Project. Ireland has also agreed to accept 36 unaccompanied

minors from migrant camps in Greece and 5 unaccompanied minors from camps in Malta.

- A new Family Reunification Humanitarian Admission Programme was announced in November 2018 aimed at persons coming from established conflict zones. This will see up to 530 refugee family members come to Ireland over a two year period.
- A special scheme for former student permission holders, launched in October 2018, is aimed at those people who have been in the State for a long number of years. INIS received 3,100 applications comprising former students and their family members and has made decisions in approx. 700 cases.
- Funding of €526,000 has been allocated for community integration projects to be carried out in 2019.

Equality

- An independent Expert Group was established in September 2018 to review the effectiveness, implementation and operation of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 and all other legislation that impacts on the provision and delivery of accommodation for Travellers.
- In March 2019, Ireland ratified the Istanbul convention on combating violence against women and all forms of domestic violence.
- The first progress report on implementation of the National Strategy for Women and Girls was published on 8 March 2019. Of the 139 actions in the Strategy 25 have been completed.

Prioritising gender equality

- At the end of 2018, the representation of women on State Boards reached 41.5%, surpassing 40% for the first time that year. In March 2019, the Government approved recommendations from the Inter-Departmental Group on Gender Balance on State Boards for further actions to increase gender balance on State Boards. These actions include increasing the visibility of gender balance on State Boards, changing behaviour, and strengthening governance and reporting mechanisms.
- The Childcare Support Bill was passed by the Oireachtas in June 2018 and underpins the Affordable Childcare Scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of quality early learning and care and school-age childcare.
- The demand-driven Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) scheme and the JobsPlus scheme are among the measures to assist return to the labour market and aiming to reduce the gap in poverty rates between male and female-headed households. By December 2018, the proportion of women among participants of the BTWEA scheme had increased to 31% from 25% in 2016/2017 when the scheme was reviewed. Similarly, female participants also accounted for approximately 30% of employments supported through the JobsPlus scheme in 2018.

- The Government approved the publication of the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill in March 2019 to promote wage transparency. As a first step, companies of 250 and more employees will be required to complete a wage survey.
- Over the year 1,088 women completed one of several EU co-funded programmes offering support to women on returning to the workforce, entrepreneurial activities and enterprise development bringing the total number of women completing a programme to 2,004.
- The LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 was launched in June 2018 putting additional measures in place to enhance the lives of LGBTI+ young people and address some key challenges they may face.
- Measures implemented in 2018 include: additional youth service hours for LGBTI+ specific services; and capacity building grants to 39 organisations across 16 counties to help make services across the country more accessible to LGBTI+ young people.
- The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 - 2021 contains 149 actions, grouped under ten themes, including Health, Education, Employment and Cultural Identity. The vast majority of the actions of the strategy have started and are on track for completion during the lifetime of the strategy.



Agriculture and Marine

Agriculture and Marine

The agri-food sector continues to make a significant contribution to the economy, accounting for 7.7% of modified Gross National Income and 172,800 jobs. In 2018, agri-food sector exports to over 180 countries worldwide totalled almost €13.7bn.

Maintaining farm payments, protecting farm incomes and supporting sustainable farming and jobs in rural and coastal communities remains a priority. In May 2018, for the first time all applicants for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) were required to apply online and this target was achieved. Advance payments under the 2018 BPS commenced on the earliest date permissible under EU regulations in October with €732m issuing to 113,000 applicants in the first tranche. Balancing payments commenced again on the earliest possible date at the start of December, and by year end payments of €1.1 billion had issued to some 121,000 farmers. Discussions with the Commission and other Member States are underway on legislative proposals and funding for CAP 2021-2027 to ensure Ireland's interests are taken into account in the preparation of the CAP Strategic Plan.

Irish seafood exports to 80 countries totalling €579m in 2018. Some €47m was invested in Ireland's seafood sector through a suite of 18 schemes under the EU Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme.

Opening and developing new markets is an important part of the Government response to the uncertainties arising from Brexit. During 2018, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine led trade missions to the US, Canada, China, Indonesia and Malaysia, Turkey, Spain and Portugal. All of these markets have been identified as offering huge potential to the Irish agri-food sector.

Budget 2019 saw the introduction of a €78m Brexit Resilience Package for the agri-food sector. The measures include €44m of direct aid for farmers, €27m in Brexit related supports for the food industry and €7m for Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Brexit-preparations. In March 2019, Government launched the "Future Growth Loan Scheme" providing long-term strategic investment loans to eligible Irish businesses, including farmers and the agri-food and seafood sectors.

There have been extensive discussions with the European Commission regarding the potentially very severe impact of Brexit – in particular, the unique nature of the difficulties facing the Irish beef sector, and the unique exposure of the Irish beef sector to the threat of a disorderly Brexit – and the likelihood of specific supports being required in order to mitigate the potential impacts on Irish farmers and processors.

Forest cover is estimated to be at its highest level in over 350 years. The area of forest is estimated to be 770,020 ha or 11% of the total land area of Ireland. A Forestry Programme Implementation Group, comprising of representatives from the forestry sector, state organisations and environmental NGOs, was established in May 2018, to monitor the implementation of the Forestry Programme.

Agri-food sector performance

- Irish agri-food exports have shown great resilience with exports for 2018 estimated at €13.7bn, down marginally from the 2017 total of €13.8bn.
- The agri-food sector continued to make a significant contribution to employment at national and regional levels accounting for 172,800 (7.7%) of total employment based on the 2018 average. It remains Ireland's largest indigenous sector.
- The Third annual progress report of Food Wise 2025: Steps to Success 2018 is an action plan focusing on: Brexit, Sustainability, Innovation & Growth and Protected Geographical Indications. Of the 375 detailed actions contained in the plan, 74% have been achieved or substantial action has been undertaken; and a further 26% have commenced.
- Following the allocation of €5m in Budget 2018 for the purchase of capital equipment, a new Prepared Consumer Food Centre was opened on 18th October 2018, which will allow companies to pilot equipment with a view to scaling up production, A further €5m has been allocated in Budget 2019 for the purchase of equipment for sensory and nutritional analysis, in addition to the development of incubation units. The Prepared Consumer Foods sector accounted for €2.62bn in Agri-food sector exports in 2018.
- A new measure is being introduced to strengthen food traceability and safety by extending electronic identification to all sheep beginning in 2019.
- In Budget 2019, there was a further allocation of €5.3m to Bord Bia, bringing its total grant in aid to €46.6m for 2019. This compares to a grant of €28.9m in 2014, and represents a 60% increase in funding for marketing and promotion of our food offering over five years.
- The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) came into force in February 2019 and will remove the vast majority of the €1bn of duties paid annually by EU companies exporting to Japan. The EPA will open up new opportunities for Irish exporters, in particular in the agri-food sector. Currently high tariffs on agricultural products will be reduced on a phased basis over 15 years. Japan's tariffs of up to 38.9% on beef will be reduced to 9%. Tariffs on hard cheeses which are currently up to 28.9% will be eliminated. Tariffs on premium pork products will also be eliminated creating opportunities for Irish producers.
- The EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement was signed in October 2018 and was ratified by the European Parliament in February 2019. Entry into force is planned to take place during 2019.
- In May 2018, a week-long trade mission to China took place to further develop relationships and to build upon the granting of access to the Chinese beef market in April 2018 and to progress the question of additional beef plants and one outstanding pigmeat plant. It also provided an opportunity to present the Irish Beef sector to potential buyers and distributors and to build upon existing links in the dairy, pigmeat and other sectors.

- Live exports of cattle increased by 30% over 2017, to 246,000 in 2018. This change was driven by a significant increase in exports to other EU countries.
- A Beef Environmental Efficiency Pilot scheme (BEEP) has been launched as part of the €78m Brexit package for the agri-food industry. The scheme (with a funding provision of €20m in 2019) will target the weaning efficiency of suckler cows and calves.
- There have been extensive discussions with the European Commission regarding the potentially very severe impact of Brexit – in particular, the unique nature of the difficulties facing the Irish beef sector, and the unique exposure of the Irish beef sector to the threat of a disorderly Brexit – and the likelihood of specific supports being required in order to mitigate the potential impacts on Irish farmers and processors.
- A Future Growth Loan Scheme has been developed in conjunction with the European Investment Bank Group to provide long-term financing support to Irish businesses to help them strategically invest in a post-Brexit environment. It is expected that 40% of the €300m in funding available for the scheme will go to primary agriculture and agri-food businesses, including those in the seafood sector.
- Since the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) began its activities in March 2015, the total amount of SBCI-supported lending activity has amounted to €1,052m (made available to 32,061 Irish Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and supporting almost 150,000 jobs). Approximately 25% of loans went to the Agriculture sector.

Farm Income Supports / Tax Measures

- The Finance Act 2018 provided for an extension of the three existing stock relief measures; the 25% General Stock Relief on Income Tax; the 50% Stock Relief on Income Tax for Registered Farm Partnerships; and the 100% Stock Relief on Income Tax for Certain Young Trained Farmers for a further three years.
- The existing income averaging measure was extended to farms with off-farm trading income.
- The Young Trained Farmer Stamp Duty Relief was extended for three years until end December 2021.
- Directive (EU 2019/633 of the European Parliament and of the Council on unfair trading practises in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 25 April 2019. An Interdepartmental working group has been established on the transposition of the Directive and have met twice since April 2019.
- The number of places on the Rural and Social Scheme has been increased to 3,350 representing an increase of almost 30% in the number of places available on the scheme in the past two years.
- Budget 2019 has provided for a €5 increase in the rate of farm assist payable from 26th March 2019. This will increase the maximum personal rate of farm assist payable from €198 per week to €203 per week.

- The National Reserve will be open for applications in 2019 to provide support to young farmers and new entrants to farming. Funding in place for the 2019 National Reserve will be in the region of €3m.
 - Government is working to build consensus with its agriculture colleagues in Europe with regard to maintaining the CAP budget post 2020 and its allocations. Co-signed a Joint Memorandum in May 2018 (supported by up to 20 other EU Agriculture Ministers), Government called for the CAP budget to be retained at current levels for the EU 27 post 2020.
 - Ireland has indicated that we are open to capping direct payments post 2020.
 - The Fodder Import Support Measure was introduced in August 2018 with a budget of €4.25m. The measure operated through the Co-operatives/Registered importers but farmers in need of fodder through the extended period of dry weather were the beneficiaries. A financial contribution (€50 per tonne) was provided to participating Co-operatives/Registered importers towards the cost of the transport of the fodder from other EU Member States excluding NI. It is estimated that up to 30,000 tonnes of fodder has been imported under the measure. The Department has made interim payments and continues to process the returns from the Co-operatives/Registered importers.
- and the Marine is on track to spend the €4bn budget under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) by 2021. Up to and including 2018, approximately €2.4bn has been spent via the varied range of schemes and development programmes within the RDP 2014-2020. Ireland's execution rate percentage under the current programme also continued to be among the highest of all Member States in 2018.
- Strong demand continues for the Teagasc Adult Green Cert programmes. 12 new contract teachers were approved in March 2019 to maximise participation in the Green Cert.
 - The review of eligible lands for the 2019 Area of Natural Constraint Scheme has been completed and agreed with the European Commission. A total of €226m was paid out under the 2018 Scheme, and Budget 2019 further increased the allocation for the scheme to €250m in 2019.
 - Advanced payments took place under year two of Sheep Welfare Scheme with a total of €15.1m issuing to some 18,600 farmers in 2018.
 - To date over 8,000 payments valued at over €117.5m have issued in respect of Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes (TAMS II). Over 23,750 applications have been received and the scheme remains open to farmers.
 - Under TAMS II, the Tillage Capital Investment Scheme is open for applications. Under this scheme over 1,450 applications have been approved with over 720 payments valued and over €8m issued.

Farm Gate Investments

- A review of the Rural Development programme 2014-2020 was published in 2018 and indicated that the Department of Agriculture, Food

- The Pigs and Poultry Investment Scheme forms part of TAMS II targeted at energy efficiency and disease reduction for the sector. Under this scheme over 208 applications have been approved with 69 payments valued at over €780,000 issued in respect of 82 payment claims submitted.
- Beef Data and Genomics Programme Payments of €38m under the Beef Data and Genomics Programme have commenced issuing to 21,000 farmers.
- The Knowledge Transfer programme is now in its third year, with over 18,000 farmers participating.
- €6.68m was paid to 1,422 farmers in respect of Organic Farming Scheme 2018 Advance payment. The scheme reopened for application in November 2018 based on market demand supply deficits in organic horticulture, cereal and dairy.
- The opening of the 2019 Scheme of Investment Aid for the Development of the Commercial Horticulture Sector has been announced. The annual budget for the Scheme has been increased by €1m to €6m for 2019. The Scheme's current EU State Aid Approval expires at the end of 2019 and EU approval is being sought to extend the scheme.
- The Areas of Specific Constraint (Island Farming) Scheme supports the continuation of traditional farming methods and the maintenance of the natural landscapes on off-shore islands. Some 798 applicants have been paid €2.3m to date under the 2018 scheme.
- The Heritage Act 2018 was passed by the Oireachtas and enacted in July 2018. It enables the extension of the hedge cutting and gorse burning seasons and provides that the Minister may make regulations to allow the cutting of vegetation of roadside hedges in August and the burning of vegetation in March, subject to conditions in the regulations to ensure the protection of flora or fauna.

Fisheries and the Marine

- Economic statistics relating to 2017 published in 2018 indicate that the direct economic value of Ireland's ocean economy currently stands at €2bn or approximately 1% of GDP, which represents a 21% increase on 2015 figures. Growth in 2017 was driven by strong performances in the aquaculture, sea fisheries, shipping and marine tourism industries as well as continued growth in the emerging ocean industries.
- The Harnessing our Ocean Wealth progress report 2018 will be published at the Annual Our Ocean Wealth Summit in Cork in June 2019. Early indications are that Ireland's Ocean Economy continues to show growth both in employment and Gross Value Added generated.
- Negotiations on mackerel quotas have concluded with countries agreeing to a 20% reduction in their quotas for 2019 to help long term sustainability of the stock. 2019 will see a quota of 55,000 tonnes for Irish fishermen. €260m in fish quotas was secured for 2019 down from €266m secured for 2018. The deal provides for maintenance of quotas year-on-year.

- A Council Regulation for a multi-annual management plan for fish stocks in Western Waters (incl. Ireland) was adopted in March 2019. It is crucial to the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy as it contains measures that stocks will be fished in line with the Maximum Sustainable Yield principal while also taking into account the implementation of the landing obligation.
- Recent estimates by Bord Iascaigh Mhara suggest that the proportion of seafood being exported in value-added rather than commodity form has increased from 30% to 46%. Government is fostering this growth through a number of initiatives, including financial support schemes.
- In 2018, approximately €41m was invested in Ireland's seafood sector through a suite of 18 schemes under the €240m European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme.
- The 'Strategy for the Irish Inshore Fisheries Sector 2019-2023' was launched in February 2019 on behalf of the National Inshore Fisheries Forum. It is the first time the Inshore Fisheries Sector has developed its own sector-specific plan.
- Funding has been announced under Ireland's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund to support the new "Clean Oceans Initiative" to provide for environmentally friendly disposal of all plastics and waste recovered at sea.
- The outcome of a review into trawling activity inside the 6 nautical mile was announced in December 2018 to exclude trawling by fishing vessels

over 18 metres from inshore waters inside the six nautical mile zone and the baselines from 1 January 2020.

Horse and Greyhound Sector

- The 10 year strategy for the sport horse sector (Reaching New Heights 2015 - 2025) is the strategic plan for the industry. A review of the governance structures of Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) was undertaken and a new Board structure for HSI has been put in place in September 2018.
- The Curragh Racecourse Development is well underway with the opening due on 26 May 2019. The National Stud has also announced the development of a new tourist initiative "The Irish Racehorse Experience" which is set to open in spring 2020.
- The Greyhound Bill is progressing through the Oireachtas, Committee stage was completed in March 2019 with the Report and Final Stages scheduled for May 2019.

Sustainability

- The Origin Green sustainability programme operates on a national scale to improve the environmental performance of individual farms and food producers. As of the end of December 2018, over 600 Irish food and drink companies had signed up to the Origin Green Programme. Over 320 companies have become Origin Green verified members, representing over 90% of Ireland's total food and drink exports.
- Total spend in the EU co-funded Rural Development Programme on Agri-Environment Climate Schemes

(GLAS, BDGP, Burren Programme, etc.) between 2014 and 2018 was €1.015bn.

- The most recent National Forestry Inventory found that the area of forest is estimated to be 770,020 hectares or 11% of the total land area of Ireland and that forest cover is estimated to be at its highest level in over 350 years.
- A promotion campaign for Neighbourwoods is ongoing and significant interest is being shown in this scheme across the country, with 5 Neighbourwoods completed so far and a further 6 in the pipeline.
- All of the projects funded in 2018 under 2017 Call for research funding for sustainable food production have now commenced and the first substantive progress reports are due to be submitted later this year. A new call for proposals was launched in March 2019.
- A full range of cost effective training courses are available nationwide for the implementation of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive. Over 31,000 individuals had registered as professional users by the end of 2018.
- Work is ongoing on the first statutory adaptation plan for agriculture, forestry and seafood development sectors which is due for submission to Government in September.
- Bord na Móna launched its Bioenergy business in 2017. In 2018, 78% of the Biomass fuel used came from indigenous sources. Bord na Móna will be using agricrops (principally willow) and forestry by-products including thinnings, brash and pulpwood as the main sources of biomass material. This material is currently being sourced in Ireland and abroad. The company is working with a number of Irish stakeholders, including Coillte, to further develop the Irish supply chain.
- A Bovine TB Stakeholder Forum was established in 2018. It is drawing up proposals to help achieve the eradication of bovine TB in the national herd by 2030.



Climate Change and Energy

Climate Change and Energy

A new whole-of-Government Climate Plan is being prepared to make Ireland a leader in responding to climate change. The Climate Action Fund is one of the four funds established under the National Development Plan 2018-2027 as part of Project Ireland 2040. Over the period to 2027, €500m will be made available to support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets. In November 2018, the Government announced the seven successful projects from the first call for funding. The projects span a range of sectors including transport, district heating, public lighting and agriculture.

Between May 2018 and March 2019, the Better Energy Programme delivered upgrades to over 20,000 homes, including 4,442 low income fuel poverty homes through capital expenditure of €89.1m. Grants for heat pumps in homes were introduced to support a move away from fossil fuels.

During 2017-2018, DCCAE provided over €14m for two partnership pathfinder programmes involving the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), the Office of Public Works (OPW) and the Department of Education and Skills – the Central Government Building Energy Retrofit Pilot and the Schools Energy Retrofit Pilot. Over 70 central government building projects and 16 schools were retrofitted during 2017-8 with more projects planned for 2019. The Public Sector has set an ambitious target to achieve 33% energy efficient improvement by 2020. The sector has achieved 24% energy efficiency improvement to date.

In 2019, €3m is being provided for the national anti-dumping initiative to continue to tackle the problem of illegal dumping. The Public Service is leading the way in reducing generation of single use plastics and waste, demonstrating its commitment to sustainable development and using its influence to persuade others of the changes required to reduce our impact on the environment.

The National Broadband Plan aims to ensure that every home, school and business in Ireland - regardless of how remote or rural - has access to high speed broadband. The procurement process to engage a company to build and maintain a future proofed high speed broadband network to 542,000 premises in Ireland is now at the final stage. As a result of the commercial investment stimulated by the NBP, over 1.75m or 74% of all premises can access high speed broadband services.

By the end of 2018, the total number of Electric Vehicles (EVs) on Irish roads had doubled to almost 7,650. The rise in EVs continues into 2019 - at the end of March 2019, there were in excess of 10,000 EVs on the road in Ireland. In 2018, 1,999 EV purchase grants were issued and administered by SEAI. A total of 1,034 grants were paid out in 2018 under the EV Home Charger Grant which supports the cost of installing a home charger up to a maximum of €600 for buyers of both new and second-hand EVs.

Cross-party co-operation led to the passage of the Fossil Fuel Divestment Act 2018 in December 2018. Within weeks of enactment, the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) had divested from €72 million of equity and debt exposures in fossil fuel undertakings as defined within the Act. In 2018, the Government approved the issuance of Ireland's first 12-year Sovereign Green Bond. This €3 billion issuance will be allocated against eligible green projects, which primarily address climate change mitigation and adaptation, clean water and wastewater treatment, counter natural resources depletion and loss of biodiversity, and reduce air pollution.

Climate Change

- A new whole-of-Government Climate Plan is being prepared which will set out the actions which must be taken to make Ireland a leader in responding to climate change. This will include new initiatives in electricity, transport, heat, and agriculture, as well as a range of other sectors and will set out how Ireland will meet its 2030 targets. It be informed by successful approaches in other countries and will have a strong focus on implementation.
- All An Post deliveries in Dublin city centre (between the canals) will be zero emission by the end of 2019 as part of the company’s ‘Post Eco’ plan to eliminate carbon emissions by 2050.

The Project Ireland 2040 Climate Action Fund

The Climate Action Fund is one of the four funds as part of Project Ireland 2040. Over the period to 2027, €500m will be made available to support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland’s climate and energy targets. In November 2018, the Government announced the first seven successful projects from the first call for funding. The projects span a range of sectors including transport, district heating, public lighting and agriculture.

- In 2018, Ireland provided €4.5m to support international climate action, including contributions to the United Nations Climate Change Convention and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Partnership.

Government ban on single use plastics (CCAIE)

In January 2019, the Government decided that government departments and public bodies will lead the way in reducing generation of plastics and will no longer purchase single-use plastic cups, cutlery and straws for use within their offices. This decision recognises that the public service must demonstrate its commitment to sustainable development and use its influence to persuade others of the changes required to reduce our impact on the environment.

Energy Efficiency Scheme

- Between May 2018 and March 2019 €89.1m was invested in the Better Energy Programme which supported energy efficiency upgrades to over 21,000 buildings. The measures available under grants were expanded in 2018 to promote deeper retrofits such as external wall insulation and support grants for heat pumps. This will help Ireland move away from fossil fuels to clean renewable heating systems.
- A number of pilot schemes, operational between 2016 and 2019, are now being evaluated. The results of these evaluations will provide the evidence necessary to help us deliver on the ambition set out in Project Ireland 2040 and meet our 2030 climate and energy targets.

- During 2018, energy efficiency works were carried out on 1,461 units under the Voids Programme, supported by funding of €8.2m.
- €12.9m was provided for during 2018 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme to improve energy efficiency and comfort levels in 4,453 local authority homes.
- In April 2018, a draft amendment was published to the Building Regulations for Dwellings for public consultation. When implemented in 2019, these new regulations will improve the energy performance of new dwellings by 70% over 2005 building regulations provisions.
- Funding up to €500,000 is available for energy efficient dairy farm equipment potentially saving the average farmer €1,440 in energy bills and 1.6 tonnes in reduced carbon emissions annually.
- The public sector has made good progress on its ambitious target of 33% energy efficiency improvement by 2020 with a 24% improvement achieved by end 2017 (the latest year for which data is available). This amounts to an annual €191m avoided energy spend and carbon emissions savings of 667,000 tonnes for 2017. Cumulative savings amount to over €1bn and 3.56 million tonnes carbon of emissions avoided (2009 – 17). Work is underway to set an even more ambitious target for the sector by 2030.
- 2018 saw the first in a series of regional gathering events under the National Dialogue on Climate Action (in Athlone and Tralee). The Government continued to support An Taisce to deliver its

Green Schools National Climate Change Action and Awareness Programme, including the flagship Climate Ambassador Programme, Climate Action Week, and Green Schools National Climate Expo.

- Since 2017 €21m has been allocated for two partnership pathfinder programmes– the Schools Energy Retrofit and Central Government Building Energy Retrofit programmes - involving SEAI, OPW, and the Department of Education and Skills. During 2017-18, 16 schools and over 70 central government projects were retrofitted under the pilot programme.

Renewable Energy

- The high level design of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) was approved by Government in July 2018. The Scheme is characterised by a series of renewable electricity auctions where generators will compete against each other for support on a bid-price basis. It is expected that the first RESS auction will commence in late 2019.
- Solar Power (Photovoltaic) along with a number of other renewable technologies was appraised as part of the development of the new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). Under RESS, renewable generators (including solar PV projects) will 'bid in' to win support through renewable electricity auctions.
- A pilot solar power micro generation scheme which targets domestic homeowners and self-consumption was launched in July 2018. The pilot scheme will remain open until the end 2020.

- The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan Interim Review was published in May 2018. The Working Groups under the remit of the Offshore Renewable Energy Steering Group have been tasked with implementing the recommendations and actions set out in the Interim Review.
- Support for R&D testing facilities and for wave and tidal projects is ongoing. €4.5m and €3.5m of capital funding was allocated for 2018 and 2019 respectively to support the development of test facilities and infrastructure.
- Capital funding of €5m has been allocated in Budget 2019 to fund delivery of the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH). The National Development Plan includes an allocation of €300m for the rollout of the scheme for the period up to 2027. The first phase of the SSRH - an installation grant for ground, air and water source electric heat pump installations - opened for applications in September 2018. Grant aid of up to 30% of the installation cost is provided for under this scheme.
- The European Commission recently approved the second phase of the SSRH for biomass boilers and anaerobic digestion heating systems under State aid rules. The completion of the State aid process is a key step and the second phase of the SSRH will be opened for applications in the first half of 2019.
- An Enabling Framework for Community Participation will be developed as part of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). Measures within this Framework will include among others a mandatory requirement for all projects looking for support under RESS to offer investment opportunities to local citizens and communities.
- 253 MW of biomass energy (including Anaerobic Digestion) has been approved for inclusion under the current REFIT 3 support scheme.
- BioEnergy technologies including biomass and Anaerobic Digestion were included in the economic appraisal undertaken as part of the RESS design. Price supports will need to be aligned with EU state aid guidelines.
- The first Progress Report of the Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Taskforce, which focused on electric vehicles, was published in October 2018.
- Two new working groups were set up under the LEV Taskforce in 2018 to examine planning for infrastructure for low emission vehicles and the potential for low emission vehicle technologies other than electric vehicles.
- €20m is being invested to fund the rollout of 50 high powered charging hubs on motorways and national roads. In addition, 50 Standard chargers across the ESB eCars network are being upgraded to fast chargers, providing additional fast charging capacity around the country.
- It is expected that the revisions to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines will be finalised and come into effect later in 2019 following the completion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and detailed analysis and consideration of the submissions and views received during the consultation phase.

Climate Change

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The Disruptive Technologies Innovations Fund is the fourth fund established under Project Ireland 2040 with €500m available between now and 2027. In December 2018, over €75m was announced for 27 ground-breaking projects under Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund. Collaborative projects include household electricity generation, sepsis treatments, coastal flooding supports & medical 3D printing.

Businesses, Community, Voluntary and Sporting Bodies, which have experienced Flood Damage to their premises, was approved by Government in November 2018.

- At the end of 2017, there were 3,799 electric vehicles on the road in Ireland. This increased to 7,647 at the end of 2018.

Flood Measures and Emergency Response

- A full review of response protocols is undertaken after each severe weather event. A full review of the Framework for Major Emergency Management document is underway and due for completion before the end of 2019.
- 42 major flood relief schemes have been completed to date. There are approximately 90 flood relief projects currently either at construction, expected to commence construction this year or under active planning and development by the OPW and Local Authorities. This includes the new projects announced for implementation under the 29 Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) publicly launched on 3rd May 2018. It is expected to commence construction on 7 schemes in 2019.
- A Standing Scheme to Provide Humanitarian Support for Small



Investing in Society

Investing in Society

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme supported 31,967 disadvantaged individuals on a one-to-one basis and 2,558 community groups. The Community Enhancement Programme was launched in 2018 and funded more than 3,000 projects worth €13m, with €0.5m ring-fenced for grants to Men's Sheds.

The inaugural National Community Weekend took place over the 2019 May Bank Holiday weekend. It celebrated and encouraged the unique sense of community that exists across the country, promoting social inclusion and encouraging neighbours to connect and celebrate together. Funding was provided to local community groups nationwide to run local events and activities.

The new public library strategy, *Our Public Libraries 2022 – Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities* was published in June 2018. Improving access, use and visibility of the library. Building on the success of the previous strategies it will remove barriers to access by eliminating library fines and supporting activities that encourage use and membership, including investment of €8m in ICT capacity and the extension of the *My Open Library* service providing library access to members outside regular opening hours.

In 2018, €3.5m was allocated to volunteering supporting infrastructure nationwide. The Dormant Accounts Fund Action Plan 2018 included provision of €1.2m in 2019 for the upgrading of the eight Volunteering Information Services to full Volunteer Centres in order to provide a consistent level of volunteering infrastructure nationwide. A Call for Input paper was launched in December 2018 as the first step towards developing a national volunteering strategy.

The materials grant for Community Employment Schemes was increased by 15% in the Budget. Materials grant covers all services and materials necessary for the effective operation of CE schemes e.g. tools, insurance etc. This will benefit 935 CE schemes and 21,000 CE participants.

The National Sports Policy 2018–2027 was launched in July 2018. Key targets include participation in sport to rise from 43% to 50% by 2027; and further targeted high performance funding to deliver more Olympic/Paralympic medals. Phase Two of the National Indoor Arena, which is scheduled to open in June 2019, will provide permanent indoor facilities for field sports including rugby, soccer and Gaelic games.

Total funding for the arts and culture sector in 2019 will increase by €22.6m to almost €190m. Arts Council funding is up by almost €6.8m or 10% to a total of €75m and in June 2018 funding of almost €7m was announced for over 100 artists, arts organisations and projects across the country. Creative Youth has a budget of €6m in 2019, an increase of nearly €4m on last year's budget. Creative Youth aims to enable the creativity of children and young people. The 2019 funding has enabled a doubling of the number of schools participating in the Creative Schools initiative from 150 to 300.

The first Cruinniú na nÓg, a national day of creativity for children and young people, took place on 23rd June 2018 and involved over 500 free events across the country. Ireland is the first country in the world to have a nationwide day of free creativity for children and young people.

Community Supports and Social Inclusion

- An Order has been made giving effect to the Budget 2018 announcement of a VAT Compensation Scheme for Charities, which will allow charities to reclaim a proportion of their VAT costs based on the level of non-public funding they receive.
- In 2018, regulations were made which broadened the access to the Disabled Drivers Scheme for charitable and community organisations providing services to persons with disabilities.
- The Social Enterprise Development Fund provides cash grants and a capacity building programme for social enterprises in rural, town and urban areas. In 2019, the fund will support up to 16 Social Enterprises with cash grants and a place on an Accelerator Programme. This is a €1.6 million fund which will be delivered over two years: 2018 – 2020.
- In December 2018, the Government agreed to allocate a grant of €85,000 in both 2019 and 2020 to Sail Training Ireland which works with young people on sail training vessels to improve their skills in areas such as communication, leadership, confidence and teamwork.
- The Dormant Accounts Fund Action Plan 2018 includes provision of €1.2m in 2019 for upgrading the part time Volunteering Information Service to full Volunteer Centres in order to provide a consistent level of volunteering infrastructure nationwide.
- A new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme was launched in 2018. Over the five years to 2022, it will provide some €190m to allow the companies that implement the programme to complete work to help the most disadvantaged in our society. 31,967 individuals and 2,558 groups were assisted in 2018.
- A new Community Enhancement Programme was put in place in 2018. It built on and replaced both the RAPID programme and the Communities Facilities Scheme that operated in 2017. Funding of €13m supported over 3,000 projects, to help community groups to improve facilities in disadvantaged areas.
- Social Innovation Fund Ireland opened call for applications to back innovative solutions to social issues in the areas of children and youth mental health and education.
- Funding of €2m was allocated to the National Anti-Dumping Initiative in 2018 which saw the delivery of over 200 projects delivered across every county including the removal of over 2,500 tonnes of illegally dumped material and the collection of over 11,000 old mattresses at free collection events.
- €150,000 has been made available to the Community (Text) Alert Programme in 2019 with €125,000 paid out under the Rebate Scheme in 2018 to active Community Alert Groups around the country.

Sports Planning

- The National Development Plan 2018-2027 commits capital funding of €42m for National Sports Campus projects for the period 2018-2027.

- Phase Two of the National Indoor Arena, which is scheduled to open in June 2019, will provide permanent indoor facilities for field sports including rugby, soccer and Gaelic games.
- The development of a National Velodrome and Badminton Centre at the Campus is expected to go to tender in Q4 2019, with construction expected to be completed by 2021.
- The National Sports Policy 2018–2027 was launched in July 2018. Key targets include participation in sport to rise from 43% to 50% by 2027; and further targeted high performance funding to deliver more Olympic/Paralympic medals.

Arts and Culture

- The centenaries of the historical events of 1918 and early 1919 were all commemorated under the Decade of Centenaries programme. The relevant events marked included the death of John Redmond, the end of World War I, introduction of voting rights for women and their right to stand in parliamentary elections, the General Election of December 1918, the first meeting of Dáil Éireann and the start of the War of Independence.
- The State Commemorative Programme 2019-2023 is currently under development and aims to promote a deeper understanding of the significant events that took place during this period and recognises that the shared historical experience of those years gave rise to different narratives and memories. The Programme has the potential to have a meaningful and lasting resonance with children and young people and will cover four strands - a State Ceramonial Strand; a Historical Strand; Community Strand and a Creative Imagination Strand.
- Total funding for the arts and culture sector in 2019 will increase by €21.6m to almost €189m.
- A new bursary scheme for artists – the ‘Markievicz bursaries’ - was announced. Awards under the scheme will be made each year to up to 5 artists/writers to a maximum value of €20,000 per individual or group.
- Arts Council funding is up by almost €6.8m or 10% to a total of €75m and in June 2018 they announced funding of almost €7m for over 100 artists, arts organisations and projects across the country.
- A combined 2019 budget of €6m for Creative Youth, an increase of nearly €4m on last year’s budget, has been announced. Creative Youth aims to enable the creativity of children and young people. The 2019 funding has enabled a doubling of the number of schools participating in the Creative Schools initiative from 150 to 300.
- The first Cruinniú na nÓg, a national day of creativity for children and young people, took place on 23rd June 2018 and involved over 500 free events across the country. Ireland is the first country in the world to have a nationwide day of free creativity for children and young people. Cruinniú na nÓg will take place on the 15th June in 2019.

- €4m was invested in supporting and empowering creativity across communities nationwide in 2018 with similar investment planned for 2019 to assist in the roll out of the 5 Year Culture and Creativity Strategies which was launched in September 2018.
- Over 1,200 projects and initiatives were rolled out in 2018 as a result of Creative Ireland Programme. 31 Culture Teams are working collaboratively at each local authority to maximise resources and implement ambitious, innovative projects as part of the Creative Ireland Programme.
- The National Opera House in Wexford was awarded a €1m capital grant and the Royal Irish Academy of Music was allocated €9m to assist in the re-development of its historic Westland Row premises in Dublin city.
- The National Creativity Fund was announced in May 2018 with grants between €10,000 and €70,000 available to individuals, organisations, community groups and colleges.
- To boost support to regional museums funding of €15,000 has been provided for in 2019 under the Mobility of Collection Schemes and €150,000 has been approved to support exhibitions.
- The film corporation tax credit is to be extended beyond the current date end of 2020 to December 2024.
- The Audiovisual Action Plan was launched in June 2018. The Plan is a long-term, industry-wide strategy to enable Ireland to become a global hub for the production of Film, TV drama and animation.
- The Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structures Fund for 2019 have been launched representing an investment up to €4.3m to support 478 built heritage projects across the country.
- Assessments of the applications under the Historic Structures Fund are being finalised and details of the grants awarded under both schemes were announced at the end of March 2019 and they are currently being progressed through the local authorities.
- A further €58,000 has been allocated to Business 2 Arts for 2019 to continue fellowships provided to develop philanthropic and fundraising expertise in arts organisations.
- A public consultation process to help shape a new National Heritage Plan commenced in November 2018 with a deadline for submissions of March 31st 2019. Over 80 public events have been held across the country and in excess of 1200 submissions have been received.

Irish Language

- 'Action Plan 2018-2022' for the Irish Language 20-Year Strategy was launched in June 2018 outlining specific measures that will be implemented on a cross-Departmental basis in support of the Irish language and the Gaeltacht .
- Bliain na Gaeilge 2018 celebrated the Irish language, both nationally and internationally, and ensured that during 2018, the Irish language would be placed centre stage and linked to the five-year cross Government initiative Clár Ildánach/Programme for a Creative Ireland.

5-year implementation plan on Irish language strategy

The Government published a 5 Year Action Plan for the Irish Language in June 2018. It outlines more than 180 specific measures that will be implemented on a cross-Governmental basis. An oversight group, which has been tasked with monitoring progress, has been established.

Among the progress already made are:

- New Junior Cycle specifications for Irish were introduced in 2017 which places a strong focus on the spoken language.
- An increased funding as provided for the Language Assistants' Scheme for the 2018/2019 school-year – facilitating the inclusion of an additional 32 schools under the scheme.
- A three-year funding programme was sanctioned to the Higher Education Authority to enable Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, in the provision of third level courses in their three Gaeltacht centres – in Gaoth Dobhair, Carna and An Cheathrú Rua.
- Language plans in respect of ten Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas were approved in 2018, bringing the total number of approved plans to 13.
- The appointment of four Language Planning Officers in Gaeltacht Language Planning areas to implement approved language plans in their communities.

- A total allocation of €2.65m was provided to advance the implementation of the Language Planning Process in 2018 and an updated 5th edition of the Language Planning Guidelines was published in January 2019.
- A grant of €120,000 over a two year period has been announced for Conradh na Gaeilge for the Irish Revival Archives Project.
- In 2018, 589 new full-time positions were created in Údarás na Gaeltachta companies. At the end of 2018 there were 8,207 jobs held in tÚdarás supported companies, 7,625 of which were full-time and 582 of which were part-time. 525 new full-time positions were created in 2018. There was a net gain of 122 jobs over the previous year.
- A Work Placement Scheme for Irish Language Students in the translation units of the European Institutions commenced in 2018. It is intended that six graduates will be appointed and gaining experience in the autumn and six others in the spring.
- Funding was provided to 'An Seó Bóthair', a roadshow organised by Conradh na Gaeilge to highlight the opportunities the Irish language affords with a particular emphasis on those in the EU institutions.
- Budget 2019 allowed for an increase of €450,000 current and €300,000 Capital for the Irish Language Support schemes, which provide financial assistance to a range of organisations and activities that support the promotion of the Irish language outside the Gaeltacht.

Transport

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland approved national road funding to a value of €434m in 2018 and €515m in 2019 enabling some of the key projects listed in the Capital Plan to continue under construction and advance to construction phase.

Improving our roads network

- Since 2016 there have been much needed increases in funding for the maintenance and renewal of the regional and local road network.
- While most funding for the regional and local road network is spent on maintenance and renewal, the phased implementation of the 12 road improvement schemes identified in Project Ireland 2040 are being progressed and is on schedule. Schemes due for completion this year, including the Portlaoise Southern Distributor Road, the Dingle Relief Road and the Nangor and Adamstown road upgrade scheme.
- The national road network is being expanded. The first of three major Public Private Partnership schemes – the Gort to Tuam scheme – opened to traffic in 2017. The two remaining schemes – the Gorey to Enniscorthy and New Ross Bypass schemes - are at construction and will open soon. In addition construction has now started on the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin scheme.

- The projects that are currently under construction are as follows:
 - » The N25 New Ross Bypass Public Private Partnership (PPP);
 - » N11 Gorey to Enniscorthy (PPP);
 - » N7 Naas Road Widening; and
 - » N4 Collooney Castlebaldwin.
- Projects that are progressing to construction in 2019 are as follows:
 - » N8/40 Dunkettle Interchange;
 - » N5 Westport to Turlough; and
 - » N22 Ballyvourney to Macroom.
- The following projects will go to tender in 2019:
 - » N52 Ardee Bypass;
 - » N59 Moycullen Bypass; and
 - » N69 Listowel Bypass.
- Investment in public transport infrastructure will rise to over €700m in 2020 and almost €1.1bn by 2021.
- Work will continue on key projects and programmes in 2019 with major public consultations being held on MetroLink and BusConnects.
- Fleet acquisition for all operators is a priority for 2019. New longer trams are being purchased for the Luas Green Line, over 270 buses are being added to the Dublin and regional fleets, and work is continuing on the procurement of a new rail fleet.
- A stakeholder forum was held in 2018 as part of the review of sustainable transport policy which brought together a wide range of representatives including consumer and passenger interests, public transport operators,

unions, business groups, environmental interests, research institutes and policy makers.

Investing in public transport

- In 2016 the **Phoenix Park Tunnel** Link project was completed and opened for passenger services in November 2016. The upgrade to the Phoenix Park tunnel in 2016 has seen commuters on the Kildare to Dublin Heuston line have the option of direct trains to Connolly, Tara Street, Pearse and Grand Canal Dock Stations.
- **Luas Cross City** opened in December 2017. It extends the Green Line from St. Stephen's Green West to the Irish Rail Broombridge Station in Cabra and links the Red and Green Luas Lines in the City Centre. It also integrates with rail services from Maynooth and Dunboyne and the majority of the Quality Bus Corridor schemes which enter or cross Dublin City Centre.
- **Waterford bus services** – in December the NTA and Bus Éireann introduced a significantly improved bus network and level of service for Waterford. The new and improved network was facilitated by the introduction of an entirely new fleet of 17 accessible vehicles, with improvements also made to bus stop infrastructure, as well as improved frequencies and increased hours of operation across the network.

- The Regional bike scheme continues to operate in Cork and Limerick and Galway, with the Galway scheme experiencing a 64% increase in the trips during the year as a result of 8 new stations. The Dublin Bikes Scheme now has 115 bike stations, 1,600 bikes with over 67,000 long term subscribers, and over 26 million journeys completed since its launch 10 years ago.
- In July 2018, the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways was launched. Applications by local authorities and agencies are currently being assessed with successful applicants expected to be notified shortly.



Ireland and the World

Ireland and the World

There are many important strands to Ireland's international ambitions. Through *Global Ireland*, we are implementing a series of policies and initiatives to increase Ireland's diplomatic representation, diversify and grow our international trade, continue our proud record in international peacekeeping and security, and invest more than ever before to bring Ireland's unique culture and heritage to a global audience.

Ireland's ability to advance our national interests and exert our influence - both within and beyond the EU - is becoming increasingly important. To support Ireland's foreign policy and economic development objectives, in June 2018 the Government launched the *Global Ireland* initiative, which aims to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint by 2025. It is the most ambitious renewal and expansion of Ireland's international presence since the foundation of the State. It provides our officials and diplomats with the mandate and resources to be more ambitious in pursuing Ireland's strategic international objectives, promoting our values and exerting our influence globally.

Over the lifetime of *Global Ireland*, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will open at least 26 new diplomatic missions, and strengthen the existing mission network. Since the initiative was launched last year, Ireland has opened new embassies in New Zealand, Chile, Colombia and Jordan, and new Consulates in Vancouver, Mumbai and Cardiff, with further openings planned for LA and Frankfurt later this year. Ireland's growing diplomatic network will enable us to build upon our work to address global challenges.

Ireland has been making extensive preparations for a post-Brexit future. Over the past year, Government has undertaken detailed work at home and at the EU level to prepare our economy and people to the greatest extent possible for all scenarios, including a no deal Brexit outcome. While the outcome of the Brexit process remains unclear, our objective remains to achieve a close and positive future relationship between the EU and the UK. This is of benefit to us both, and to our partners in the wider world. The expansion of Ireland's international footprint will include considerable development and reinforcement of our Embassy and agency network across Europe, and beyond.

Global Ireland recognises the vital role of international development in shaping the world in which we live. In February 2019, the Government published *A Better World*, Ireland's policy for International Development. The new policy emphasises our Sustainable Development Goals pledge to reach 'the furthest behind first', and reaffirms the Government's commitment to delivering 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2030.

Global Ireland also highlights the need for Ireland to deepen our engagement with international partners, particularly through multilateral organisations including the United Nations. A major part of this drive for deeper multilateral engagement is Ireland's campaign for election to the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 term. Launched in July 2018, Ireland's campaign reflects our continuing engagement on issues of international importance and the important role played by the UN in our foreign policy.

Our state agencies are also growing their international presence to deal with post-Brexit opportunities and challenges. IDA has opened a new office in Toronto and has reconfigured its European footprint. Culture Ireland has appointed five high-profile Cultural Ambassadors and will deliver a global programme of Irish arts in 2019. Bord Bia has expanded its personnel in key global markets including Dusseldorf, London, Singapore, Shanghai, Warsaw, and Dubai. Enterprise Ireland has opened new offices in Seattle and Manchester, and has increased resources to support client diversification through the Irish Advantage campaign and expansion of existing offices.

2018 marked the 60th anniversary of Defence Forces first involvement in UN peacekeeping, and the 40th anniversary of its first deployment to Lebanon. Ireland has the longest unbroken record of participation in UN mandated peace support operations, and has participated for 20 years in the NATO Partnership for Peace in support of International Peace and Security and peacekeeping capability development. Since the launch of Global Ireland, there have been, on average, more than 600 Defence Forces personnel deployed at any given moment across 9 different international missions and to range of international organisations and National representations.

Each of these activities and initiatives are important contributions to opening up new opportunities for international trade and inward investment, strengthening Ireland's bilateral and multilateral relations, promoting our values and foreign policy objectives, supporting our citizens abroad and improving our engagement with our diaspora.

Brexit and the EU

- In the twelve months May 2018 to May 2019, the Taoiseach attended 6 formal European Council meetings and 3 informal Summits. Intensive engagement with our EU and international partners remains crucial, in relation both to Brexit and to other important issues on the agenda at EU level.
- The Withdrawal Agreement and The Political Declaration was formally endorsed by the European Council on 25 November 2018. The Withdrawal Agreement secured an important Government objective: a legally operational backstop to ensure that there will be no hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Following the rejection of the Withdrawal Agreement in Westminster on 29 March, The European Council agreed to an extension until 31 October 2019. This is a flexible extension and the UK may leave the EU before that date if Westminster ratifies the Withdrawal Agreement. The UK must hold elections to the European Parliament. If it does not, the UK will leave the EU on 1 June.
- An intensive programme of strategic engagement with EU partners has continued, with the Taoiseach having held 22 formal bilateral meetings with European leaders and 5 formal bilateral meetings with Presidents of EU Institutions.
- Ireland continues to engage in the development of EU policy in important areas such as the single market, digital single market, international trade, climate change, and foreign relations.

Northern Ireland and UK Relations

- The Taoiseach and Prime Minister May made a joint statement on Friday, 26 April announcing the establishment of new process of political talks to seek to quickly re-establish to full operation the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement - the Northern Ireland Executive, Assembly and the North-South Ministerial Council - to commence as soon as possible after the local elections in Northern Ireland.
- A new round of focussed talks began on Tuesday 7 May. The two Governments worked together to set the conditions and the structure and timing of the talks to give them the best chance of success possible
- The Government is actively engaging with the British Government on moving forward with draft legislation to establish the Stormont House legacy bodies in both jurisdictions.
- A draft Criminal Justice (International Cooperation) Bill is being finalised for consideration by the Government and Oireachtas. This legislation will include provision for enhanced cooperation with Coroners in Northern Ireland and Britain in dealing with legacy cases and enable access to testimony from An Garda Síochána, where this is relevant to their inquests.
- Over the course of 2018, Ireland's Reconciliation Fund awarded grants totalling €2.7m to over 140 organisations working on peace and reconciliation among communities on both sides of the border. An additional €1m in funding has been made available for 2019, increasing the total of the Fund to €3.7m.

- Following a UK Supreme Court judgment on 27 February 2019, the Government has proactively engaged with the British Government on the commitment in Weston Park Agreement to a public inquiry into the murder of Pat Finucane. The Government is also continuing to engage at the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to seek a re-opening of individual measures in the Finucane case.
- The Taoiseach met Prime Minister May eight times during 2018. Bilateral meetings also took place with representatives of the devolved administrations including the Scottish and Welsh First Ministers.
- The British Irish Intergovernmental Conference met on 8 May. The Conference considered East/West relations, security cooperation and political stability in Northern Ireland.
- The British-Irish Council met twice in 2018 and two further meetings are scheduled for 2019.
- Trade missions from the North West are now planned on a joint basis. There were two joint trade missions to the USA in 2018. Councillors from both Donegal County Council and Derry and Strabane District Council, together with local businesses, visited Philadelphia from June 18th to June 25th. A further trade mission to Boston took place from November 13th to November 16th.
- Support for the North West continues to deliver the objectives of the North West Gateway Initiative. The Government has provided €2.5m for the North West Development Fund, with additional matching funding provided by the Northern Ireland Executive. The most recent Financial Monitoring Report, approved on 30th November 2018, outlined total committed spend of £2.48m, of which £1.127m had been incurred and paid at that date.
- In May 2018, the Government approved the development of a 13km section of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Clones as a water sports and leisure amenity and re-committed to developing a 13km cross-border stretch under Project Ireland 2040, in the category of Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage. The works to complete the first phase of reopening navigation from the Erne to Castle Saunderson on the Ulster Canal are now complete. Work on Phase 2 of the Ulster Canal Greenway between Smithborough, Co. Monaghan and Middletown, Co. Armagh is on-going and on schedule to be completed in 2021.
- A wide variety of activity has continued, both in terms of the formal areas of co-operation, the North South Implementation Bodies and in co-operation outside of the formal North South institutional framework. All of the North South Bodies continued to operate effectively within the constraints of circumstances to fulfil their mandates set by the North South Ministerial Council.
- The 16th annual Cross Border Conference on Organised Crime took place in County Down in November 2018, bringing together senior officers from An Garda Síochána, the PSNI, the National Crime Agency, and Government Departments and agencies from both jurisdictions.

Global Ireland 2025

In June 2018 the Government launched Global Ireland, Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025, an ambitious plan to double Ireland's reach and impact by 2025. A major focus of the initiative is expanding and deepening our diplomatic presence overseas. Significant work has been undertaken on this expansion and deepening of the mission network since the announcement.

- In August 2018, the Embassy of Ireland in New Zealand was opened followed by Ireland's new Consulate General in Vancouver, Canada in October 2018.
- The Irish Aid Development office in Liberia was also upgraded to an Embassy.
- The next phase of expansion is currently underway with the opening of Embassies in Colombia, Jordan and Chile in early 2019, and the Consulate General in Cardiff and Mumbai.
- This will be followed by Consulates General in Los Angeles and Frankfurt later in the year, and Embassies in Ukraine, the Philippines and Morocco shortly thereafter.

- The EU 2014-2020 PEACE and INTERREG Programmes promote peace and economic and social cohesion across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland and have a total value of €553m.
- By the end of 2018, the INTERREG VA Programme (€283m) was 97% committed with 32 cross-border projects approved in the fields of research & innovation, environment, sustainable transport and health & social care.
- The PEACE IV Programme (€270m) reached 99% commitment by the end of 2018, with 95 projects being approved in Shared Education, Children & Young People, Shared Spaces & Services and Building Positive Relations.

Trade and Markets

- In 2018 62 Ministerial led international trade promotion events were organised, including trade missions to Germany, Italy, China and the US. In 2019 the International Trade Mission and events scheduled to support Irish exporters will include 73 international trade visits. The 2019 programme, which will continue to place a strong focus on market diversification into the EU and other priority markets, will include missions and events in the Eurozone, North America, Canada, AsiaPac, the Middle East, UK, Central Europe and Latin America.
- The Team Ireland overseas network supported an extensive programme of international trade Mission and events last year in support of the market intensification and diversification targets in the new trade strategy. Enterprise Ireland organised 70

Ministerial-led international trade events in 2018 to 33 different markets including trade missions to the USA, China, Brazil and Switzerland. Over 200 international trade events are planned in 2019.

- During 2018, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine worked closely with Bord Bia and embassies to develop a programme for trade missions to the USA, Canada, China, Indonesia and Malaysia. Already in 2019 a similar such trade mission to Turkey occurred with others to China, Japan, South Korea, Egypt and Algeria also being planned for 2019.
- In 2018 the IDA organised 16 Ministerial-led marketing visits across the US and Asia.
- Tourism Ireland undertook an extensive programme of Sales Missions and Ministerial visits to markets including Britain, Germany, the US, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Australia/New Zealand, Qatar and the UAE. Further Sales Missions and Ministerial visits are planned for 2019.
- The Team Ireland overseas network supported Ministerial visits to some 56 countries over the Saint Patrick's Day period in 2019 to promote Ireland and Irish businesses.
- A cross-sectoral, whole-of-Government Strategy for the US and Canada was approved by Government in January 2019, and launched in both Washington DC and Toronto. The Strategy sets out the roadmap and milestones in relation to how Ireland will structure and focus its strategic engagement in the US and Canada in the period to 2025. Separate complimentary Strategies for Asia-Pacific and Latin America & the Caribbean are currently being finalised.
- In June 2018 the Government launched Global Ireland, Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025, an ambitious plan to double Ireland's scope and impact by 2025. A key focus of the initiative is expanding and deepening our diplomatic presence overseas.
- In August 2018 the Embassy of Ireland in New Zealand officially opened followed by Ireland's new Consulate General in Vancouver, Western Canada in October 2018. The Irish Aid Development office in Liberia was also upgraded to an Embassy. Embassies in Colombia, Jordan and Chile are all now open, as are the Consulates in Mumbai and Cardiff.
- This will be followed by Consulates General in Los Angeles and Frankfurt later in the year, and Embassies in Ukraine, the Philippines and Morocco shortly thereafter. These openings will expand Ireland's diplomatic and consular network to 93 and will play a vital role in attracting more investment to Ireland; boosting tourism and trade; building stronger links with our diaspora and increasing cultural exchange.
- The expansion of the Online Passport Service means that more than 50% of all passport applicants are now eligible to apply online.

Conflict Resolution

- In 2019, Ireland made a further pledge of €25m in humanitarian aid to the Syrian crisis, bringing our total commitment since 2012 to €143m.
- Ireland remains committed to

promoting accountability for atrocities committed in Syria, including through our contributions totalling €300,000 to the UN's International Impartial and Independent Mechanism.

- The Tánaiste visited Israel and Palestine in January and June 2018, and hosted a Palestinian delegation led by President Abbas in Dublin in September 2018. These visits provided opportunities to raise Ireland's concerns about the impact of the continuing occupation with both parties, and to discuss prospects for a comprehensive peace agreement.
- The Tánaiste hosted a meeting of EU and Arab Foreign Ministers in Dublin in February 2019 to discuss the Middle East Peace Process
- Additional funding of €2m to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East as been announced.
- At the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018, Ireland put forward a resolution on a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East which was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 156 UN states.
- Following from Ireland's leading role in the negotiation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we will continue to promote nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, including the gendered impact of nuclear weapons and detrimental effect that a nuclear weapons detonation would have on achieving Agenda 2030. We aim to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2019.

Implementing the White Paper on Defence (Defence)

- Implementation of a total of 95 separate projects arising from the White Paper are being carried out on a phased basis. 42 projects have already been initiated and, of these, 11 have been fully completed and closed, with a number of others close to completion. Further projects are to be initiated this year.
- Projects which have been completed include the development of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in the Defence Forces, the development of further initiatives to encourage more women to apply for the Defence Forces and the development of a policy on intellectual property rights and endorsement.
- Projects due to be completed shortly include the procurement of Armoured Logistic Vehicles for overseas missions and the development of an Service Level Agreement with Irish Aid relating to participation by members of the Defence Forces in the Emergency Civil Assistance Team (ECAT) initiative.
- Progress with White Paper implementation is being reviewed as part of the White Paper Update which is currently underway and which is the first iteration of a three-yearly cycle of defence reviews, as provided for in the White Paper.

Defence

- The mid-life refit of the Army's armoured personnel carrier fleet is progressing. Ten armoured logistic vehicles have also been procured to increase force protection of personnel overseas and three new fixed wing utility aircraft are currently under construction and delivery will commence later this year.
- A fourth new Offshore Patrol Vessel for the Naval Service was delivered in 2018 and has been named and commissioned as LÉ George Bernard Shaw. A tender competition is underway for replacement Maritime Patrol Aircraft for the Air Corps.
- Implementation of a total of 95 separate projects arising from the White Paper on Defence is being carried out on a phased basis. To date, 42 projects have been initiated and, of these, 11 have been fully completed and closed including the development of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in the Defence Forces, the development of further initiatives to encourage more women to apply for the Defence Forces and the development of a policy on intellectual property rights and endorsement.
- A new General Service 'ongoing recruitment' model has commenced. As of end January 2019, the WTE strength of the Permanent Defence Force stood at 8,921. As of end January 2019, the effective strength of the Army Reserve and the Naval Service Reserve was 1,791 while the First Line Reserve stood at 288 personnel.
- As of the end of 2018, the number of female personnel in the Permanent Defence Forces stood at 601, 6.7% of serving personnel. A total of 32 female General Service Recruits and 10 female Cadets were inducted in 2018, representing 6.5% of the General Service intake and 13.51% of Cadet Inductions.
- The Government is providing a substantially increased annual grant of €100,000 to the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel, while a further €11,000 is paid annually to the Irish UN Veterans Association.
- As of end of December 2018, over 1,300 applications were received for the most recent RDF General Service Recruitment campaign.
- The interagency guidance team established to support and develop Civil Defence has now met on five occasions.
- An interim feasibility report on the development of a new Institute for Peace Support and Leadership Training in the Curragh was completed in October 2018, with a final report expected to be completed in Q2 2019. The study will inform next steps.
- Work continues in 2019 on two enterprise projects which aim to create the optimal environment to encourage partnerships between the Defence Forces and industry/research institutes. This follows formal approval in October 2018 of a Policy on Intellectual Property in the area of Research, Development and Innovation for the Defence Organisation.
- Ireland has been represented at the EU Working Party on the external aspects of countering terrorism (CT), thereby

contributing to vital discussions on EU CT initiatives. We continue to be guided by the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and have actively supported the work of the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

- Taoiseach and Tánaiste formally launched Ireland’s campaign bid for a seat on the Security Council in New York on 2 July 2018.

International Development

- Programming to NGOs will now be in line with the Government’s New Policy A Better World. Over €10m has been announced for 24 NGOs to carry out development projects overseas. This includes over €8m in grants to Irish NGOs.
- Ireland has renewed our commitment to ending the global epidemics of AIDS, TB and Malaria through our partnership with the Global Fund by increasing our current annual contribution to the Fund by 50%. Ireland currently contributes €30m to the Global Fund for the period 2017-2019.
- Ireland’s overall development and humanitarian funding to Palestine reached €15.38m in 2018, the highest level ever. The Ireland-Palestine Scholarship Programme was launched in February 2019 offering over twenty full scholarships this year to Palestinian students to study in Ireland.
- In 2018, Ireland provided \$16.7m funding for six Irish humanitarian NGOs under our Humanitarian Partnership Programme. This allowed these NGOs to give humanitarian assistance to an estimated 1.5m people in crises. NGOs were invited to compete for a

further three-year humanitarian funding scheme covering 2019-21.

Overseas Development Aid

In February 2019, the Government launched its new policy for international development, A Better World. This new policy represents a significant milestone both in terms of Ireland’s international development policy and our foreign policy as a whole. It updates our traditional focus on ‘the poorest of the poor’ to realise the pledge of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reach ‘the furthest behind first’. It provides the framework for Ireland’s expanding development programme, in line with our commitment to reach the UN target of allocating 0.7% of our GNI to official development assistance by 2030.

A Better World outlines Ireland’s vision of a more equal, peaceful and sustainable world. It charts a clear way forward to achieve this vision. It commits us to focusing on four key policy priorities: Gender Equality; Reducing Humanitarian Need; Climate Action; and Strengthening Governance. The policy also identifies three clusters of interventions where we will intensify our work – on Protection, Food and People.

- On 28 February 2019, the Government launched its new policy for international development, A Better World. It provides the framework for Ireland’s expanding development programme, in line with our commitment to reach the

UN target of allocating 0.7% of our GNI to official development assistance by 2030.

- In April 2018, Ireland published its whole-of-government strategy for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In June 2018 a National SDG Stakeholder Forum was established offering a unique opportunity for policy makers, civil society, business and other interested parties to come together to share experiences and information on SDG related activities taking part at a national and international level. In July 2018 Ireland presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on its implementation of the SDGs to the UN at the HLPF. In January 2019 expressions of interest were sought from organisations to take part in Ireland's first SDG Champions Programme.

artistic figures as Cultural Ambassadors have been made to assist in the promotion of Ireland under Global Ireland 2025.

Arts and Culture

- Hurling has been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. As such, hurling has been recognised as a key element of Ireland's living heritage to be safeguarded for future generations.
- Funding of €766,000 was made available for the promotion of Irish arts worldwide enabling 115 Irish artists and arts organisations to present projects in 38 different countries in 2018 and 2019.
- Funding of €4.6m has been allocated to Culture Ireland for the promotion of Irish arts globally in 2019. Five appointments of globally recognised



Making a Partnership in Democracy Work (including Political and Constitutional Reform)

Making a Partnership in Democracy Work (including Political and Constitutional Reform)

The cross-party Dáil Business Committee, chaired by the Ceann Comhairle, continues to meet weekly to plan and agree Dáil business and the weekly schedule. The proportion of Private Members' legislation in the Oireachtas has increased significantly in the 32nd Dáil. Against this background, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government and Dáil Éireann was developed on Private Members Bills. The amendments to Dáil Standing Orders to implement the MoU were agreed in December 2018 and came into effect in January 2019.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2018, which was signed into law by the President in December 2018, established the new Parliamentary Budget Office and Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisers on a legal footing.

Since May 2018, the Government has passed 48 Acts and published 46 Bills.

In May 2018, arising from the work of the Citizens' Assembly and the Oireachtas Committee on the 8th Amendment to the Constitution, a referendum on repealing the 8th Amendment took place. In October 2018, a Presidential election was held and, on the same day, a referendum saw a change in the Constitution in relation to blasphemy. Local and EU elections and a referendum on divorce are scheduled for 24th May 2019. On the same day, the people of Cork City; Limerick City and County; and Waterford City and County will have an opportunity to vote in a plebiscite on a proposed directly elected mayor with executive functions. A referendum to extend the franchise at presidential elections to Irish citizens resident outside the State is also planned to take place in October 2019.

Our Public Service 2020 - the new framework for innovation and development in the public service - became operational during 2018. As well as innovation and working collaboratively across the whole of Government, Our Public Service 2020 emphasises the importance of digital delivery and using data to achieve greater efficiency. It has a strong focus on organisations and people, as well as on achieving outcomes and real change.

A comprehensive review of all of the actions in the Civil Service Renewal Plan was completed during 2018 in order to inform the future direction of civil service reform policy and the work currently underway on a new plan, to cover the period 2019-2021. As part of the overall effort to enhance capability and performance across the Civil Service, specific progress was made during 2018 on mobility, including the launch of Phase 1A, for Executive and Clerical Officers. In Quarter 4 2018, four Departments piloted the new OneLearning Learning Management System - a single gateway enabling all staff on Human Resource Management System to access all learning and development provisions and opportunities.

Under the Public Service Pay and Stability Agreement 2018-2020 (PSSA), €1.1bn has been committed out to 2021 and represents a significant investment in public service pay.

By end 2018 the average representation of women on State Boards had increased to 41.5%.

Oireachtas Reforms

- Since May 2018, this Government has passed 48 Acts and published 46 Bills.
- Debates on Government Bills are not guillotined in this Dáil unless with the agreement of the Oireachtas Business Committee and the support of the Dáil. An example is the Brexit-sensitive Sea Fisheries Amendment legislation.
- As part of Dáil reform, Memorandum of Understanding on Private Members' Legislation (drawn up and agreed) and Government decision (including reasons) are now provided to proposer of legislation within specified timeframe.
- The Judicial Appointments Commission Bill, published in 2017, provides for the replacement of the existing Judicial Appointments Advisory Board with a new Judicial Appointments Commission. The Bill was passed by Dáil Éireann in 2018 and has commenced its passage through the Seanad.
- The increased time provided for Private Members Business has resulted in over 341 Private Members Bills being published in the Dáil and Seanad since May 2016. Nine of these have since been enacted including the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 and the Intoxicating Liquor (Amendment) Act 2018.
- The Government established the All Party Seanad Reform Implementation Group [SRIG] in April 2018 to bring forward a Report and draft Bill to implement the Manning Report. SRIG, under the Chairmanship of Senator Michael McDowell, published a Report and draft Bill in December 2018. The

Government is due to consider the Report shortly.

- Report stages of legislation are now scheduled so as to facilitate wider engagement and promote a better management of competing duties and responsibilities.
- Oireachtas Committee Reports are now discussed in the Dáil and Seanad on a regular basis. Dáil time is provided for debate and scrutiny of Oireachtas Committee Reports every second Thursday.
- Arising out of the Brexit legislation preparations, consultation with spokespersons and other interested members has been enhanced.
- Confidence and Supply arrangements have been extended with continued consultation with relevant opposition parties and/or members

Reforming the Budgetary Process

- An Oireachtas Budget Oversight Committee was established in 2016. A Parliamentary Budget Office was subsequently set up in 2017.
- The Summer Economic Statement, the Mid-Year Expenditure Report, and the circulation of Tax Strategy Group Papers are now a regular part of the pre-Budget cycle.
- The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2018 established on a legal footing the establishment of a new Parliamentary Investigations Unit and an independent office to assist members and Committees on budgetary matters to strengthen the independent

legal advice it provides to Oireachtas Members.

- Following the success of the pilot Equality Budgeting initiative outlined in Budget 2018, it is being expanded in 2019 to further develop the gender budgeting elements, and to broaden its scope to other dimensions of equality including poverty, socioeconomic inequality and disability. Nine Departments are now engaged on the Equality Budgeting initiative and work is ongoing to expand this to all Departments, agencies and public bodies.

Civil and Public Service Reform

- The conclusion on each of the five topics considered by the Citizens' Assembly formed the basis of a number of reports and recommendations which were submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas for further debate by elected representatives.
- The report and recommendations on the *Eighth Amendment* was considered by a joint committee of politicians from both Houses of the Oireachtas, who in turn also recommended a referendum to remove the Eight Amendment from the Constitution. This referendum took place on 25 May 2018 and passed by a majority of 66.4%.
- The Reports and recommendations on *how we best respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population and how the State can make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change* were submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas on 8th December 2017 and 18 April 2018 respectively. The final report on *the manner in which referenda*

are held and fixed term parliaments was published on 22 June 2018.

- A public consultation on a Regulatory Impact Analysis for the Establishment of an Electoral Commission was launched on 28 December 2018 and closed on 15 March 2019.
- As part of the next wave of Local Government reform, measures in relation to Cork, identified in the Local Authority Boundaries paper have been given effect. The administrative boundary between Cork city and Cork County will be altered in May 2019 following the local elections.
- Plebiscites will be held on May 24th 2019 on directly elected mayors with executive functions in Cork City Council, Limerick City and County Council, Waterford City and County Council at the same time as the Local Government and European Elections.
- On 8 March, 2019, the Government approved a range of measures to promote increased participation by women in the upcoming local elections and greater gender equality on local councils.
- The Regional Action Plan for Jobs Implementation Committees began in April 2018 to refresh and refocus all Regional Plans to ensure their relevance and impact out to 2020, so that they continue to deliver jobs across the country, in every region, and can be robust to address the challenges we face, including Brexit. The result of the refresh and refocus are the nine new Regional Enterprise Plans to 2020.

- On 26 October 2018, the Referendum was held with the majority of people voting to change the Constitution of Ireland in relation to the issue of blasphemy. On the 24th of May 2019 there will be referendum on the Thirty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Divorce) Bill 2016.
- The Spending Review 2017 to 2019 has improved the quality and coverage of evaluation reviews across the public service. Supported by the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service the Evaluation Review process systematically examines existing spending programmes. To date, the process has led to over 50 published reports across areas of expenditure including health, education, housing and social protection.
- A dramatic rise in the number of FOI requests to almost 34,000 occurred in 2017 seeing a 67% increase over 2016. The low proportion of cases in which requesters chose to seek a review of decisions would suggest that the legislation is working to a satisfactory level in terms of requests.
- The terms of the Lansdowne Road Agreement 2016-2018 were fully implemented. The Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 is now in place.
- In 2018 the Public Service Pay Commission focused on recruitment and retention issues in respect of Nurses, Midwives Non Consultant Hospital Doctors and Consultants. A report on this module was published in September 2018. The remaining areas identified as potentially having recruitment and retention difficulties will be reported on in 2019. These include the defence sector, Dentists, Allied Health Professionals and Senior Executive and specialist roles in the civil and public service.
- Approximately €1.1bn has been committed to under the Public Service Stability Agreement to fully unwind the emergency legislation and this now has a legislative basis in the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017.
- From 1 January 2019 the Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR) exemption threshold increased to €39,000 for those pre-March 2012 public service pensioners while the rates for post February 2012 public service pensioners who already benefit from an exemption threshold of €60,000 decreased from 5% on income between €60,000 and €100,000 to 3%.
- The cost increase in 2019 arising from this PSPR amelioration under the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017 is estimated at €24m.
- The Government works closely with the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court monitoring the staffing and budgetary requirements of both bodies. Additional funding has been provided in 2019 to enable the bodies deal with anticipated increased workload arising from An Garda Síochána gaining access to the bodies and to facilitate an improved delivery of the full range of WRC services to regional locations.
- Since the introduction of the new guidelines on appointments to state boards the Public Appointments Service has, following competitive

processes, sent forward 2,613 names for Ministerial consideration, of which almost 800 were appointed to State Boards.

- In 2018, 51% of the 205 individuals appointed to State Boards through the PAS application and assessment process were female.
- The Public Service Leadership Board (PSLB), made up of representative Secretaries General of Government Departments and CEO/equivalent of public service organisations, which provides collective leadership for Our Public Service 2020 (OPS2020) met on four occasions during 2018. Six of the 18 priority actions within OPS2020 were identified as priorities by the PSLB got underway during 2018.
 - » Increased customer satisfaction
 - » Increased public trust
 - » Greater use of digital to do business with the public service
 - » Better government effectiveness
 - » Quality of certain public services
 - » Greater employee engagement
- As part of the overall effort to enhance capability and performance across the Civil Service, specific progress was made during 2018 on mobility, including the launch of Phase 1A, for Executive and Clerical Officers.
- In Quarter 4 2018, four Departments piloted the new OneLearning Learning Management System - a single gateway enabling all staff on Human Resource Management System to access all learning and development provisions and opportunities.
- The Civil Service Management Board (CSMB) met eight times in 2018 to oversee the delivery of the Civil Service Renewal programme and its minutes are published on the website of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.
- The 2018 Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards process attracted 70 nominations from across the Civil Service and 30 projects were shortlisted, with 11 award-winning projects.
- The results of the Civil Service Business Customer Survey undertaken in 2018 indicated inter alia that: 78% of respondents were satisfied with the service they received; 82% were satisfied with the outcome of their last interaction; and 91% found the experience of their last interaction to be as expected.
- Work continued in 2018 on the development of actions to support gender balance at the senior levels of the Civil Service.

Appendix 1

Bills enacted since Government came to office on 6th May 2016

Electoral (Amendment) Act 2016	25/07/2016
Health (Amendment) Act 2016	26/07/2016
Water Services (Amendment) Act 2016	26/07/2016
Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act 2016	27/07/2016
Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Act 2016	27/07/2016
Commission of Investigation (Irish Bank Resolution Corporation) Act 2016	27/07/2016
Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016	27/07/2016
Energy Act 2016	30/07/2016
Finance (Certain European Union and Intergovernmental Obligations) Act 2016	26/10/2016
National Tourism Development Authority (Amendment) Act 2016	16/11/2016
Social Welfare Act 2016	19/12/2016
Appropriation Act 2016	20/12/2016
Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016	23/12/2016
Finance Act 2016	25/12/2016
Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2016	26/12/2016
Statute Law Revision Act 2016	26/12/2016
Road Traffic Act 2016	27/12/2016
Courts Act 2016	28/12/2016
Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2017	16/02/2017
Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017	22/02/2017
Communications Regulation (Postal Services) (Amendment) Act 2017	15/03/2017

Criminal Justice (Suspended Sentences of Imprisonment) Act 2017	15/03/2017
Health (Amendment) Act 2017	31/03/2017
Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Act 2017	12/04/2017
Misuse of Drugs (Supervised Injecting Facilities) Act 2017	16/05/2017
Courts Act 2017	17/05/2017
Companies (Accounting) Act 2017	17/05/2017
Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Act 2017	23/05/2017
Criminal Justice (Offences Relating to Information Systems) Act 2017	24/05/2017
Competition (Amendment) Act 2017	07/06/2017
Companies (Amendment) Act 2017	07/06/2017
Criminal Justice Act 2017	28/06/2017
Petroleum and Other Minerals Development (Prohibition of Onshore Hydraulic Fracturing) Act 2017	06/07/2017
Inland Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2017	06/07/2017
Rugby World Cup 2023 Act 2017	13/07/2017
Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 2017	19/07/2017
Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017	19/07/2017
Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2017	19/07/2017
Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland (Amendment) Act 2017	25/07/2017
Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Act 2017	26/07/2017
Minerals Development Act 2017	26/07/2017
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Act 2017	26/07/2017

Independent Reporting Commission Act 2017	26/07/2017
National Shared Services Office Act 2017	26/07/2017
Mediation Act 2017	02/10/2017
Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017	07/11/2017
Water Services Act 2017	17/11/2017
Civil Liability (Amendment) Act 2017	22/11/2017
Legal Metrology (Measuring Instruments) Act 2017	28/11/2017
Health and Social Care Professionals (Amendment) Act 2017	09/12/2017
Diplomatic Relations (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2017	13/12/2017
Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017	16/12/2017
Appropriation Act 2017	18/12/2017
Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Hague Convention) Act 2017	21/12/2017
Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2017	21/12/2017
Social Welfare Act 2017	23/12/2017
Electoral (Amendment) (Dáil Constituencies) Act 2017	23/12/2017
Irish Sign Language Act 2017	24/12/2017
Finance Act 2017	25/12/2017
Intoxicating Liquor (Amendment) Act 2018	31/01/2018
Public Service Superannuation (Amendment) Act 2018	28/02/2018
Technological Universities Act 2018	19/03/2018
Telecommunications Services (Ducting and Cables) Act 2018	04/04/2018
Vehicle Registration Data (Automated Searching and Exchange) Act 2018	25/04/2018

Domestic Violence Act 2017	08/05/2018
Data Protection Act 2018	24/05/2018
Radiological Protection (Amendment) Act 2018	05/06/2018
Criminal Justice (Corruption Offences) Act 2018	05/06/2018
Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2018	02/07/2018
Childcare Support Act 2018	02/07/2018
National Archives (Amendment) Act 2018	14/07/2018
Health (General Practitioner Service) Act 2018	17/07/2018
Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018	18/07/2018
Heritage Act 2018	18/07/2018
Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018	19/07/2018
Intoxicating Liquor (Breweries and Distillers) Act 2018	22/07/2018
Road Traffic (Amendment) Act 2018	23/07/2018
Industrial Development (Amendment) Act 2018	23/07/2018
Children and Family Relationships Act 2018	24/07/2018
Insurance (Amendment) Act 2018	24/07/2018
Companies (Statutory Audits) Act 2018	25/07/2018
Thirty Sixth Amendment of the Constitution Act 2018	18/09/2018
Mental Health (Renewal Orders) Act 2018	03/10/2018
Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018	17/10/2018
Markets in Financial Instruments Act 2018	29/10/2018
Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (Amendment) Act 2018	14/11/2018

Children's Health Act 2018	20/11/2018
Thirty-Seventh Amendment of the Constitution (Repeal of offence of publication or utterance of blasphemous matter) Act 2018	27/11/2018
Home Building Finance Ireland Act 2018	03/12/2018
Fossil Fuel Divestment Act 2018	17/12/2018
Finance Act 2018	19/12/2018
Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018	20/12/2018
European Investment Fund Agreement Act 2018	20/12/2018
Appropriation Act 2018	20/12/2018
Irish Film Board (Amendment) Act 2018	24/12/2018
Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2018	24/12/2018
Consumer Protection (Regulation of Credit Servicing Firms) Act 2018	24/12/2018
Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Act 2018	24/12/2018
Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018	25/12/2018
Public Service Superannuation (Age of Retirement) Act 2018	26/12/2018
Finance (African Development (Bank and Fund) and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018	26/12/2018
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2018	27/12/2018
Central Bank (National Claims Information Database) Act 2018	27/12/2018
Local Government Act 2019	25/01/2019
Hallmarking (Amendment) Act 2019	14/02/2019
Personal Injuries Assessment Board (Amendment) Act 2019	25/02/2019
Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2019	26/02/2019

Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019	04/03/2019
Criminal Law (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) Act 2019	05/03/2019
European Parliament Elections (Amendment) Act 2019	12/03/2019
Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2019	17/03/2019
Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2019	04/04/2019
Companies (Amendment) Act 2019	11/04/2019

Appendix 2

Bills Published since May 2018

Data Sharing and Governance Bill 2018 [Seanad]	12/06/2018
Home Building Finance Ireland Bill 2018	18/06/2018
Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2018	19/06/2018
Health (General Practitioner Service) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	29/06/2018
Public Service Superannuation (Age of Retirement) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	09/07/2018
Children and Family Relationships (Amendment) Bill 2018	09/07/2018
Central Bank (National Claims Information Database) Bill 2018	12/07/2018
Children's Health Bill 2018 [Seanad]	12/07/2018
Thirty-seventh Amendment of the Constitution (Repeal of offence of publication or utterance of blasphemous matter) Bill 2018	17/07/2018
Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill 2018	20/07/2018
Health Service Executive (Governance) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	25/07/2018
Local Government Bill 2018	27/07/2018
Criminal Justice (Mutual Recognition of Probation Judgments and Decisions) Bill 2018	27/07/2018
Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2018	27/07/2018
Coroners (Amendment) Bill 2018	02/08/2018
Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Bill 2018	03/08/2018
Local Government (Rates) Bill 2018	09/08/2018
Personal Injuries Assessment Board (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2018	10/08/2018
Mental Health (Renewal Orders) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	12/09/2018
African Development (Bank and Fund) Bill 2018	27/09/2018
Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Bill 2018	01/10/2018
Health and Social Care Professionals (Amendment) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	01/10/2018

Greyhound Racing Bill 2018 [Seanad]	12/10/2018
Finance Bill 2018	18/10/2018
National Surplus (Reserve Fund for Exceptional Contingencies) Bill 2018	26/10/2018
Irish Film Board (Amendment) Bill 2018	08/11/2018
Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Bill 2018	12/11/2018
Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	14/11/2018
European Investment Fund Agreement Bill 2018 [Seanad]	16/11/2018
Criminal Law (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	26/11/2018
Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Bill 2018	28/11/2018
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Bill 2018	12/12/2018
Appropriation Bill 2018	12/12/2018
Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2018	21/12/2018
Consumer Protection (Gift Vouchers) Bill 2018 [Seanad]	21/12/2018
Companies (Amendment) Bill 2019 [Seanad]	09/01/2019
European Parliament Elections (Amendment) Bill 2019	04/02/2019
Credit Union Restructuring Board (Dissolution) Bill 2019	06/02/2019
Civil Registration Bill 2019	15/02/2019
Regulated Professions (Health and Social Care) (Amendment) Bill 2019	19/02/2019
Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Bill 2019	22/02/2019
Retention of Records Bill 2019	28/02/2019
Land and Conveyancing Law Reform (Amendment) Bill 2019 [Seanad]	04/03/2019
Courts (Establishment and Constitution) (Amendment) Bill 2019	28/03/2019
Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Bill 2019 [Seanad]	29/03/2019
Gender Pay Gap Bill 2019	08/04/2019

Appendix 3

Abbreviations

AEC – Atlantic Economic Corridor
AHB – Approved Housing Body
AIM – Access and Inclusion Model
BEEP – Beef Environmental Efficiency Pilot
BPS – Basic Payment Scheme
CAB – Criminal Assets Bureau
CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCMA – Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears
CE – Community Employment
CFC – Controlled Foreign Company
CoFPI – Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland
DEIS Schools – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education
EI – Enterprise Ireland
EPA – European Partnership Agreement
ESS – Electricity Support Service
EVs – Electric vehicles
FDI – Foreign Direct Investment
FRMP – Flood Risk Management Plan
GAAR – General Anti-Abuse Rule
GMS – General Medical Services (GMS) Scheme
HAP – Housing Assistance Payment
HBFI – Home Building Finance Ireland
HDSG – Housing and Disability Steering Groups
HEA – Higher Education Authority
HIPS – Housing Incremental Purchase Scheme
HIS – Horse Support Ireland
IDA – Industrial Development Authority
IPS – Individual Placement and Support
ISIF – Irish Strategic Investment Fund
KEEP – Key Employment Engagement Programme
LA – Local Authority
LDA – Local Development Agency
LIHAF – Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund
LINC – Leadership for inclusion in Early Years
LEV – Low emission vehicle
NACOS – National Advisory Council for Online Safety
NAMA – National Asset Management Agency
NHSPWD – National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability
NPF – National Planning Framework
NSP – National Service Plan
OPS2020 – Our Public Service 2020
PAS – Public Appointments Service
PDF – Permanent Defence Force

PIAB – Personal Injuries Assessment Board
PSLB – Public Service Leadership Board
PSPC – Public Service Pay Commission
PSPR – Public Service Pension Reform
RAPID – Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development
RAS – Rental Accommodation Scheme
RDP – Rural Development Programme
RESS – Renewable Electricity Support Scheme
RLS – Repair and Lease Scheme
RSES – Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
RTB – Residential Tenancies Board
SBCI – Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland
SEAI – Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SFI – Science Foundation Ireland
SICAP – Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SME – Small to Medium Enterprises
SNAs – Special Needs Assistant
SRIG – Seanad Reform Implementation Group
SSRH – Support Scheme Renewable Heat
TAMS II – The Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes
TEN-T – Trans European Transport Network
WRC – Workplace Relations
WTE – Whole time Equivalent
YESS – Youth Employment Support Scheme

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Government of Ireland