

Disability Federation of Ireland | Budget 2016

Summary of Key Measures of Budget 2016

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.

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.

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.