**Disability Federation of Ireland | Budget 2016**

 **Summary of Key Measures of Budget 2016**

**Income Support**

* Restoration of Respite Care Grant to €1700.
* Supports for water services to include €25 a quarter for people with disabilities and carers.
* €3 increase per week for pensioners and carers aged 66 and over.
* €2 increase for qualified adults aged under 66 years and an increase of €2.70 for qualified adults aged 66 years or over.
* €3 million additional funding to fund Free Travel scheme, increasing the funding to €80 million in 2016.
* Carer’s Allowance to be paid for 12 weeks (currently 6 weeks) from January, after the death of the person being cared for.
* €2.50 weekly increase in Fuel Allowance
* New Paternity Benefit to be launched in 2016.
* Family Income Supplement threshold to increase by €5 per week for each of the first two children.
* Christmas bonus of 75% of payment (not less than €20) to be paid to those on all social welfare payments, including Disability Allowance, Carers Allowance and Domiciliary Care Allowance.
* Child benefit to be increased by €5 a month from January.

**Employment Supports**

* Addition of €2.50 per week to top-up payments for Community Employment, Rural Social Scheme, Gateway, Tus, and JobBridge programmes.

**Health**

* Just €280m in new money goes forward to next year’s health budget, a mere 2% raise on 2015.
* €8 million for expansion of therapeutic services for children, particularly speech and language
* Funding for the National Maternity Strategy.
* No decrease in prescription charges or hospital fees.
* €35m in funding to mental health and suicide prevention.
* Free GP services to under 12’s.
* €66m extra allocated to Fair Deal.

**Housing**

* Increase of €69 million to social housing budget, bringing it to €414 million.
* €135 Million provision for Community and Rural Development in 2016.
* Total funding of over €180 million for the capital provision for local authority housing will deliver more than 1,000 new units through a programme of construction and acquisitions.
* The provision of only €76 million for CAS in an attempt to meet the housing needs of vulnerable groups with some 450 units to be provided for people with specific needs in 2016.

**Children and Education**

* Budget of €8.5 billion allocated to education this year.
* €15 million in 2016 to support children with special needs to access early childhood care and education.
* 2,260 new teaching posts and 600 new resource teachers on the way
* Pupil teacher ratios to decrease: from 28:1 to 27:1 for primary classes, and 19:1 to 18.7:1 for secondary.

**Taxation**

* Changes to the levels of Universal Social Charge, with a new entry point of €13,000 introduced.
* Home Carer Tax Credit will be increased by €190 to €1,000.