



COMMUNITY PLATFORM
CHALLENGING POVERTY & INEQUALITY

Community Platform

Pre Budget Submission

Budget 2027



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht

The Community Platform is funded by DRCDG.

COMMUNITY PLATFORM - CHALLENGING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

a network of 32 national organisations working to address poverty, social exclusion, and inequality

Introduction

Founded in 1996, the Community Platform is an alliance of national networks and organisations in the community and voluntary sector working to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality. The Community Platform was set up to be a collective critical voice for equality, rights and anti-poverty interests at a national level. The Community Platform works together as one voice capturing a wide diverse group of organisations' representing marginalised groups in Ireland. For further information see appendix 1.

In budget 2027 The Community Platform calls for measures to address the following:

Poverty

- Redesign how poverty is calculated to more accurately reflect the real situation, particularly the impact of housing costs.
- Introduce a Minimum Income, automatically benchmarked to the cost of living, based on the MESL index.
- Introduce a Universal Care Income.
- Stop subsidising the private sector to deliver more expensive, poorer quality services, that more efficiently should be delivered as public services.
- Overhaul the tax system on a progressive basis, eliminating tax avoidance & taxing wealth to reduce inequality.
- Provide adequate funding and resourcing for the recently published Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2026-2030.
- Fund a dedicated Anti-Poverty Coordinator role to strengthen coordination of Ireland's anti-poverty response, consistent with the approach recommended under the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- Engage in a comprehensive review of the Report from the SIF Preparatory Workshops undertaken in the run up to this year's Social Inclusion Forum, with a view to the immediate implementation of many of the detailed suggestions made, many of which would have an immediate impact on the groups most likely to be disproportionately impacted by poverty with associated oversight directly including the community and voluntary sectors (as recommended by the EU Anti Poverty Strategy).
- Adopt a justice reinvestment approach and divert funding for the criminal justice system into communities experiencing deprivation as part of a prevention approach, focusing resourcing on education, youth services, addiction supports, housing and employment initiatives in those communities.

Racism and Exclusion

- A dedicated, ring-fenced implementation fund for the National Action Plan against Racism and establish dedicated, multi-annual budgets to fully implement the plan's recommendations.
- Significantly increase the €1.1M allocated to Ireland against Racism funding to ensure grassroots organisations can scale up local initiatives combating racism
- Core funding for migrant organisations and groups set up to and working directly with and in support of migrants across the country to support inclusion and anti racism initiatives at community level.
- A dedicated, ring-fenced implementation fund for the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II in Budget 2027 with an increase of 20% to the current annual NTRIS implementation budget.

- A dedicated, ring-fenced implementation fund for the National Traveller Health Action Plan with an increase of 35% to its annual budget to fund the full and meaningful implementation of the Action Plan, strengthen, support and sustain Traveller Primary Health Care Projects, strengthen workforce planning- recruitment and retention , and roll out of the Traveller Mental Health Action Plan with a dedicated ringfenced figure allocated towards its implementation.
- An adequate and ringfenced budget to be secured and allocated for the implementation of the Roma Health Action Plan in 2027.
- A dedicated, ring-fenced implementation fund for the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy with an increase of 25% to its current budget with associated timelines and targets.
- A substantial increase in funding specifically ringfenced and allocated to immigration service delivery in the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration in order to increase resourcing and thereby reduce the extremely long wait times and processing delays experienced by migrants in Ireland in relation to a range of applications and renewals.
- With an associated budget for enhanced and essential support for organisations working with migrants on these issues and for services providing the associated professional counselling including trauma counselling.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- An additional €300m investment in Budget 2027 to reduce childcare costs and improve accessibility.
- Commit to adequate investment in and ensure the public delivery of quality public services and supports, such as health, housing, education (for children and adults), childcare and social care.
- Deliver a universal, accessible, publicly funded model for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) with a guaranteed place for all children, including through increased investment in ECEC to 1% of national income by 2030.
- Begin the rollout of publicly-delivered ECEC, with 50 pilot services, prioritising marginalised and underserved communities. 30 million
- Capital funding for state-led services, but linked to rollout of public delivery between 2026 and 2030. 135 Million
- Ring-fenced funding for ECCE educators' wages; and commitment for state to take on ECCE educators' wages in the sector
- Increased investment in targeted supports, Equal Start and AIM
- The main call on Social Protection is to protect payments and raise them by €15 in Budget 27 and other increases for the child support payment.

Violence against Women

- Resource Cuan to provide secure and multi-annual funding to frontline and DSGBV specialist services and to the essential independent community initiatives which work from the ground up and act as first responders as well as ongoing empowerers and supporters.
- Legal Aid
 - Guarantee Civil Legal Aid for all Orders under the Domestic Violence Act 2018 - provide ringfenced funding to the Legal Aid Board for DVA 2018 applications, fund a DVA 2018 legal aid solicitor panel, out-of-hours or rapid-response legal advice pathways, court-based legal aid clinics or scheduled legal aid attendance in high-volume family court venues
- Adequate and free legal advice and court accompaniment for all victims-survivors
- of DSGBV
- Resource physical court environments for the provision of sufficient
- waiting/consultation rooms, and separate facilities for victims-survivors

- Establish specialised judges to handle DSGBV cases and invest in training for Gardaí
- and the DPP to better support victims-survivors
- Establish a non-means tested Safe Fund for victims-survivors to
- alleviate the financial burden on their path to independence and safety
- Survivor-Centred Structures of Engagement , €3 million
- Sustainable multi-annual funding for specialist DV services:to cover staffing, operational, accommodation and victim-survivor related costs. This will facilitate organisations to plan strategically, reducing administrative burden for both government and service providers, improving financial accountability and enabling services to invest in preventative and long-term initiatives as opposed to crisis management.
- Enhance workplace conditions for specialist DV service staff including unsocial hours compensation, universal benefits and protected training budgets.

Climate and Just Transition

- Allocate specific resources and commit to gender, equality and poverty-proofing all climate policies and investment; including the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund (ICNF) and the Social Climate Fund.
- Provide targeted cost-of-living supports at households most exposed to energy poverty and transport disadvantage
- Maintain and increase funding for community climate action projects and provide long term clarity for funding and funding sources that allows groups to plan for the future and sustain momentum – such as the Climate Action Fund and the Just Transition Fund

Disability

- Introduction of a Cost of Disability Payment Scheme in line with input from the public consultations and the Cost of Disability Strategic Focus Network Summit.
- Review the Disability Allowance and other Disability-related social protection schemes by substantially increasing the income disregards for these payments.
- Introduce a fully-resourced scheme to initiate and strengthen DPOs-led Employment Support Programmes.

Mental Health

- Invest at least an additional €328 million for mental health, including €8m to establish Ireland's first Mother & Baby Unit.
- Improve Mental Health services for people experiencing homelessness Improve mental health services for people experiencing homelessness – with more focus on harm-reduction measures and increased HSE funding for mental health, drug, and alcohol interventions.
- Divert people with serious mental health needs away from prison and the criminal justice system and into appropriate care through the increased resourcing of community mental health services and expansion of the Psychiatric In-reach and Court Liaison Service nationally.

Housing and Homelessness

- Significantly increase investment in State-led housing and accommodation for the provision of public, affordable, secure and cost-rental homes, including substantially increasing the delivery of culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation, and move towards the goal of 20% of all housing in the state being social and affordable housing as recommended by the Housing Commission.
- Provide ring-fenced funding to support the implementation of the forthcoming Homelessness Prevention Framework, as part of a cross-departmental approach.
- Accelerate the renovation and retrofitting of the housing stock, prioritising energy poor households

- Ensure that funding is secured to allow for increases in the maximum monthly rent limits under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme, in order to bring them in line with market rents.
- Ensure adequate funding and resourcing for the implementation of the forthcoming Child and Family Homelessness Action Plan.
- Ensure social housing supply increases to the new target of 12,000 homes per year and ensure these homes have the maximum impact on reducing long-term homelessness.
- Align HAP rates with up-to-date local rent data, as recommended by the Housing Commission and the ESRI, to improve affordability and increase access to rental accommodation for households reliant on this payment. As an important form of short-term housing support, HAP must allow people to secure a home in their own community without undue financial hardship.
- In recognising that domestic violence is a significant driver of homelessness among women and children in Ireland, there needs to be co-ordinated housing pathways that support their journey to freedom. This includes:
 - Capital investment in refuge, Safe Homes and move-on accommodation - through Cuan capital funding, increased use of CAS, prioritisation for areas with limited or no refuge provision.
 - Develop a national housing pathway for DSGBV victim-survivors - create a national DSGBV housing allocation category and ringfence appropriate local authority and AHB allocations; fund tenancy sustainment supports for victim-survivors moving into permanent housing; fund dedicated DSGBV Housing Officers in every local authority.
 - Establish a national Sanctuary Scheme, available across tenure types where safe and appropriate (security enhancements) and fund Sanctuary Co-ordinators to facilitate this.
 - Provide flexible DSGBV housing support fund for deposits, rent in advance, utility costs, relocation costs and school transport.

Adult Literacy

- Provide additional funding to support the Adult Literacy for Life strategy through its Learn with NALA distance and eLearning service, literacy ambassador programme in Irish prisons, and teaching and learning materials
- Provide sufficient funding to implement the recommendations of the Expert Group on Literacy Provision, the mid-term review of the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy and strategic advice notes from the National Skills Council

Quality Employment

- Introduce a living wage based on the cost of living, as calculated by the Living Wage Technical Group.
 - Strengthen Ireland's lifelong learning infrastructure so that all people of working age can access appropriate education and training opportunities, particularly at less than Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
 - Introduce automatic provision of the Working Family Payment for eligible families.
 - Ensure the Public Employment Service can support all people of working age to access career development opportunities, regardless of their employment or social welfare status.
 - Continue to invest in effective disability employment schemes to tackle the stubbornly high disability employment gap in Ireland.
 - Develop, resource and implement a comprehensive national Traveller and Roma employment, training and enterprise action plan, and scale up the target for the Civil Service Traveller and Roma Placement Programme with a 15% increase in placements in Budget 2027. Reinforce the initiative through development of an associated initiative in support of long term employment across the civil and public service and local authorities.

- Update the thresholds for medical cards, and adequately increase the income disregards of means tests for the One Parent Family Payment, the Disability Allowance and the Jobseeker's Allowance. Removal of the "4 in 7" rule must be implemented to support people to access employment.
- Ensure that means testing and loss of secondary benefits do not disincentivise particularly marginalised groups from accessing the labour market.

Funding for the Community Sector and Voluntary Sector

Provide adequate and sustainable funding for the Community and Voluntary Sectors Strategy including a commitment to expanding supports for Community Development through the expansion of the Community Development Programme, and increasing funding to organisations funded under the Scheme of Supports for National Organisations (SSNO) who as it currently stands, will have received no increase in funding in the 2026-2030 allocation.

Community Development Programme

The Community Development Programme was launched in June 2021, reflecting the commitment in the Programme for Government of the day to re-establish the programme. The programme aims to support community development initiatives that address poverty, social exclusion and inequality and environmental concerns, and promote human rights. The associated objectives set out to: develop collective community responses to these; demonstrate the benefits of community development when addressing new and emerging issues and to call for collaboration and cooperation between marginalised groups, mainstream services and decision-making bodies. The Community Development Programme has guaranteed funding from DRCDG to the end of 2026. Community Work Ireland is funded to support the programmes and promote the work undertaken with a view to building the case for programme with a view to building the case for expansion and extension of the programme.

Supporting National Organisations

The Scheme of Support for National Organisations (SSNO) provides critical core funding to national NGOs to carry out their work. The current funding round is from 1st July 2026 – 31st December 2029 with a maximum amount awarded per organisation of €90,000 per annum. This is the same maximum figure allocated in 2016 meaning that at the end of 2029, despite inflation, cost of living increases, rising fuel and operational costs and increasing demands on national organisations, they will have received no increase in SSNO funding for 13 years.

This situation is causing huge strain on organisations in the sector and must be addressed urgently. Invest in the extension and expansion of the SSNO from 2027 and beyond.

The Community Platform calls for:

- A commitment in Budget 2027 for a new deliberative review of the SSNO with the Community and Voluntary sectors and the Department, exploring its essential reinforcement.
- A commitment in Budget 2027, to increase SSNO funding by 25% to be continued to the end of the Scheme in 2029.

Community Platform

Increased funding for the Community Platform to at least €52,000, there has been no increase in funding over the past decade. The Community Platform serves as a vital mechanism for representing through social partnership processes Ireland's increasingly diverse marginalised communities and the existing,

new and emerging challenges that they face. It provides the sole access point to Social Partnership for numerous national networks and organisations that represent and support people experiencing poverty, disadvantage and inequality. Without the Community Platform, therefore, many marginalised communities would be excluded from key fora, dialogues and spaces for engagement with the state.

NOTE: Details of Community Platform proposals are in the Pre-Budget submissions of the Platform members.

For more information about the Community Platform you can check out our **website** here: [Community Platform | Community Platform / https://communityplatform.ie/](https://communityplatform.ie/)

We are also on **Instagram** [Community Platform \(@communityplatformirl\)](https://www.instagram.com/communityplatformirl/) • [Instagram photos and videos](#) and **Linkedin**: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/community-platformirl/posts/?feedView=all>

Links to some of the Community Platform Members own Prebudget submissions:

1. [CWI - AIEB Pre budget submission - Community Work Ireland](#)
2. [National Women's Council: Pre-Budget Submission 2027 » Publications » The National Women's Council of Ireland](#)
3. <https://www.nala.ie/publications/our-asks-for-budget-2027/>
4. <https://www.atdireland.ie/wp/atd-ireland-2027-pre-budget-submission/>
5. [AONTAS PreBudget Submission 2027](#)

Appendix 1:

Community Platform

What we believe

- The vision of the Community Platform is an Ireland that is inclusive, sustainable and equal.
- The mission of the Community Platform is to work together to develop and promote a shared analysis, policies and action based on our values.
- The Values of the Community Platform are: Dignity, Economic Equality, Participation, Social Justice, Solidarity, Sustainability and Transparency.

What we do:

The main activities of the Platform are:

- Mutual solidarity, sharing information training and discussion.
- Developing joint policies, positions and publications.
- Promoting policies through participation in national structures (such as the Community and Voluntary Pillar), liaising with Government Ministers and Departments and through public statements.

Membership

The Platform is currently made up of 32 national organisations (below). Membership is open to national organisations whose main focus is on representing the interests of those living in poverty, social exclusion and inequality. Priority is given to organisations working from the values of dignity, economic equality, participation, social justice, solidarity and sustainability.