

**WHAT WOULD
IT TAKE TO
ELIMINATE
CONSISTENT
POVERTY
BY
2030?**



COMMUNITY PLATFORM
CHALLENGING POVERTY & INEQUALITY

SEPTEMBER 2024

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Overview

Ireland has been both a leader and a laggard in addressing poverty. The state led in the past by setting quantitative targets to reduce poverty, but the state has also narrowed its definition of poverty and repeatedly failed to achieve its own targets.

Currently, Ireland has a national target to reduce 'consistent poverty' to 2% or less by 2025 (down from 5.6% in 2018), with a particular focus on reducing the number of children in consistent poverty. Consistent poverty in 2023 was 3.6% , including 4.8% of all children (aged 0-17).¹

The Community Platform has consistently called for all national budget measures to be assessed to ensure that they reduce poverty, and the eradication of poverty is one of the Platform's four priorities in its *Manifesto for Local, European and General Elections* in the period 2024-2025.² The Community Platform is sceptical of the government's current target and approach to reducing poverty:

- The 2025 target of 2% is unlikely to be achieved. The state failed to meet its targets in 2012, 2016 and 2020, and there hasn't been fundamental change in its approach.
- Consistent poverty rates over the last 20 years are tied to the economic cycle and economic shocks (such as inflation), as the government has failed to address structural issues that keep people in poverty for whom good jobs are not available or are not a viable option.
- Consistent poverty—including consistent poverty among children—cannot be addressed in isolation from wider trends in poverty, deprivation and social exclusion.
- There is no credible implementation plan to address the circumstances of those who experience consistent poverty.
- The official target does not go far enough. Why not aim for zero, as was stated national policy in 2002 and 2007? Seeking to eliminate consistent poverty by 2030 would say that we want Ireland to be a country that does not leave anyone behind.

The three objectives for this paper are to:

Identify what types of household are more commonly in consistent poverty.

Identify the root causes and structural reasons for consistent poverty for different household types.

Identify potential solutions that would reduce if not eliminate consistent poverty for different household types.

3.6%

Consistent poverty in 2023

4.8%

this included 4.8% of all children (aged 0-17)

This paper is designed to provoke thought about Ireland's relative success or failure in setting targets to reduce poverty, and to promote public debate about alternative ways to move forward.

Reference is made to some of the proposals from each member of the Community Platform, which shows how reducing poverty is a central concern across a diverse range of organisations.

¹ Note that Census 2022 led to SILC 2022 figures being adjusted to match population profile as part of the publication of SILC 2023. Table 5.1, <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/poverty/>

² See <https://communityplatform.ie/>

Recommendations

The Community Platform's *Manifesto for Local, European and General Elections* asks parties to commit to the eradication of poverty:

Develop and implement an all of Government anti-poverty strategy based on the target of eliminating consistent poverty by 2030 with a range of policy and administrative measures adequate to ensure this target is achieved.

Achieving the goal of eliminating consistent poverty will involve a high level of political commitment and policy measures that are adequate to meeting this challenge, including:

- Income adequacy for everyone, in or out of work, and in retirement.
- Access to quality, affordable and sustainable public services for all irrespective of income level, including public housing, education, transport, utilities, care and health, including the full implementation of Sláintecare.
- Access to a quality job, which provides a decent income, for those who can work.
- Effective and transparent ex-ante poverty and equality impact assessment.
- Effective and proactive measures to prevent all forms of discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights.

Six key recommendations from this report are:

- 1** Commit to the eradication of consistent poverty by 2030.
- 2** Develop and implement an anti-poverty strategy, along the lines proposed by the Community Platform.
- 3** Acknowledge and address the structural reasons why some people are more likely to be in poverty, including gender, age (including being a child), being a lone parent, domestic abuse, disability, Deaf/Irish Sign Language users, educational disadvantage, living in a disadvantaged area, housing tenure, long-term unemployment, living alone, ethnicity (including being a Traveller or Roma), being an immigrant, and living in adverse circumstances such as homelessness or a mental health crisis.
- 4** Ensure there is a route out of poverty for those who are unable to secure an adequate income from work, or who are unable to work due to disability, parenting, unpaid caring, discrimination or simply the lack of opportunities where they live.
- 5** Lower wealth inequality, such as through progressive wealth taxation and greater investment in public housing.
- 6** Better coordinate and target income supports and public services to reduce the incidence of material deprivation.

Lived Experience

Consistent poverty cannot be fully understood from just the available survey statistics. That is why this report also includes quotations from people who experience poverty in their daily lives, and from people who work directly with them.

Quotations have been sourced from ATD Ireland, especially from their recent report, *Breaking Barriers: A Participatory Approach to Defining Socio-Economic Discrimination in Real Terms*,³ and from Age Action's recent report, *Spotlight on Income in Older Age*.⁴

“ *People with direct experience of poverty should be recognised as experts on poverty and should be included in any societal debate. This participation is essential, but it takes time and effort to build up the confidence to speak out.*”
Breaking Barriers

What is Consistent Poverty?

Consistent poverty means that a household's income is less than 60% of the median income and the household also experiences deprivation (meaning that they cannot afford two or more out of 11 necessities).⁵ Consistent poverty implies that there is a permanent gap between some people's incomes and the cost of meeting their needs, with many of them consistently going without basics like home heating, warm clothing or food.

The latest statistics from the annual Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) show that the consistent poverty rate was 3.6% in 2023, and the rate was 4.8% for children (aged 0-17).⁶ This means that 185,385 people were living in consistent poverty, including 57,840 children.⁷

Consistent poverty has a deeply negative impact not only on those directly affected, but on whole communities and wider society. Poverty represents a loss of human potential and negative consequences caused by poverty can divert resources into short-term fixes and problem management, rather than long-term solutions that involve structural change towards a more flourishing, inclusive society.

Looking in depth at consistent poverty in this report is not to say that this is the only form of poverty or that eliminating consistent poverty is a sufficient national goal. However, there are three reasons to focus on consistent poverty in detail, alongside other work on poverty:

“ *There's a massive stigma around the concept of poverty because we still operate in a very charitable way when we talk about poverty, the deserving and the undeserving poor.*”
Breaking Barriers

1. It uses the government's official measurement of poverty, and it lets us scrutinise the credibility of the government's pledge to reduce consistent poverty and the impact of recent initiatives such as the new Child Poverty and Wellbeing Programme Office in the Department of the Taoiseach.
2. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a focus on those who are furthest behind, so it makes sense in this context to seek solutions for people living in consistent poverty.
3. Looking at the causes of consistent poverty allows us to see why consistent poverty persists and why some households are more likely than others to experience consistent poverty. Looking at root causes points towards sustainable, long-term solutions.

³ www.atdireland.ie/wp/breaking-barriers-defining-socio-economic-discrimination/

⁴ www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/published_age_action_spotlight_on_income_in_older_age.pdf

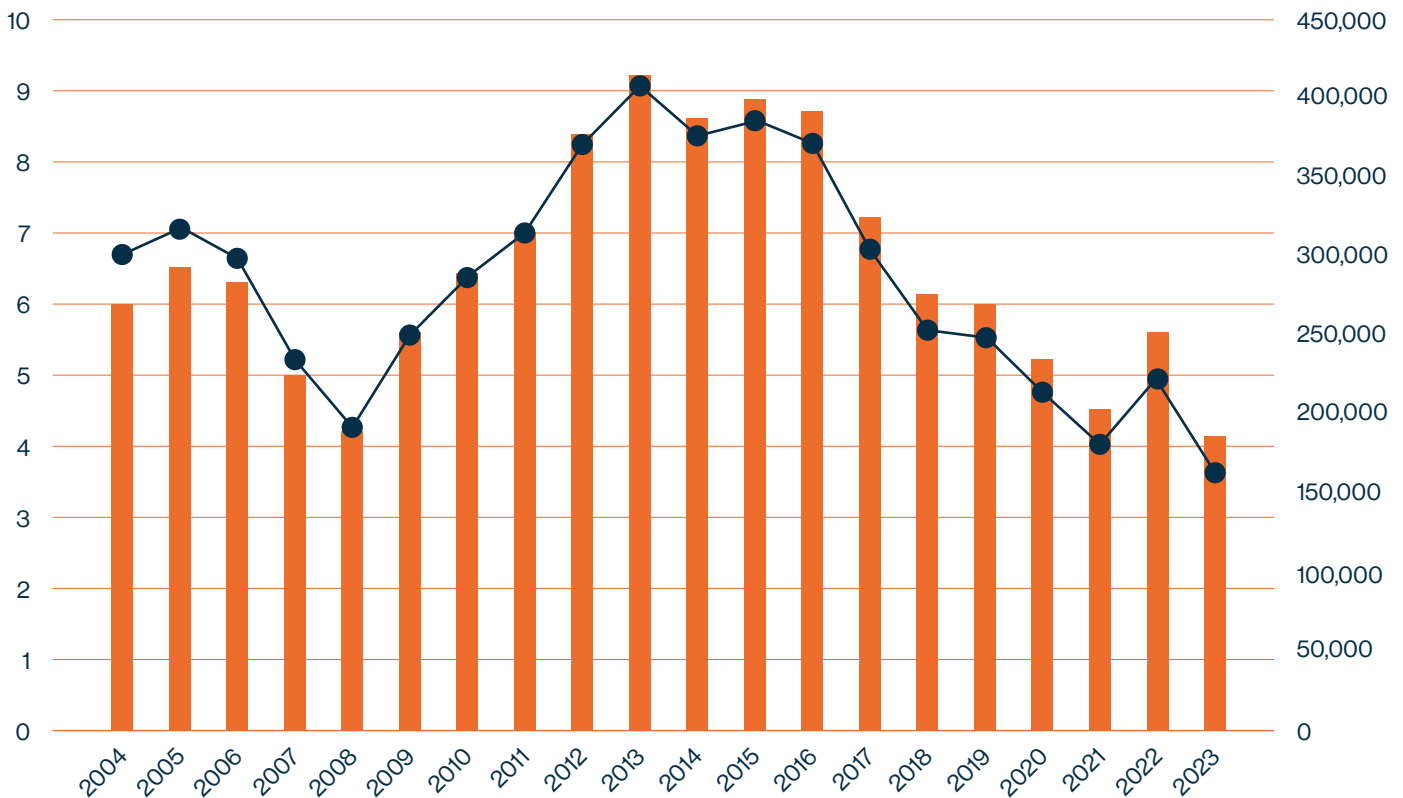
⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/be955a-social-inclusion-division/>

⁶ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/poverty/

⁷ SILC 2023 estimated that there were 1,906,724 households, 5,149,582 individuals and 1,205,622 children aged 0-17 in 2023.

See Tables 9.1 and 9.2, <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/backgroundnotes/>

Figure 1. Consistent Poverty (% population in blue; number of people in orange)
 — break in series from 2020 (SILC, CSO) ⁸



In addition, this report goes beyond the government’s target of reducing consistent poverty to 2% and envisages what it would take to eliminate consistent poverty altogether, which was government policy in 2002 and 2007. Other countries have gone further towards eliminating poverty, and therefore it makes sense to look at what changes could be made in Ireland to achieve a greater reduction in poverty.

As shown in Figure 1, the percentage and number of people in consistent poverty has fluctuated over the last twenty years. Consistent poverty rose after the economic collapse of 2008, and only began to fall from 2013 onwards. In 2022, there was an increase in consistent poverty, associated with the period of high price inflation.

It is important to note that as Ireland’s population grows, a smaller percentage of people in consistent poverty can still represent a similar number of people. For example, in 2004, there were 266,983 people in consistent poverty (representing 6.6% of the population) while in 2022 there were 251,149 people in consistent poverty (representing 4.9% of the population).

There was a significant reduction in consistent poverty in the last two decades of the 20th century, with consistent poverty of 15.1% in 1994 reduced to 6.2% by 2000—and consistent poverty among children reduced from 24.8% in 1987 to 8% in 2000.⁹ But despite another two decades of strategies, there has been no permanent decrease in consistent poverty. Instead, the rate fluctuates with trends in the economy. This begs the question of whether a wholly different approach is needed to meet the target of 2% or to eliminate consistent poverty entirely.

“ *What it’s costing just to stay alive today, never mind anything else.*”
Spotlight on Income in Older Age

⁸ Data from CSO (SIA12 and SIA60); <https://data.cso.ie/>.
⁹ www.socialinclusion.ie/publications/building_an_inclusive_society.pdf

Other Ways of Measuring Poverty

The government's official measure of poverty is consistent poverty,¹⁰ which is a statistic unique to Ireland not used across other EU member states. Other standard measures from the CSO and Eurostat indicate that much higher levels of poverty and deprivation persist in Ireland, affecting hundreds of thousands of people.

21.6%

Irish population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat 2022)

Table 1. Measurements of Poverty and Deprivation

Measurement	% of Irish population
At risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat 2022) ¹¹	21.6%
At risk of poverty (Eurostat 2022) ¹²	16.5%
Persistent at risk of poverty (Eurostat 2022) ¹³	10.5%
In-work at risk of poverty (Eurostat 2021) ¹⁴	8.5%
Material deprivation (Eurostat 2022) ¹⁵	8.8%
At risk of poverty (CSO 2023) ¹⁶	10.6%
At risk of poverty (CSO 2023)—adjusted for inflation ¹⁷	13.6%
Deprivation (CSO 2023)	17.3%
Consistent poverty (CSO 2023)	3.6%

Another method for measuring income adequacy is the annual Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) report, which is based on itemised shopping baskets for a range of household types. This provides very exact information on the cost of living faced by households on low incomes. The cost of a core MESL basket of goods increased by 16.8% between 2020 and mid-2024.

Out of 214 household types, social welfare income was not adequate to allow people to afford a minimum standard of living in three-quarters (76%) of cases in 2024.¹⁸

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/be955a-social-inclusion-division/>

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/explore/all/tb_eu?lang=en&subtheme=es&display=list&sort=category&extractionId=TESPM150

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tessi010/default/table?lang=en&category=t_ilc.t_ilc_ip.t_ilc_li

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tessi020/default/table?lang=en&category=t_ilc.t_ilc_ip.t_ilc_li.t_ilc_li__

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tesov110/default/table?lang=en&category=t_ilc.t_ilc_ip.t_ilc_li.t_ilc_li____

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/view/tessi080?category=t_ilc.t_ilc_md.t_ilc_mddd

¹⁶ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2022/poverty/

¹⁷ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/

¹⁸ 2024 update forthcoming; see www.budgeting.ie

Government Targets to Reduce Consistent Poverty

The government has set a target to reduce the national consistent poverty rate to 2% or less by 2025, to be reduced from 5.6% in 2018. As part of this drive to reduce poverty, the government has pledged to take at least 70,000 children out of consistent poverty.¹⁹ Both pledges are in *A Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025*,²⁰ and the current programme for government pledges “rigorous implementation” of this strategy.

Ireland's first National Anti-Poverty (NAP) Strategy was launched in 1997, and had a stronger focus on eliminating poverty. For example, in 1997: “The overall goal of the NAP/inclusion process is to ‘... reduce substantially and ideally eliminate poverty in Ireland and to build a socially inclusive society’.”²¹

Previously, the *National Reform Programme* (2010) set the target of reducing consistent poverty to 4% by 2016 and 2% by 2020. *The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* set a target of reducing consistent poverty to 2-4% by 2012 and eliminating consistent poverty by 2016. *Building an Inclusive Society* (2002) set a target to “reduce the numbers of those who are ‘consistently poor’ below 2% and, if possible, eliminate consistent poverty, under the current definition of consistent poverty”.

Some of the issues of focus in the previous National Anti-Poverty Strategies are less central in the current Roadmap. For example, the key term ‘income adequacy’ is now absent, despite this being a core concern of earlier strategies. The *Roadmap for Social Inclusion* seems more narrowly focused on the premise that a good job is the sole route out of poverty, as opposed to one of a number of routes. This leaves a gap in the analysis, as there is no solution presented for those who are unable to work or for those who are unable to secure an adequate income from work.

The original 1997 NAP had a broader analysis, and its key objectives were to be achieved through the following approaches:

- Sustain economic growth and create more and better jobs;
- Increasing of income support in real terms for those who need it and employment participation for those who are able;
- Improve access to and providing higher quality public services;
- Address the specific needs of groups at high risk of poverty and tackling the causes of inter-generational poverty;
- Supporting disadvantaged communities.²²

<2%

The government has set a target to reduce the national consistent poverty rate to 2% or less by 2025

70,000

As part of this drive to reduce poverty, the government has pledged to take at least 70,000 children out of consistent poverty

¹⁹ Out of the 92,000 identified in 2018 as living in consistent poverty.

²⁰ <https://assets.gov.ie/46557/bf7011904ede4562b925f98b15c4f1b5.pdf>

²¹ www.esri.ie/system/files?file=media/file-uploads/2015-07/JACB200622.pdf

²² www.esri.ie/system/files?file=media/file-uploads/2015-07/JACB200622.pdf

Economic Analysis

Quantitative analysis has shown a high level of correlation between economic growth and poverty reduction in Ireland.²³ After a period of expansion in job opportunities, leading to lower unemployment, consistent poverty decreases. A strong implication of this is that lowering consistent poverty relies on favourable economic conditions, and any reduction in consistent poverty may be temporary as it is liable to be reversed at the next economic downturn. This is exactly what happened in the period 2008-2016 when higher poverty was associated with unemployment and cuts to social welfare. It also occurred in the period 2020-2024 when welfare rates, which are not indexed against inflation, fell behind the cost of living due to high inflation, especially in energy and food costs.

Hoping for long-term economic growth sufficient to eliminate poverty is not a credible approach, which is why it is so important to look at the relationship between economic growth and poverty, as well as the root causes of consistent poverty (addressed in later sections).

A high level review of the extensive economic literature on poverty and its relationship to economic growth provides the following broad findings:

- A country's overall income level and level of economic growth impacts upon absolute poverty, and a country's distribution of income impacts on absolute poverty. And both of these factors (economic growth and the distribution of income) interact with one another.²⁴
 - All things being equal, economic growth reduces absolute poverty. However, economic growth does not (of itself) reduce income inequality or wealth inequality, and it may worsen inequalities.
 - All things being equal, countries with higher inequality have lower growth. This implies that economic models that allow income and wealth inequality to grow will inevitably lead to lower growth over time (and that lower level of growth will therefore lead to higher poverty).
 - Measures directed at reducing poverty foster economic growth.
 - Reduction in wealth inequality fosters growth and reduced poverty, but not necessarily reduced income inequality.
- Sustained reduction in poverty requires more than just economic growth. The optimum strategy appears to be one where a country combines (1) general measures to foster growth with (2) specific measures to reduce poverty and (3) specific measures to reduce wealth inequality.²⁵

²³ Michálek, A., Výboštok, J. Economic Growth, Inequality and Poverty in the EU. Soc Indic Res 141, 611–630 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1858-7>

²⁴ See, for example, Bourguignon, F. (2004). The poverty-growth-inequality triangle. The World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (28102). <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/449711468762020101/pdf/28102.pdf>

²⁵ See, for example, Ravallion, M. (2016) *The Economics of Poverty: History, Measurement, and Policy*. Oxford University Press. <https://academic.oup.com/book/10927>

Consistent Poverty by Household Characteristics

The following statistics illustrate how many individuals or households experience consistent poverty, depending on their characteristics.

Table 2. Consistent Poverty Rates (%) by Demographic Characteristics (2023, SILC, CSO) ²⁶

Gender

Men	3.5%
Women	3.7%

Age

0–17	4.8%
18–34	3.0%
35–49	3.2%
50–64	4.8%
65+	1.4%

Age (children and young people)

²⁷

0–5	3.7%
6–11	4.9%
12–17	5.7%
18–24	3.2%

Employment / labour market status

Employed	1.5%
Unemployed	9.4%
Retired	1.5%
Unable to work due to health	16.5%
Student, pupil	4.6%
Domestic tasks	6.9%

Educational attainment

Primary or below	5.8%
Lower secondary	6.2%
Upper secondary	2.7%
Third level non-degree	2.6%
Third level degree or higher	1.3%
Post leaving cert	4.4%

Household composition

1 adult, 65+	3.2%
1 adult, <65	13.0%
2 adults, 65+	0.9%
2 adults, <65	1.7%
3 or more adults	1.3%
1 adult with children <18	7.1%
2 adults with 1-3 children <18	4.5%
Other households with children <18	4.0%

Household members at work

No person at work	8.9%
1 person at work	5.5%
2 persons at work	1.3%
3+ persons at work	0.0%

²⁶ See Table 5.1, www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/poverty/

²⁷ Data on children in consistent poverty, <https://data.cso.ie/table/SIA69>

Household type

One person household	8.6%
Lone parent with at least one child aged <25	7.2%
Lone parent with all children aged 25+	2.4%
Couple without any child(ren)	1.1%
Couple with at least one child aged <25	3.6%
Couple with all children aged 25+	0.0%
Other type of household	2.9%

Tenure

Owner-occupied	1.4%
Rented or rent free	8.5%

Region

Urban	4.3%
Rural	2.1%
NW region	4.2%
Southern region	4.0%
East and Midland region	3.1%

An initial look at the statistics shows that the incidence of consistent poverty is much higher among some parts of the population.

Consistent poverty is highest for people unable to work due to their health (16.5%), people who are unemployed (9.4%), one parent families (7.1%), single adults aged 18-64 (13%) and renters (8.5%).

Women are more likely than men to report consistent poverty. At 4.8%, children experience a high rate of consistent poverty compared to adults, with children aged 12-17 reporting the highest rate of consistent poverty of any age group (5.7%).

Households where no one is in work experience much higher consistent poverty (8.9%) and the North-West and Southern regions have a higher incidence of consistent poverty than the East and Midland region.

8.9%

Households where no one is in work experience much higher consistent poverty

16.5%

Consistent poverty is highest for people unable to work due to their health

Marginalised Groups Not Included in National Statistics

All of these statistics are useful to help point towards who in society is most likely to be living in consistent poverty. At the same time, national surveys of this type can only go so far and they do not identify everything. For example, the survey does not identify whether migrants experience a higher rate of poverty, and the survey is not fine-grained enough to give information on Travellers, Roma or other minorities where it is known that poverty is especially high. For example, the government's *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021* recognises high unemployment among Travellers in the Census and the All Ireland Health Study.²⁸ Census 2022 found that only 3,518 (16.8%) out of 20,969 Irish Travellers aged 15 or older were at work, versus 56.2% for the whole population.²⁹

3,518

Census 2022 found that only 3,518 (16.8%) out of 20,969 Irish Travellers aged 15 or older were at work

The Profile of People in Consistent Poverty

Ireland's population in 2023 was estimated to be 5,149,582 people.³⁰ A consistent poverty rate of 3.6% implies that 185,385 people were living in consistent poverty in 2023. Reducing this to 2% implies taking 82,393 people out of consistent poverty. Eliminating consistent poverty means assisting all 185,385 people.

Based on SILC data we can paint a picture of who is affected. For example, there were 57,840 children living in consistent poverty in 2023, representing one in every twenty children (4.8%). While consistent poverty is strongly associated with households where no one is at work, nonetheless one in every five adults in consistent poverty in 2023 was employed.

57,840

There were 57,840 children living in consistent poverty in 2023, representing one in every twenty children

²⁸ www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/43310/d7d54fbff0f4418982856e7dddaf78c1.pdf#page=16

²⁹ <https://data.cso.ie/table/F5087>

³⁰ See Table 9.2, www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/backgroundnotes/

Table 3. Profile of People in Consistent Poverty (SILC 2022, CSO) ³¹

Profile	Individuals in this profile group	Consistent poverty (2023 %)	Number of individuals in consistent poverty	Proportion of all people in consistent poverty (%)
Whole population	5,149,582	3.6	185,385	100.0
Men	2,543,894	3.5	89,036	48.0
Women	3,069,151	3.7	113,559	61.3
0-17	1,205,002	4.8	57,840	31.2
18-34	1,096,861	3.0	32,906	17.8
35-49	1,148,357	3.2	36,747	19.8
50-64	937,224	4.8	44,987	24.3
65 or older	762,138	1.4	10,670	5.8
Employed	2,420,304	1.5	36,305	19.6
Unemployed	144,188	9.4	13,554	7.3
Retired	653,997	1.5	9,810	5.3
Unable to work due to health	221,432	16.5	36,536	19.7
Student, pupil (18+)	339,872	4.6	15,634	8.4
Domestic tasks	242,030	6.9	16,700	9.0
1 adult, 65+	190,535	3.2	6,097	3.3
1 adult, <65	236,881	13.0	30,795	16.6
2 adults, 65+	463,462	0.9	4,171	2.3
2 adults, <65	551,005	1.7	9,367	5.1
3 or more adults	1,076,263	1.3	13,991	7.5
1 adult with children <18	200,834	7.1	14,259	7.7
2 adults with 1-3 children <18	1,472,780	4.5	66,275	35.8
other households with children <18	957,822	4.0	38,313	20.7
Owner-occupied	3,568,660	1.4	49,961	27.0
Rented or rent free	1,580,922	8.5	134,378	72.5
Urban	3,475,968	4.3	149,467	80.6
Rural	1,673,614	2.1	35,146	19.0

There is a limit to what the survey can tell us, as there was not a sufficient sample size to combine all of these variables. For example, while four in five (80.6%) of those in consistent poverty are in urban areas, does that apply to all children as well? Similarly, with 72.5% of those in consistent poverty living in rented housing, does a similar situation pertain for children in consistent poverty? And is that social housing or private rented housing? A larger scale survey would be needed—or else administrative data or some other approach—to pinpoint the characteristics of people living in consistent poverty in more detail.

There is also a concern about response rate as not everyone invited to participate completes the forms for the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). In 2023, the response rate was 36.9%. Fewer than one in four (23.9%) new households joined the survey and two-thirds (59.2%) of households who were surveyed for a second or subsequent time completed the forms.³² The relatively low response rate for new households means that there is a risk that some households in poverty will be excluded, not least people who are homeless, who are moving home frequently or who are in adverse circumstances, as they are likely to find it hardest to participate. The potential exclusion of the most socially excluded households could skew the survey findings to under-estimate the extent of poverty.

³¹ Datasets SIA81, SIA82, SIA83, SIA85, SIA87 and SIA871 from <https://data.cso.ie/>

³² www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/backgroundnotes/

What Would Ireland Look Like Without Consistent Poverty?

Ireland without consistent poverty would not be utopia. There would still be some people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, meaning that they have a low income relative to the national average. There would also be some people experiencing enforced deprivation, meaning that they are going without two or more basic items due to cost. However, the elimination of consistent poverty would mean that no one would be in a situation where they experience both a low income and material deprivation on an ongoing basis. This implies that cash supplements or direct provision of goods and services would be available to protect people from the worst of poverty.

It is impossible to eliminate consistent poverty without also reducing the risk of poverty and the incidence of deprivation, so an Ireland without consistent poverty would also have lower levels of poverty measured in these other ways. In particular, the elimination of consistent poverty will require concerted action to address enforced deprivation. At present, a person is considered to be experiencing enforced deprivation if they cannot afford two or more of the items listed below. At present, currently one in six (890,878 people) in Ireland experience some level of enforced deprivation.³³

“ I really tried to use less oil and electricity to a point where it was not a very pleasant winter.”

Spotlight on Income in Older Age

“ I am cutting back a lot on food, clothes, heat, socialising, travel and holidays. No foreign holidays.”

Spotlight on Income in Older Age

The percentage indicates those individuals affected among the whole population in 2023.³⁴

- Unable to afford to replace any worn out furniture **(17.8%)**
- Unable to afford to have family or friends for a drink or meal once a month **(12.3%)**
- Unable to afford a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight **(11.8%)**
- Without heating at some stage in the last year **(10.8%)**
- Unable to afford new (not second-hand) clothes **(8.1%)**
- Unable to afford to keep the home adequately warm **(7.2%)**
- Unable to afford to buy presents for family or friends at least once a year **(5.2%)**
- Unable to afford a roast once a week **(4.2%)**
- Unable to afford two pairs of strong shoes **(2.0%)**
- Unable to afford a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day **(1.6%)**
- Unable to afford a warm waterproof coat **(1.2%)**

In terms of the specific forms of deprivation listed, this means for example that around 916,626 individuals live in households that cannot afford to replace worn out furniture, 370,770 individuals live in households that are unable to afford to keep the home adequately warm, and 82,393 individuals live in households that cannot afford a protein-rich meal (meat, chicken, fish or equivalent) every second day. If Ireland eliminated consistent poverty, the incidence of these forms of deprivation would almost certainly be significantly reduced

SILC 2023 also reported some additional forms of deprivation that are not used in the calculation of the official deprivation rate. Findings included that 34.3% of the population of Ireland could not afford an unexpected expense without borrowing, 23.8% could not afford a week's holiday, 15.3% could not afford a leisure activity that costs money and 6.3% could not afford a car or van.³⁵

³³ 17.3% of the population reported enforced deprivation in 2022 (SILC 2023). www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2023/poverty/

³⁴ <https://data.cso.ie/table/SIA131>

³⁵ <https://data.cso.ie/table/SIA131>

What Would It Take to Eliminate Consistent Poverty?

For a country with Ireland's level of economic development and wealth, eradicating or significantly reducing consistent poverty and enforced material deprivation could be achieved through a focused effort by the state and society.

The *Roadmap for Social Inclusion* is based on the premise that a good job is the surest route out of poverty. Yet, the persistence of consistent poverty—and the concentration of consistent poverty among certain groups—suggests that securing employment is not going to work for many of those who remain in consistent poverty. It did work from the 1980s to 2000s—during which time employment levels surged and poverty decreased significantly—but it likely that a major reason why people continue to experience consistent poverty during a period of record low unemployment is

because they are unable to secure an adequate income from work, or else because they are unable to work due to disability, parenting, unpaid caring, discrimination or simply the lack of opportunities where they live.

To initiate discussion and debate about practical ways in which poverty can be eliminated, the remainder of this report highlights just a selection of proposals put forward by members of the Community Platform. This is not by any means an exhaustive list, as many other social justice and anti-poverty organisations outside of the Community Platform also have published proposals on reducing or eliminating poverty, including for example the Children's Rights Alliance,³⁶ St Vincent de Paul (SVP),³⁷ Social Justice Ireland,³⁸ and others.

Focus on Overall Poverty

EAPN Ireland—which is a network of 160 organisations and individuals, and the Irish section of the wider European Anti-Poverty Network—proposes policies to increase the incomes of people in poverty including welfare increases and a higher national minimum wage based on a Living Wage,³⁹ and also proposes more progressive taxation, better resources for autonomous community development, targeted supports for energy-poor households, and greater investment in public housing, transport and other public services.⁴⁰ EAPN Ireland has also published recent research on the number of households that need help to afford basic necessities,⁴¹ and it provides further analysis of how to reduce poverty.⁴²

Any strategy to eliminate consistent poverty requires co-ordination across different arms of the state, but it equally requires the participation of the people and communities most affected. There has been some good practice in terms of participation under the government's *Roadmap for Social Inclusion*—such as the annual Social Inclusion Forum—but there is scope for a greater level of

collaboration between policy makers and those affected by their policies, which is why the Community Platform has proposed a progressive model of collaborative governance as a framework for such engagement,⁴³ alongside principles for social dialogue.⁴⁴

A key proposal is for the inclusion of socio-economic status as a tenth protected ground under the Equality Acts to give legal protection against discrimination at work and as consumers.⁴⁵ This proposal is endorsed by ATD Ireland, AHEAD, CAN, EAPN Ireland, FLAC, ILMI, INOU, as members of the Add the 10th Alliance, as well as by other members of the Community Platform.

TASC (Think-tank for Action on Social Change) publishes an annual report on economic inequality in Ireland. In its latest report it finds that while income inequality has fallen over the long-run, inequality increased recently by most measures. They also found that inflation has impacted low-income households and renters the most, and they propose that increases in social investment can reduce market inequality and alleviate Ireland's high cost of living.⁴⁶

³⁶ www.childrensrights.ie/

³⁷ www.svp.ie/end-poverty/social-justice-issues/

³⁸ www.socialjustice.ie/

³⁹ www.livingwage.ie/

⁴⁰ www.eapn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EAPN_Ireland_Pre-Budget_Submission_2024.pdf

⁴¹ www.eapn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Basic-Necessities-Final-Report-Double.pdf

⁴² www.eapn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EAPN_Watch_2022-Final.pdf

⁴³ <https://communityplatform.ie/publication/towards-a-progressive-model-of-collaborative-governance-a-community-platform-discussion-paper/>

⁴⁴ <https://communityplatform.ie/publication/valuing-social-dialogue/>

⁴⁵ www.atdireland.ie/wp/socio-economic-discrimination-add-10th-ground/

⁴⁶ www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/the_state_we_are_in_2023.pdf

Another TASC report identifies the growing reliance on community and voluntary organisations to provide people with basic necessities, including to people in employment. Among their recommendations are a living wage, benchmarking welfare rates against the MESL, widening eligibility for Fuel Allowance, investing in public services, and re-examining means-testing and other eligibility for services.⁴⁷



There's quite a lot of micro stuff ... it's often not a single incident, it's a drip feed, a continual drip feed of comments, you know, the dispositions of people towards you ... That's hard to capture in law, because law tends to fixate on single incidents, whereas I think a lot of the harm is like just corrosive, as I said, streams of stuff that might happen over the course of years."

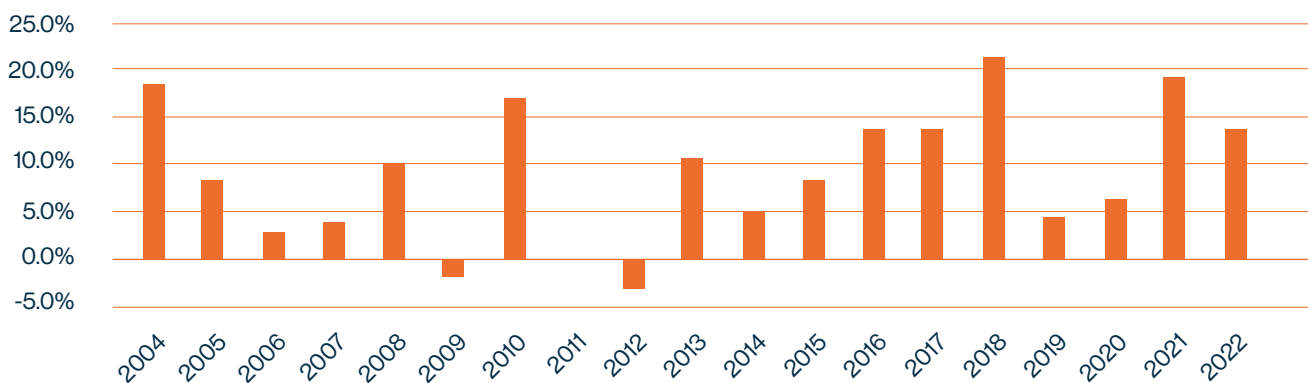
Breaking Barriers

Focus on Women

For most years surveyed, women face a higher risk of poverty than men, and more women than men experience enforced deprivation and consistent poverty. For example, in the period 2004-2022, women were more likely to be in consistent poverty

in all but two years. In nine of those years, women were more than 10% and up to 21.6% more likely to be in consistent poverty.⁴⁸ In almost every year, women were also more likely to be at risk of poverty or to experience deprivation compared to men.

Figure 2. Consistent Poverty (Percentage difference women versus men, 2004-2022, break in data series from 2020; CSO)⁴⁹



The National Women's Council (NWC) has highlighted factors relevant to higher poverty among women, including the persistent gender gap in wages and pensions,⁵⁰ inequalities in the state pension system,⁵¹ the disproportionate prevalence of women in low paid work,⁵² the lack of access to affordable childcare, the gender inequality in unpaid care work, and the costs faced by women parenting alone. Among their budget proposals, the NWC advocate for a public model of childcare provision and higher weekly welfare rates.⁵³

The Women's Collective Ireland (WCI) works through 17 Women's Community Development Projects around Ireland. In its budget proposals, it advocates for investment to ensure the retention of staff and organisations working with women in marginalised communities and localities. WCI also call for investment in women's community education programmes and investment to allow the WCI to expand to new localities.⁵⁴

Age Action's research has highlighted that older women have significantly lower incomes than older men, with some research finding that women's pensions are 35% lower than men's. Poverty and deprivation is also higher among older women compared to men.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/eapn_tasc_report_low_income_141122.pdf

⁴⁸ Data as published by the CSO. If data on children was removed, it is likely to show an even greater gender inequality faced by adult women

⁴⁹ Data from CSO (SIA12 and SIA60); <https://data.cso.ie/>

⁵⁰ See, for example, https://www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWCI_Gender_budgeting_presentation_to_womens_caucus_-_13_June_2017.pdf and https://www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/No_Small_Change_summary.pdf

⁵¹ www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWCI_Opening_Statement_to_the_Joint_Oireachtas_Committee_on_Social_Protection_on_the_State_Pension_-_29.06.17.pdf

⁵² www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/Presentation_Low_Pay_2015.pdf

⁵³ www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWC_PBS_2023_Shaping_our_Future.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://womenscollective.ie/latest-news/womens-collective-ireland-wci-pre-budget-submission-2024/>

⁵⁵ www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/published_age_action_spotlight_on_income_in_older_age.pdf

Focus on Children

In the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion* the government aims to “maintain the ambition to lift over 70,000 children (aged 0-17 years) out of consistent poverty by 2020, a reduction of at least two thirds on the 2011 level (107,000 children).” This gave a target of reducing consistent poverty among children to 37,000 in 2020.⁵⁶ The same target was also in the previous national action plan.⁵⁷

As of 2023, there are 57,840 children experiencing consistent poverty, and it was nearly 92,000 in 2022, which was acknowledged in the government’s recent (August 2023) *Child Poverty and Well-being Work Programme 2023-2025*.⁵⁸ The new Child Poverty and Well-being Programme Office, set up within the Department of the Taoiseach, will work with the Department of Social Protection and DCEDIY “to develop and monitor a new national child poverty target to the end of 2025”.

Lowering—or eliminating—consistent poverty among children cannot happen in a vacuum. Poverty occurs at the level of households and communities. Consistent poverty among children requires measures to bring their parents out of poverty, and to raise living standards among specific communities and in areas of the country where there is a concentration of disadvantage.

In that regard, the Community Platform developed *Principles for delivering a high quality, inclusive and accessible Public Childcare Model*,⁵⁹ as one part of the solution that is needed to address child poverty and disadvantage, not least the higher incidence of poverty among lone parents.

“*What you put into a child when they’re young is what you’re going to get out of a child when they’re older.*”

Breaking Barriers

“*Children are being poverty-shamed in front of their classmates, making the rest of the class aware that they have not paid.*”

Breaking Barriers

70,000

The government aims to “maintain the ambition to lift over 70,000 children (aged 0-17 years) out of consistent poverty by 2020

Treoir highlights the lack of support for kinship care in Ireland, which is “the full-time care of children by grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, or other close family and friends [which] occurs when there is no parent to care for the child at that time. This situation occurs as a result of the death of a parent, illness, imprisonment, or lack of capacity due to substance misuse or mental illness.”⁶⁰ Treoir highlights that Guardian’s Payments under the Department of Social Protection are lower than the foster care payment, and there is no higher rate for older children. This is despite the MESL research showing that there are higher costs associated with older children/teens,⁶¹ and despite the fact that poverty rates are higher among teenage children.⁶² In their recent budget submission, Treoir make a range of other recommendations that would help target children who are more likely to be experiencing consistent poverty.⁶³

The Family Resource Centre National Forum has called for additional funding for the 121 family resource centres around Ireland to enable them to better meet the needs of those using their services. Included among their activities are measures directly addressing consistent poverty and deprivation, such as food banks. Family resource centres also provide a range of support sessions, including helping people to access education or to apply for jobs, and helping people to secure welfare entitlements.⁶⁴ In addition, they provide information and establish local community groups to meet local needs, such as childcare facilities, after-school clubs and men’s groups.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/eapn_tasc_report_low_income_141122.pdf

⁵⁷ www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT424_0.pdf

⁵⁸ www.gov.ie/en/publication/573a7-the-child-poverty-and-well-being-programme-office-programme-plan/

⁵⁹ <https://communityplatform.ie/publication/principles-for-a-public-childcare-model/>

⁶⁰ www.treoir.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Treoir-2024-Pre-budget-Submission-DSP.pdf

⁶¹ www.budgeting.ie/publications/mesl-2023/

⁶² <https://data.cso.ie/table/SIA69>

⁶³ www.treoir.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Treoir-2024-Pre-budget-Submission-DSP.pdf

⁶⁴ www.familyresource.ie/uploadedfiles/FRC%20National%20Forum%20Pre%20Budget%202024%20Submission_3.pdf

⁶⁵ www.familyresource.ie/what-is-a-family-resource-centre.php

Focus on Lone Parents

The data on poverty shows that households with one adult plus children experience consistent poverty 2.6 times as often as households with two adults and children, with consistent poverty of 14.1% among single parent households compared to 5.3% among two-adult households with children. Single parents also experience the highest deprivation rate of any household type— at 43.5%— which is 2.5 times the national average.⁶⁶ Most lone parents are women, which makes it another example of gender inequality, providing one factor among others that explains the higher level of poverty typically experienced by women. Some of the consistent poverty faced by children also clearly results from the income inadequacy of single parent families.

To address the income needs of lone parents, One Family has proposed, for example, raising the Qualified Child Increase component of welfare payments, the removal of Child Benefit and child maintenance in means tests to access public schemes and supports, expansion of the Hot School Meals Programme,

2.5x

Single parents experience the highest deprivation rate of any household type - 2.5 times the national average

increases to SUSI grants, a minimum income guarantee after housing costs, increases to Fuel Allowance and the extension of access to the Jobseekers Transitional Payment to parents in education with children at school.⁶⁷

The National Women's Council has called for the expansion of weekly welfare rates and steps to reduce childcare costs to support lone parents in particular.⁶⁸

Focus on Domestic Abuse

One of the sometimes hidden factors in poverty is that a person may not benefit from their nominal household income due to domestic abuse, financial abuse or a situation of coercive control where a spouse, partner or other person controls the household's income and savings.

While domestic violence can occur in any situation, research indicates that a significant number of lone parents have fled domestic violence or abuse.⁶⁹ Research also shows that, at least for women from a working class background, leaving a situation of domestic violence often results in deep material poverty.⁷⁰

Women's Aid has identified living in or being at risk of poverty and fear of homelessness if not actual homelessness among the impacts of abuse on women and children, alongside the obvious physical, mental and emotional impacts.⁷¹

The NWC has pointed out that recent budgets have failed to fund sufficient refuge accommodation units as required under the Istanbul Convention on action against violence against women and domestic violence.⁷²

Among its budgetary proposals designed to assist women fleeing domestic violence, Safe Ireland calls for greater access to domestic violence refuges, more investment in public housing, more funding of legal aid solicitors, a waiver for Exceptional Needs Payment means tests for the initial period where someone is fleeing domestic violence and expansion of Home Tuition for children temporarily resident in refuges or domestic violence emergency accommodation.⁷³

The Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI) has called for increased funding for rape crisis centres to enable them to meet the high levels of demand. Funding is also needed on a regional basis to ensure equitable access to support in all areas of Ireland. RCNI also call for greater capital funding for refuge accommodation.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2022/poverty/

⁶⁷ <https://onefamily.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PBS-Finalfinal.pdf>

⁶⁸ www.nwci.ie/learn/article/government_must_increase_social_welfare_rates_to_support_women_and_lone_parents

⁶⁹ For example, Bradshaw and Millar (1991), Ford et al (1995) and Rowlingson and McKay (1998) cited in Wilcox, P. (2000), Lone Motherhood: the Impact on Living Standards of Leaving a Violent Relationship. *Social Policy & Administration*, 34: 176-190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9515.00184>

⁷⁰ Wilcox, P. (2000), Lone Motherhood: the Impact on Living Standards of Leaving a Violent Relationship. *Social Policy & Administration*, 34: 176-190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9515.00184>

⁷¹ www.womensaid.ie/app/uploads/2023/07/womens_aid_annual_impact_report_2022_-_embargoed_0001_20623.pdf

⁷² www.nwci.ie/learn/article/long_term_budget_2023_will_not_protect_women_from_poverty_and_inequality

⁷³ www.safeireland.ie/policy-publications/

⁷⁴ www.rcni.ie/rape-crisis-network-ireland-calls-for-action-to-aid-a-sector-in-crisis/

Focus on Disability

In 2022, more than a third (35.2%) of people unable to work due to long-standing health problems were at risk of poverty. Nearly half (44.3%) experienced enforced deprivation, and one in five (19.7%) were in consistent poverty. Even in 2020, before the period of high inflation, disabled people or people with long-term illness were much more likely to experience poverty than most other people in society.⁷⁵

The state recognised that there is a cost of disability in terms of extra spending needs that disabled people face, which lowers their ability to meet other costs. The Department of Social Protection commissioned and published a major report on the cost of disability. “The analysis shows that the actual costs faced by individuals with severe disabilities on average range from €9,600–€12,300 per annum and for those with limited disabilities from €8,700–€10,000 per annum”.⁷⁶ Many organisations have called for the report to be followed by both weekly and once-off payments, and the provision of services, to allow disabled people to overcome these costs and to live on a level playing field with the rest of society.

ILMI (Independent Living Movement Ireland) has called for a ‘cost of living’ payment on top of core welfare to address the cost of disability, including an adjustment for recent high inflation. ILMI have also called for greater investment in housing, transport, personal assistance services and employment, to address poverty among disabled people.⁷⁷

“ *If you look at the health statistics, generally the higher someone’s social economic status, the better their health is*”
Breaking Barriers

“ *That sense of exclusion and failure can really erode somebody’s mental health and it can cause really serious problems like depression, hopelessness, suicidal ideation and it can result in suicide. And then it can also impact on people’s physical health.*”
Breaking Barriers

Research in the UK has shown that people with hearing impairment were “significantly more likely to experience economic hardship and less likely to be employed than people without hearing impairment”.⁷⁸ While there is a lack of research in this area, it is likely that a similar situation exists in Ireland. One small-scale Irish study in 2002 identified poverty and barriers to employment for deaf people in Ireland.⁷⁹

SLIS (Sign Language Interpreting Service) continues to identify a lack of Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreters.⁸⁰ The report of the formal recognition of ISL recognises the “extreme marginalization” and “systematic exclusion” of Ireland’s Deaf community, which relies for redress on the increased availability and quality of ISL interpreters.⁸¹ However, the report on the operation of the ISL Act found its implementation remains “well below the expectations of the legislation”.⁸² The recent introduction of the social inclusion voucher scheme is a positive and necessary initiative, as it enables users of ISL to avail of free interpreting hours to access social, educational and culture events as well as services (including medical) and other activities. However, greater awareness and promotion of the scheme is needed to ensure access by marginalised and vulnerable groups. Evaluation of the new scheme is also required.

“ *Walking is very painful and getting up and off buses takes time and hurts a lot. I don’t have a car and can’t afford taxis.*”
Spotlight on Income in Older Age

⁷⁵ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2022/poverty/

⁷⁶ www.gov.ie/en/publication/1d84e-the-cost-of-disability-in-ireland-research-report/

⁷⁷ <https://ilmi.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ILMI-Budget-2023-Invest-in-Inclusion.pdf>

⁷⁸ https://pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/139858103/Kim_Byrne_and_Parish_LOS_final_manu_revised3PURE.pdf

⁷⁹ www.tara.tcd.ie/bitstream/handle/2262/96645/1s_There_Poverty_in_the_Deaf_Community_R.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁸⁰ <https://slis.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Evaluation-of-SLIS-National-Disability-Inclusion-Strategy-NDIS-Actions-October-2022.pdf>

⁸¹ https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_justice_and_equality/reports/2016/2016-10-13_report-on-the-formal-recognition-of-irish-sign-language-october-2016_en.pdf

⁸² <https://assets.gov.ie/244651/5422d6f4-8478-4cf9-9c4a-a2398fae6d7c.pdf>

Focus on Energy and Climate

Energy adds a specific dimension to poverty, in the form of energy poverty (high energy costs as a proportion of household costs) and energy deprivation (inability to afford energy). As energy costs can fluctuate much more than other household costs, this can often lead to arrears or difficulty keeping warm in winter—especially in recent years with very high energy costs.

As Ireland transitions towards a low carbon economy, there is a specific vulnerability experienced among those living in poverty. Studies show that lower income households are more vulnerable to air pollution and other forms of environmental degradation by virtue of being in poorer health, having less access to healthcare and not

having the means to invest in air filtration and better-quality housing. Those on lowest incomes contribute least to carbon emissions but they may also be unable to afford to transition to more energy saving appliances or heating systems, or to afford home insulation, which can leave them locked into fossil fuel use and with higher energy bills as a result.⁸³

Climate action has to include a climate justice dimension, to ensure that lower income households are not left behind or left in greater energy poverty or energy deprivation due to their inability to afford alternatives to their current situation.⁸⁴

Focus on Educational Disadvantage

Whether due to learning difficulties or other forms of disadvantage, there is a strong link between poverty and educational attainment. The risk of poverty is four times higher for someone who left school after primary education (16.9%) compared to someone with a third level degree (4.7%). The rate of consistent poverty among people who left school after primary or lower secondary is 5.8% and 6.2% respectively, versus the national average of 3.6%.

Census 2022 found that 10% of people aged 15 years and over in Ireland (28% of those aged 65 or over) had no formal education, or primary school education only; 81,280 people had no formal education at all. A 2019 discussion paper from the ESRI found a positive correlation between higher financial literacy, higher total household wealth and lower financial stress amongst Irish people. It also found that those with higher educational qualifications have higher rates of financial literacy.⁸⁵

NALA has called for more investment in measures to address literacy, numeracy and digital skills needs.⁸⁶ They have also called for a Plain Language Act, which is in the 2020 Programme for Government, and full implementation of the ten-year Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy.⁸⁷



When you are young you can go anywhere to improve yourself. When you are old you have very few choices.”

Spotlight on Income in Older Age

10%

Of people aged 15 years and over in Ireland had no formal education or primary school education only

81,280

People had no formal education at all

⁸³ See, for example, www.friendsoftheearth.ie/assets/files/pdf/still_left_out_in_the_cold_-_full_report.pdf

⁸⁴ www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWC_CWI_FeministClimateJusticeReport_Web_%28compressed%29.pdf

⁸⁵ <https://docs.iza.org/dp12187.pdf>

⁸⁶ www.nala.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Literacy-Now-NALA-2020.pdf

⁸⁷ <https://assets.gov.ie/197863/c6f1e81f-3f60-485d-9c55-e33cb85508bc.pdf>

Focus on Poorer Communities, Regions and Rural Areas

The national poverty statistics do not have a sufficiently large sample size to allow analysis on the basis of localities. However, Pobal publishes the Haase-Pratschke Deprivation Index by small areas, which allows the geographical distribution of deprivation to be mapped.⁸⁸

Unsurprisingly, the index shows broad patterns of higher affluence around Dublin and other major urban areas, and higher levels of deprivation in the north-west and other rural areas. However, the detailed maps also show that there are pockets of severe disadvantage in Dublin and other cities too, and there is significant diversity across the country in terms of where deprivation is concentrated.

Irish Rural Link (IRL) has called for greater investment in public service in rural areas, including rural transport, and measures to overcome digital exclusion and lack of broadband internet access. IRL has called for benchmarking of welfare against the Minimum Essential Standard of Living standard, and large increases in Fuel Allowance for households unable to transition to alternative fuels.⁸⁹

Community Action Network (CAN) provides examples of systemic change where leadership is developed at community level, where dialogue with people is undertaken and where people are enabled to make collective complaints about inequality or injustice.⁹⁰

Community Work Ireland (CWI) highlight the importance of community work and community engagement in addressing poverty, inequality and social exclusion.⁹¹ CWI promotes networks and working groups on areas such as mental health, migration and climate justice.⁹² In their budgetary analysis, CWI highlight the centrality of the SDG goal to leave no one behind. They call for the development of an autonomous community development infrastructure working for and with marginalized communities, particularly by extending and expanding the Community Development Programme, and more investment in the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP), especially in the development of skills and knowledge, and investment in community workers.⁹³

“ I’m from Sheriff Street and if I’m ringing for a pizza, I can’t give Sheriff Street as an address. Instead I give Spencer Dock and it comes straight away. But if I give Sheriff Street, they do not deliver. That’s a key thing around that area.”
interview by ATD Ireland

“ I live a very isolated life because of money problems.”
Spotlight on Income in Older Age

“ I inherited the reputation of the area and that stuck with me.”
Breaking Barriers

Focus on Renters

People in rented accommodation are six times as likely to be in consistent poverty as homeowners, with 7 in 10 of those in consistent poverty being renters. The financial burden of housing costs is “a heavy burden” for 4 in 10 households who rent (41.2%) and “somewhat of a burden” for another 4 in 10 (45.8%).⁹⁴

Threshold has identified a wide range of concerns with the private rental sector, including a lack of affordability, insufficient protection for tenants and poor quality accommodation.⁹⁵ In its budget proposals, Threshold has proposed the creation of a fund to assist renters in arrears, higher Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) rates, a dedicated homelessness prevention budget, targeted measures to improve the energy efficiency of rented homes, and a deposit protection scheme.⁹⁶

“ An example of bridging the gap between communities might be mixed housing. People who might be better able to afford their own home and their neighbour who might be in a house that is social housing but rather than separating and segregating people you’re bringing them together.”
Breaking Barriers

⁸⁸ <https://maps.pobal.ie/WebApps/DeprivationIndices/index.html>

⁸⁹ <https://irishrurallink.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Irish-Rural-Link-Pre-Budget-Submission-2024-Final.pdf>

⁹⁰ www.canaction.ie/

⁹¹ www.cwi.ie/

⁹² www.cwi.ie/working-groups-networks/

⁹³ www.cwi.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/pre-budget-submission-2.pdf

Focus on Long-Term Unemployment

In May 2024, Ireland's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate among people aged 15-74 was 4.0% (3.8% for men and 4.1% for women).⁹⁷ This has led some commentators to describe the labour market as being in a state of 'full employment'. However, Ireland's Labour Force Survey tell another story. Just three-quarters (73.8%) of people aged 15-64 were in employment in the first quarter of 2024.⁹⁸ While those not at work includes students, people unable to work due to disability or care work, and people who took early retirement, it also includes people who have been discouraged from the labour market. Moreover, while the unemployment rate may include many people moving between jobs, it also includes a cohort of people who are long-term unemployed—especially older workers—who cannot access suitable work opportunities.

Among disabled people, there are also many who wish to work, who cannot access suitable jobs. An ESRI study found that Ireland had the fourth lowest rate of employment among disabled people among all members of the European Union in 2018.⁹⁹

The latest data (Q1 2024) shows that there were 28,800 people (1% of the labour force) in long-term unemployment.¹⁰⁰

The INOU (Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed) has highlighted a wide range of issues that disadvantage people who are long-term unemployed or distant from the labour market, including inflexible rules in the welfare system, a need for more practical supports including for confidence and mental health, and disadvantaged localities such as rural areas. The INOU has called for a more work-friendly social welfare system, more resources for employment services to better support people into work and for greater awareness of and support to overcome barriers to re-entering work, including the need for support, training and help with travel costs.¹⁰¹

Focus on Older People Living Alone

In 2023, one in five (20%) of older persons living alone experienced enforced deprivation and 3.2% were in consistent poverty. The incidence of deprivation is significantly higher than in 2020 due to increases in inflation, while many low, fixed retirement incomes did not increase or went up to a lesser extent than inflation.

Age Action—along with other members of the Pension Promise Campaign¹⁰²—has called for the rate of the state pension to be benchmarked to 34% of total average earnings as a first step towards providing income security to older persons.¹⁰³ This would require the state pension rate to increase by more than €40, and Age Action has called for this to occur by 2026, which is the same year that the government is introducing a new national living wage to replace the minimum wage. Age Action's analysis of inflation has shown that €100 in 2024 will have the same spending power that €84 had in 2020, which shows the extent to which inflation has eroded spending power—and welfare rates have been cut in real terms as they have not maintained people's spending power.¹⁰⁴

“ *I can't afford to live if my husband dies. One of my family is going to have to take me in. I couldn't live on my pension.* ”
Spotlight on Income in Older Age

In its analysis of the situation of older persons, Age Action's *Reframing Ageing* report shows that inadequate transport, housing, healthcare, home care and other services can all have the effect of enforcing social isolation and exclusion, especially for older persons living alone. Conversely, the presence of supports can help compensate for low income by enabling older persons to live independently.¹⁰⁵ *Spotlight on Income in Older Age* describes the factors that lead to many older persons having a low income in older age, including 3 in 10 who rely on social protection for more than 90% of their weekly income.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁷ <https://data.cso.ie/table/QLF02>

⁹⁸ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-lfs/labourforcesurveyquarter12024/

⁹⁹ www.esri.ie/news/new-research-highlights-the-education-and-employment-disadvantages-experienced-by-people-with

¹⁰⁰ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-lfs/labourforcesurveyquarter12024/unemployment/

¹⁰¹ www.inou.ie/assets/files/pdf/inou_pbs_2024.pdf

¹⁰² <https://thepensionpromise.com/>

¹⁰³ www.ageaction.ie/news/2023/06/19/pension-promise-coalition-demand-state-pension-34-average-earnings

¹⁰⁴ www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/age_action_pbs_to_dsp_budget_2024.pdf

¹⁰⁵ www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/reframing_ageing_state_of_ageing_in_ireland_2022_published.pdf

¹⁰⁶ www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/published_age_action_spotlight_on_income_in_older_age.pdf

Focus on Travellers and Roma

In Census 2022, there were 32,949 resident Irish Travellers in Ireland, representing 0.6% of the population. There were also 16,059 Roma. These small population sizes mean that ethnic groups such as Travellers and Roma are not included in the national survey of poverty and living conditions. However, successive studies into the situation of Travellers and Roma have found a very high level of poverty and disadvantage.

Census 2022 found that only 3,518 (16.8%) out of 20,969 Irish Travellers aged 15 or older were at work.¹⁰⁷ Census 2016 found that over half had left formal education after primary school. Travellers also experience a higher rate of disability than the general population, with one in five (19.2%) having a disability.¹⁰⁸

A 2019 report by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights based on a survey of Travellers and Roma in Ireland found very high levels of poverty: 10% of Travellers indicated that in someone in their household went to bed hungry at least once in the previous month; 40% live in households that have difficulties to make ends meet (versus 8% in the general population); 28% of Traveller children in Ireland grow up in severe material deprivation; and 31% of Travellers live in households that cannot pay for basic items. In the survey, half (52%) of Travellers also reported experiencing hate-motivated harassment.¹⁰⁹

According to the 2018 Roma Needs Assessment, Roma in Ireland reported high levels of discrimination in accessing Social Protection (84.3%). Of respondents who applied for social protection, 48.1% were not successful.¹¹⁰

1/5

Travellers have a disability

31%

of Travellers live in households that cannot pay for basic items

Roma in Ireland often find it difficult to provide the necessary documentation to comply with the Habitual Residence Condition and so cannot access social welfare payments, including Child Benefit. This forces some Roma families into desperate poverty and overcrowded living conditions.

According to the *Roma Needs Assessment*, 20% of respondents experienced significant poverty, including:

- No kitchen (**12.4%**)
- No cooker (**9.6%**)
- No fridge (**13.5%**)
- Sometimes without food, gas, water and/or electricity
- Begging as a source of income (**17.6%**)
- No income (**14%**)

The Roma Needs Assessment makes a series of recommendations including an enhanced humanitarian response for Roma in dire poverty, national Roma employment and training actions and effective measures to tackle anti-Roma discrimination and racism.

The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) has called on the government to expedite the *Traveller Education Strategy*, *Traveller Health Action Plan* and the *Traveller Mental Health Action Plan*. They also call for a focus on reducing Traveller child poverty, more delivery of Traveller specific accommodation, measures to address energy poverty especially for Travellers living in mobile homes, and funding to implement the 149 actions in the *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy*.¹¹¹

Pavee Point also call for investment in accommodation, health and education for Travellers. They have called for equality budgeting to include Travellers and for better data and analysis of how budgets impact on Travellers, investment in apprenticeship programmes and removal of barriers to accessing state support (such as the Habitual Residency Condition), which negatively affects Traveller women fleeing domestic violence.¹¹²

The National Traveller Women's Forum (NTWF) has identified a wide range of issues affecting Travellers, and Traveller women in particular, including discrimination, lack of educational opportunities, domestic violence and problems in private rented accommodation.¹¹³ NTWF has called for more workplaces where Travellers can be safe from discrimination, more provision of childcare and opportunities to enter work without losing important secondary benefits such as a Medical Card.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ <https://data.cso.ie/table/F5087>

¹⁰⁸ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8itseah/

¹⁰⁹ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-roma-and-travellers-survey-country-sheet-ireland_en.pdf

¹¹⁰ www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/RNA-PDF.pdf

¹¹¹ <https://itmtrav.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ITM-Pre-Budget-Submission-2023.pdf>

¹¹² <https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/PreBudgetSubmission.pdf>

¹¹³ www.ntwf.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/NTWF-Gender-Position-Paper.pdf

¹¹⁴ www.ntwf.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/NTWF-Traveller-Women-and-Employment.pdf

Focus on Migrants

A recent ESRI report shows that Ireland has a ‘migrant wage gap’ of 22%, which can be as high as 40% for migrants from Eastern Europe. Non-Irish nationals tend to be in lower quality jobs and are less likely to be members of trade unions. African nationals have “very low” employment rates and earn on average 14% less than Irish nationals after accounting for background and job characteristics.

Non-Irish women experience a double earnings penalty: “Non-Irish women earn 11 per cent less than non-Irish men, who in turn earn 18 per cent less than Irish men. This means non-Irish women earn 30 per cent less than Irish men.”¹¹⁵

In addition to economic inequality, Ireland continues to have frequent reports of racism and racist crimes, especially against people who are visibly different due to skin colour, religious clothing or ethnicity.¹¹⁶

The Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) has cautioned against the introduction of Seasonal Employment Permits. If the scheme proceeds, the cost of these should be carried by employers and not charged to workers, and measures should be put in place to ensure that seasonal workers can access the Workplace Relations Commission for any breaches of their employment rights. Contracts under the scheme should guarantee a weekly minimum number of paid hours and clearly outline what net wages will be received.¹¹⁷ ICI have also called for more progress on migrant local integration.¹¹⁸

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) has called for the reduction in the “extortionate” €300 fee levied for an Irish Residence Permit (IRP) card, which is over 15 times the fee charged in Austria, Greece or Spain.¹¹⁹

Cairde highlights that many people from ethnic minority communities face barriers accessing health services and their needs are often overlooked in health service planning and delivery.¹²⁰ In particular, there can be a gap in access to mental health services.¹²¹

People who are illegally trafficked are most vulnerable to poverty as well as abuse, and may be forced into prostitution or enforced begging. Only 44 cases of human trafficking were detected in Ireland in 2021, but ICI believe that many cases go undetected.¹²²

The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) call for increased weekly payments for asylum seekers living in Direct Provision centres and access to the welfare Free Travel pass. They also call for the restoration of Child Benefit payments to the 1,600 children living in these centres. They call for greater investment in English language education, translation services, and legal aid, as well as greater investment in housing as many people with refugee status cannot find affordable housing and remain in state centres despite their legal right to remain.¹²³

IRC have also highlighted the rapid rise in homelessness among people seeking international protection in Ireland.¹²⁴

The Vincentian MESL Research Centre published a working paper on the MESL costs for families in Direct Provision and found a weekly shortfall of €117.50 for a family with one parent and two children, or €140.37 for a family of two parents and two children. They recommend the introduction of a Child Benefit type payment for these families, while noting that it would be insufficient on its own to address these families’ income inadequacy.¹²⁵

Financial Justice Ireland (FJI, formally Debt and Development Coalition) highlight that the economic system we live in does not serve the majority of people yet many people find economics too complicated to develop an opinion on. They advocate for more educational resources to help people understand the economic system.¹²⁶ One of the issues FJI have highlighted is the importance of migrant workers’ remittances (money sent to their countries of origin) as a source of income for family who may have little other income to rely on. There can be exploitation in terms of fees levied on the international transfer of money, and sending remittances can mean that migrants end up experiencing poverty in Ireland.

¹¹⁵ www.esri.ie/news/new-esri-research-finds-a-significant-migrant-wage-gap-with-east-europeans-particularly

¹¹⁶ See, for example, <https://inar.ie/our-work/research-and-data-on-racism-in-ireland/>

¹¹⁷ See Consultation on Seasonal Employment Permit and Transfer of Employment Permit - <https://shorturl.at/hFNr2>

¹¹⁸ www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/2022-11/IMCI%20Report%20Final_O.pdf

¹¹⁹ www.mrci.ie/2023/08/28/migrant-group-calls-on-minister-mcentee-to-reduce-extortionate-immigration-fees-in-upcoming-budget/

¹²⁰ <https://cairde.ie/about/improving-access/>

¹²¹ <https://cairde.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Developing-Mental-Health-Advocacy-Report-Dec-2021.pdf>

¹²² See Migrants and Gender Based Violence and Human Trafficking <https://shorturl.at/LvLqy>

¹²³ <https://irishrefugeecouncil.eu.rit.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=5e1558ab-2979-4b7c-b8b2-d2518c0aef6a>

¹²⁴ www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/now-i-live-on-the-road-new-report-on-homelessness-among-people-seeking-protection

¹²⁵ www.budgeting.ie/download/pdf/working_paper_-_estimating_the_mesl_costs_for_families_in_direct_provision.pdf

¹²⁶ www.financialjustice.ie/econowhat1/what-is-econo-wa/

Focus on People in Adverse Circumstances

A programme of measures to eliminate consistent poverty must go beyond the headline statistics if it is going to bring all 185,385 individuals out of consistent poverty. That includes measures to eliminate consistent poverty among the 14,303 people currently in emergency homeless accommodation (April 2024),¹²⁷ the 14,502 people given international protection or humanitarian leave to remain in Ireland in the period 2019-early 2023,¹²⁸ the 82,956 people from Ukraine granted temporary protection in Ireland since February 2022,¹²⁹ some of those affected by addiction (in a context where 7% of the population uses illegal drugs every year)¹³⁰ and the c. 2,600 people leaving prison every year,¹³¹ many of whom are in poverty on release.

People fleeing domestic violence was addressed earlier in relation to lone parents, but not everyone fleeing violence or abuse has children. Nonetheless, many of the policy proposals listed earlier are equally relevant to people fleeing domestic violence who are also in poverty.

ATD Ireland works with people affected by chronic poverty and they highlight the lived experience of poverty in order to inform what it would take to realise the sustainable development goal of leaving no one behind. For example, they highlight the needs of families in Direct Provision, Traveller groups, addiction recovery groups, asylum seekers, people with experience of prison, adult literacy groups, people in isolated rural areas, and people struggling with poor mental health. ATD Ireland's *Community Conversations* report highlights the diversity of experiences, the resilience and capacity of people affected by poverty and inequality, and the variety of community organisations that provide vital support for people.¹³²

Homelessness in Ireland is at its highest level in years, with 14,303 people in homeless emergency accommodation in June 2024, including 4,404 children.¹³³ Focus Ireland highlight that a range of zero-cost changes to housing policy could help alleviate homelessness, including fairer access to social housing for households trapped in homelessness for long periods, intensive case management to facilitate exits out of homelessness, greater local flexibility on use of two-bed units for Housing First where no

“ I just wanted to highlight the massive link between being discriminated against, shouldering shame and stigma and the effect on mental health.”

Spotlight on Income in Older Age

“ There is a lack of resources and an under investment in youth. This leads to limited job prospects and opportunities. Children grow up to disrespect law and order.”

Breaking Barriers

one-bed units are available, legislation to require Local Authorities to regard the best interests of the child when responding to families presenting as homeless, and alignment of rent arrears arrangements for HAP (Housing Assistance Payment) tenants with those for social housing tenants to avoid evictions into homelessness due to low levels of arrears. In addition, Focus Ireland call for measures including increased investment in social housing supply, greater supports for young people leaving care (building on recent initiatives), funding for the tenant in situ scheme, increased funding for HAP, and increased funding for mental health in-reach services within homeless accommodation.¹³⁴

The Simon Communities of Ireland (SCI) national office reports on the low number of properties advertised for rent at or below the maximum allowed under the HAP scheme, which shows how people reliant on HAP are locked out of the housing market by high costs.¹³⁵ Both SCI and Focus have called for the HAP maximum rents to be aligned to data showing the realities of the private rental market. In its budgetary proposals, SCI call for investment in bringing vacant buildings into use as residences, more investment in the prevention of homelessness, a 40% increase in Rent Supplement rates, and higher social welfare rates.¹³⁶

The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) notes that Ireland's rates of committal to prison are among the highest in the EU and Council of Europe area, due to sentencing and penal policy rather than demographics or rates of crime. Overcrowding is common and the prison population has poor literacy levels, poor mental health, addictions and experience of homelessness.¹³⁷ IPRT call for reform of penal policy, and also a greater level of support for prisoners on release.¹³⁸

¹²⁷ www.focusireland.ie/knowledge-hub/latest-figures/

¹²⁸ www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-06-01/259/

¹²⁹ www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-06-01/259/

¹³⁰ www.hrb.ie/news/press-releases/single-press-release/article/new-hrb-report-examines-drug-use-in-ireland/

¹³¹ Estimate, based on <https://www.iprt.ie/prison-facts-2/>

¹³² www.atdireland.ie/wp/leave-no-one-behind-series-3-2/

¹³³ www.focusireland.ie/knowledge-hub/latest-figures/

¹³⁴ www.focusireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Pre-Budget-Submission-2024.pdf

¹³⁵ www.simon.ie/e-publication/locked-out-executive-summary-june-2023/

¹³⁶ www.simon.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Simon-Communities-of-Ireland-Pre-Budget-Submission-2023.pdf

¹³⁷ www.iprt.ie/why-penal-reform/

¹³⁸ www.iprt.ie/site/assets/files/7214/progress_in_the_penal_system_2022.pdf

Synthesis: More Focus Needed on the Structural Causes of Poverty

The great reduction of consistent poverty from the 1980s to the early 2000s was due to the rise of employment, including more opportunities to get a well-paid job with consistent hours. While necessary, this approach was and remains insufficient to complete the eradication of consistent poverty. The state has taken steps to addressing some of the barriers to employment, such as the need for affordable childcare and changes to welfare rules to eliminate ‘poverty traps’, but more is needed.

Most of consistent poverty in 2024 is concentrated among people who are not in employment. Based on 2022 data, 4 in 5 adults in consistent poverty were not in employment, 5.3% were retired, 9% were engaged in domestic tasks, and 19.7% were unable to work due to health. For most of these people, employment is not the solution. Instead, there needs to be a greater focus on public services to meet their basic needs and to eliminate deprivation, combined with income adequacy through social protection payments.

For the 1 in 5 people in consistent poverty despite being employed, a greater focus is needed on minimum hours of work per week, consistent access to work, housing supports and other public services, as well as income supplements, especially for those with disabilities and/or dependents.

Above all, as illustrated by the lived experience comments made by people with direct experience, there needs to be greater participation of people living in poverty in the policies that affect them, and actions are required to address the stigma and discrimination experienced by people in poverty. People living in poverty must be fully respected as rights-holders, and participation in the decisions that directly affect them is a fundamental requirement of human rights.

In this regard, the Community Platform’s submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights highlights the failure of successive governments to address poverty and other long-term challenges, resulting in deeper inequalities and hardship for many people, particularly those from the most marginalised communities. The submission calls on the state to improve and strengthen the ways it engages with civil society and affected communities in order to find workable and effective solutions to these challenges.¹³⁹ The Platform’s proposals on collaborative governance provide a framework for improved engagement.¹⁴⁰

“ *It’s like having a book in front of you and you judge that book by the cover, but you never got the chance to read it — or speak to the person to see who they are, what they’re really like.* ”
Breaking Barriers

What are the next steps?

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 acknowledges the definition of poverty put forward by the European Platform Against Poverty initiative, that “poverty in its multiple dimensions includes a lack of income and sufficient material resources to live in dignity; inadequate access to basic services, such as healthcare, housing and education; labour market exclusion and poor quality work.”¹⁴¹

The identification of poverty as complex—having multiple causes and different manifestations—points towards the need for a systemic approach to the reduction and elimination of consistent poverty. The diverse perspectives put forward by members of the Community Platform, and by other social justice organisations, points to the intersection of poverty, inequality, discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion. Not everyone in consistent poverty can get out of poverty by accessing good quality employment, as many of those who remain in poverty are unable to work for a variety of reasons. In many cases, the provision of housing, healthcare and education would alleviate costs for households affected by consistent poverty as well as providing a potential route out of poverty.

It is welcome that a new plan to end child poverty has been published (August 2023), and there is an opportunity to shape the work of the new programme office as it conducts research and prepare policy proposals for government. Not least, the work of the office to set the next child poverty target will be crucial. Now is the opportunity to press politicians and officials for the next to eliminate all child poverty—and all consistent poverty.

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion runs until 2025 but even next year officials will be preparing for the next national anti-poverty plan. Now is the opportunity to press politicians and officials that the next plan should restore the target (from 2002 and 2007) to seek the total elimination of consistent poverty by 2030.

It is possible to eliminate consistent poverty by 2030, but it will only happen if society pushes government to take the necessary steps, many of which are outlined in this report.

¹³⁹ https://communityplatform.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Community-Platform-ICESCR-Submission_FINAL.pdf

¹⁴⁰ <https://communityplatform.ie/publication/towards-a-progressive-model-of-collaborative-governance-a-community-platform-discussion-paper/>

¹⁴¹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/64919609-e0ad-4e76-9970-00f4490f92ef>

Recommendations

The Community Platform's *Manifesto for Local, European and General Elections* asks parties to commit to the eradication of poverty:

Develop and implement an all of Government anti-poverty strategy based on the target of eliminating consistent poverty by 2030 with a range of policy and administrative measures adequate to ensure this target is achieved.

Achieving the goal of eliminating consistent poverty will involve a high level of political commitment and policy measures that are adequate to meeting this challenge, including:

- Income adequacy for everyone, in or out of work, and in retirement.
- Access to quality, affordable and sustainable public services for all irrespective of income level, including public housing, education, transport, utilities, care and health, including the full implementation of Sláintecare.
- Access to a quality job, which provides a decent income, for those who can work.
- Effective and transparent ex-ante poverty and equality impact assessment.
- Effective and proactive measures to prevent all forms of discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights.

Six key recommendations from this report are:

- 1** Commit to the eradication of consistent poverty by 2030.
- 2** Develop and implement an anti-poverty strategy, along the lines proposed by the Community Platform.
- 3** Acknowledge and address the structural reasons why some people are more likely to be in poverty, including gender, age (including being a child), being a lone parent, domestic abuse, disability, Deaf/Irish Sign Language users, educational disadvantage, living in a disadvantaged area, housing tenure, long-term unemployment, living alone, ethnicity (including being a Traveller or Roma), being an immigrant, and living in adverse circumstances such as homelessness or a mental health crisis.
- 4** Ensure there is a route out of poverty for those who are unable to secure an adequate income from work, or who are unable to work due to disability, parenting, unpaid caring, discrimination or simply the lack of opportunities where they live.
- 5** Lower wealth inequality, such as through progressive wealth taxation and greater investment in public housing.
- 6** Better coordinate and target income supports and public services to reduce the incidence of material deprivation.

THE COMMUNITY PLATFORM

**THE COMMUNITY PLATFORM IS
AN ALLIANCE OF 31 NATIONAL
NETWORKS AND ORGANISATIONS
IN THE COMMUNITY AND
VOLUNTARY SECTOR WORKING
TO ADDRESS POVERTY, SOCIAL
EXCLUSION AND INEQUALITY.**



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- Cairde
- European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland
- Family Resource Centre National Forum
- Financial Justice Ireland
- Focus Ireland
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Independent Living Movement Ireland
- Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed
- Irish Penal Reform Trust
- Irish Refugee Council
- Irish Rural Link
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- National Adult Literacy Agency
- National Traveller Women's Forum
- National Women's Council
- One Family
- Pavee Point
- Rape Crisis Network Ireland
- Safe Ireland
- Sign Language Interpreting Service
- Simon Communities of Ireland
- TASC
- Threshold
- Treoir
- Women's Aid
- Women's Collective Ireland



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CHALLENGING POVERTY & INEQUALITY

SEPTEMBER 2024