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Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe
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Budget 2024 – Enhancing the Well-being of People Living in Ireland

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This paper has been prepared by staff in the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery & Reform. The views presented in this paper are those of the author alone and do not represent the official views of the Department or Minister.

Introduction

In the *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future*, the Government has set out a commitment to utilising a well-being perspective to inform budgetary priorities as a complement to existing economic measurement tools. This is part of a wider commitment to developing a set of well-being indices to create a well-rounded, holistic view of how Irish society is faring and to utilising this approach in a systematic way across government policy making.

Ireland's [Well-being Framework](#) was launched in July 2021. The Framework consists of eleven dimensions which constitute the different aspects of well-being.



Well-being and the Budgetary Process

In December 2022, the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform published a [working paper](#) that outlines how a well-being perspective was being developed within the whole-of-year budgetary process:

- *Summer Economic Statement* – Annual publication of a high-level analysis of the CSO's [Well-being Dashboard](#) to provide an [overall picture of Ireland's progress](#) using data that facilitates a longer-term view of quality of life;
- [National Economic Dialogue](#) – Provides an opportunity for stakeholders to consider issues around well-being including longer-term economic, social and environmental factors;
- *Spending Review* – Offers an opportunity to develop and present policy analysis that [applies a well-being perspective](#) to existing public policies and programmes;
- Expenditure Allocations - Utilise the dimensions of the *Well-being Framework* to provide a cross-governmental presentation of public expenditure allocations.

The purpose of this working paper is to set out an initial approach to describing how the selected measures presented in [Budget 2024 - Expenditure Report](#) are enhancing well-being.¹ This approach is intended to complement the existing Vote Group approach presented in the *Expenditure Report*. More broadly, it is intended to inform a dialogue about how a well-being perspective may further contribute to informing resource allocation decisions. It is also intended that the *Well-being Framework* will be utilised to describe total expenditure allocations following the publication of the *Revised Estimates for Public Services*.

A Well-being Perspective on Selected Measures Announced in the Budget

Ireland's *Well-being Framework* sets out an overarching vision of “enabling all our people to live fulfilled lives now and into the future”. The approach set out in Ireland [conceptualises public policy](#) as, in general, providing opportunities for people to change or progress their lives, and more specifically, as a way of intervening in a targeted manner in cases when opportunity may have been denied by the context in which a person lives (e.g., by poverty or deprivation).

Ireland's *Well-being Framework* focuses attention on **how public policy can enable people to have purposeful lives that support good physical and mental health, enabling development of skills across the life cycle and providing a good standard of living.**

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **mental and physical health** aspect of well-being:

- €38.9m to support delivery of additional capacity. Funding for increased staff for beds across Acute and Community settings. Development of surgical hubs in 2024 to improve access and deliver better patient outcomes. Delivering on ICT Capital Plan including National Patient App and expansion of the virtual care model [Department of Health]
- €40.3m to support workforce and reform. Delivering workforce reform measures such as Safe Staffing, increased consultant numbers, increased GP training places and more Advanced Nurse Practitioners. Delivery of reform measures towards the regionalisation of the Health Service [Department of Health]
- €13.2m to support improved access for patients. Delivery of measures under Urgent and Emergency Care Plan (UEC) and the Waiting List Action Plan (WLAP) to reduce waiting time and improve patient flow [Department of Health]
- €7.5m to support better services. Expansion and continued development across acute and community services including CAMHS, new-born screening and health and wellbeing initiatives [Department of Health]
- Continuing support for sports and recreation: Increase female participation in sport, which will include examining participation, coaching & officiating; Enhanced supports for high performance athletes; Increased support for the national sporting organisations [Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media]

¹ What is presented here is based on information provided by Departments and Offices as part of a well-being tagging initiative.

- €3.3m to support the Digital Safety Coordinator [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **knowledge, skills and innovation** aspect of well-being:

- €39m to support the provision of Free School Books for Junior Cycle students in post-primary schools in the free education scheme. This will reduce the cost of education for over 212,000 students and their families [Department of Education]
- €13m to support the provision of an additional 1,216 Special Needs Assistants working across primary, post-primary and special schools in September 2024. Additional SEN resources will support the provision of an inclusive education system [Department of Education]
- €14m to support the provision of an additional 744 teachers working across various SEN settings included Special Classes, Special Schools, and Mainstream settings. Additional SEN resources will support the provision of an inclusive education system. [Department of Education]
- €20m to support the continuation of the Enhanced Summer Programme to address the ongoing impact of Covid on children [Department of Education]
- €5m provision to increase the education welfare supports to retain children in schools and supports for those outside traditional school settings [Department of Education]
- €4m to support the provision of additional supports for Special Schools [Department of Education]
- €10m to provide for the continuation of curricular and assessment reforms, particularly in relation to the Senior Cycle [Department of Education]
- €7m to support increased capitation for recognised schools in the free education scheme [Department of Education]
- €60m in funding to address the sustainable funding of Higher Education as outlined in Funding the Future, including: increased staffing levels and strengthened capacity, enhanced support services for students, greater alignment of provision with priority skills needs, further development of tertiary programmes [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]
- €67.4m to provide funding for the growth of the craft apprenticeship system from 13,000 places in 2022 to over 16,000 places in 2024 and fund additional apprenticeship bursaries [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]
- €31m to support improvements to the student grant scheme: Maintenance Grant increases to adjacent and non-adjacent rates. A pro-rata increase will commence in January 2024; Restoration of maintenance grants to eligible postgraduate

students on a similar basis to undergraduates. Pro-rata grants will commence in January 2024; - Increase to the income threshold for Band 4 Maintenance Grant and 100% Student Contribution Grant from September 2024; Addressing fees for part-time education as part of Child Poverty Agenda [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]

- €4.1m to enhance the number of medicine places for Irish/EU students [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]
- €3m to drive FET Strategy Implementation with a particular focus on digital transformation, quality assurance and curriculum development [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]
- €3m to standardise and reduce PLC charges levied across the sector [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]
- €2m to support the implementation of the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy and funding to improve outcomes for learners who engage with FET while in custody or through transition from custody FET through Building Bridges [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]
- €2.5m in additional funding for Students with Disabilities across all FET programmes both full time and part-time, and provide free period products for the period poverty initiative [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science]
- €7m to support the continued implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) supporting more than 7,000 children with a disability to access, and meaningfully participate in the ECCE programme, with an expansion of AIM outside of the ECCE programme hours to support children of ECCE age with disabilities [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth]
- €4.5m to support the commencement of an initial rollout of the Equal Participation Model (EPM), whereby services will be provided with a proportionate mix of universal and targeted supports to support children and families accessing their services who are experiencing disadvantage [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth]
- €3.35m to support Science and Technology Programme [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]
- €3.3m for the European Space Agency to ensure that Irish companies can secure additional ESA related contracts to a commensurate value [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]
- €31m to support public sector research and innovation [Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine]
- €41m to support the development of Seafood Infrastructure [Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine]

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **income and wealth** aspect of well-being:

- Weekly Personal and Qualified Adult rates of payment – Working Age Recipients (€448.6m) Increase the weekly rates of payment to all working age recipients by €12 per week, with proportionate increase for qualified adults and those on reduced rates of payment, from January 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Weekly Personal and Qualified Adult Rates of Payment – Pensioners (€461.4m) Increase the weekly rate of all pension payments (for those aged 66 and over) by €12 per week with proportionate increases for qualified adults and those on reduced rates of payment, from January 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Extend Child Benefit eligibility (€21.6m) – Child Benefit will be paid in respect of children aged 18 in full-time education, from September 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Introduce a Pay Related Benefit for Jobseekers (€5m) – Subject to Government decision, to introduce a Pay-Related Jobseeker's benefit scheme which links the rate of benefit to a person's previous earnings, from December 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Increase the income disregard for Carer's Allowance (€19.2m) – Increase the income disregard for Carer's Allowance to €450 single for a single person and to €900 for a couple, from June 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Increase the rate of Domiciliary Care Allowance (€7.6m) – Increase the rate of Domiciliary Care Allowance from €330 to €340 per month, an increase of €10, from January 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Qualified Child Increase (€60.9m) – Increase both IQC rates by €4, from €42 to €46 per week in respect of children aged under 12, and from €50 to €54 per week in respect of children aged 12 and over, from January 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Working Family Payment income thresholds (€1m) – Increase the income thresholds for Working Family Payment by €54 per week, from January 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- Extend Parent's Benefit duration (€10.3m) – Extend Parent's Benefit from 7 to 9 weeks, from August 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- €55m of increased capital funding to deliver Cost Rental and Affordable homes, and to make it more affordable to bring vacant homes back into use [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €348m to support connectivity and communications delivery. An additional 100,000 premises passed, and an additional 40,000 premises connected by end 2024 [Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications]
- €27m to support IDA Regional Property and Grants Programmes [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]

- €9m to support Local Enterprise Offices roll out of expanded mandate [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]
- €3m to support the Credit Guarantee Scheme [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]
- Continuing support for tourism services: Funding to tourism sector to support recovery and sustained development, including targeted measures to support downstream business impacted as a result of the war in Ukraine; Continued funding for both overseas and domestic marketing; Supports for sustainable tourism and climate action initiatives [Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media]

Ireland's *Well-being Framework* focuses attention on **how public policy can ensure a sustainable sense of place, including through an appropriate and safe place to live and protection of Ireland's environment, climate and biodiversity.**

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **housing and built environment** aspect of well-being:

- €155m of increased capital funding for local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to build additional homes for social housing [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €105m of additional funding for Uisce Éireann will ensure the continued delivery of key major projects such as the continuing capacity and biological upgrade of the Ringsend WWTP; major sewer network upgrades in Athlone and supporting the delivery of housing committed to in Housing for All [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €27m to support the provision of homeless services, including emergency accommodation, homelessness prevention measures and tenancy sustainment services. This level of financial support will be kept under continual review in 2024 [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €75m to support increased provision under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme will support the delivery of 6,000 new social homes in 2024 [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €9m of increased capital funding for the delivery of Traveller accommodation and for adaptation works for the homes of older people and people with a disability [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €2.2m to support the work of the Housing Agency and the Approved Housing Body Regulatory Authority [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €10m to allow for increased investment in the resourcing of the planning system, through additional staff for An Bord Pleanála, local authorities and support for a new planning learning and development initiative and the newly established agency to regulate development in the Maritime Area, the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €380m to support the biggest ever budget for SEAI residential and community energy upgrade schemes (including the Solar PV scheme) will continue to build momentum in delivering on our national retrofit targets [Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications]

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **safety and security** aspect of well-being:

- Additional net investment of €21.5 million will allow for the recruitment of up to 1,000 trainee Gardaí, an increased trainee allowance and an additional 250 Garda staff in 2024 to underpin civilianisation and redeployment, and to provide professional support to frontline policing. Additional funding is also provided for the full year cost of recruitment of Garda personnel in 2023. Saving arising from

changes in the staffing profile are netted to provide a net increase of €21 million [An Garda Síochána]

- €25m to provide for a 24 per cent increase in the annual Garda overtime budget to further support frontline policing [An Garda Síochána]
- An additional €20.4m for operational expenditure which includes provision for equipment for Garda units, further funding for road safety policing, the expansion of the canine unit and enhanced Health and Wellness measures for Garda personnel [An Garda Síochána]
- €12.4m to provide for additional investment in payroll will assist the Prison Service in its response to increasing prisoner numbers [Prisons Service]
- €6m to meet increased operational and standing costs of the Defence Forces and facilitate progress on transformation, and allow for an anticipated intake of additional PDF recruits in 2024 along with increase in related training and consultancy costs. It also provides for the full year costs of the extension of Healthcare benefits to all Defence Forces personnel [Department of Defence]
- €34m to support significant capital investment on defensive equipment programmes such as the Land Forces Capability Development and Force Protection Programme, the Naval Service Vessel Renewal and Replacement Programme, and the Air Corps Aircraft Renewal and Replacement Programme, along with upgrading and modernising built infrastructure in military installations throughout the country [Department of Defence]
- €34m for International Protection and Ukraine Response will support the expansion of processing output and enhance processing times [Department of Justice]
- €30m to allow increased humanitarian assistance and support to Ukraine, as well as support for initiatives to tackle food insecurity and increasing humanitarian needs [Department of Foreign Affairs]
- €56m to support evidence-based targeted bovine TB testing [Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine]
- €9.25m to support a number of new statutory Agencies which are in the process of being established (including the Gambling Authority, an agency for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, the Office of the Police Ombudsman, the Policing and Community Safety Authority the National Office of Community Safety and the Office of the Independent Examiner) [Department of Justice]
- €4m to support Emergency Transport Services. This will enable the Department to continue to provide emergency transport services as part of the response to the war in Ukraine [Department of Transport]
- €5.8m to support Irish Coast Guard. This will assist in enhancing Coast Guard services, particularly the transition to a new Coast Guard Search and Rescue service with Bristow [Department of Transport]

- €3m to support the Health and Safety Authority and €5m to support Competition and Consumer Protection Commission [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]
- €10m to increase the statutory foster care rate by the end of 2024 by €75 per week for children under 12 and €73 per week for children over 12, bringing it to €400 and €425 per week respectively [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth]
- €0.4m to Water Safety Ireland to help increase their activity and impact [Department of Rural & Community Development]

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **environment, climate and biodiversity** aspect of well-being:

- €45m to support the National and EU Just Transition Fund Programmes. A number of funding calls are currently open or are due to launch shortly under this programme, including a Bio-economy Demonstration Initiative Scheme, a Scheme for Private and Community SMEs in the Tourism Sector, and a Local and Regional Economic Strategies Support Scheme [Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications]
- €3m to support the rollout of the Circular Economy Strategy to raise Ireland's circularity rate to EU average and reduce the environmental impacts of our patterns of production and consumption [Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications]
- €200m to support enhanced provision for the Agri-Climate Rural Environment (ACRES) scheme [Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine]
- €57m to support enhanced provision for the Organic Farming scheme [Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine]
- €3.6m in additional funding is being provided to support initiatives to protect and restore water quality, particularly those associated with the implementation of, and compliance with, the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €27m to support public transport services. This will enable the Department to continue to provide high quality transport services [Department of Transport]
- €7m in additional funding is being provided to support the programmatic components of the NPWS Strategic Action Plan and the recruitment of Biodiversity Officers; the Heritage Council, the National Monuments Service, built heritage initiatives and Heritage Ireland 2030; visitor services across our national parks, nature reserves, heritage estate and waterways' networks [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €4m in additional capital funding is being provided to support: continued implementation of the NPWS Strategic Action Plan and to support the implementation of the Conservation Measures Programme to fulfil our obligations in relation to the Birds and Habitats' Directives; the conservation of built and archaeological heritage through the Community Monuments Fund, Historic Structures Fund and Built Heritage

Investment Scheme capital projects on the inland waterways, including the restoration of the Ulster Canal (including Shared Island Funds) [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]

- €30m in additional funding for Vote 27, together with funding provided by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, will enable Ireland to provide a total additional sum of €42.5 million for international climate finance in 2024, a significant step towards meeting Ireland's commitment to provide annual funding of €225 million by 2025 [Department of Foreign Affairs]

Ireland's *Well-being Framework* focuses attention on **how public policy can preserve balance, inclusivity and equality of opportunities across society with open and effective government, empowering families, friends and communities to grow, connect and meaningfully engage.**

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **work and job quality** aspect of well-being:

- Wage Subsidy Scheme weekly hours threshold (€3.7m) – Reduce the minimum weekly hours threshold for employers to avail of the Wage Subsidy Scheme from 21 to 15, from April 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- €1.5m to support mentoring and development of social enterprises [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €0.5m to promote remote working in rural areas, promoting the Connected Hubs infrastructure that is in place, which includes over 300 co-working hubs across the country [Department of Rural & Community Development]

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **civic engagement, trust and cultural expression** aspect of well-being:

- €4.6m for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and similar type supports. SICAP aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality by supporting over 2,000 local community groups and through one-to-one engagement with over 23,000 marginalised individuals annually [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €11m for SICAP and volunteering supports to continue community-based support for those from Ukraine and other countries [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €1m to support Local Community Development Committees with local community and economic planning at local level [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €0.2m to Charities Regulatory Authority to regulate the sector [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €2.6m to support the vital work of Reconciliation Fund & Shared Island Civil Society Fund in support of the Good Friday Agreement [Department of Foreign Affairs]
- €1.5m to go towards supporting Irish community organisations overseas, in particular community care groups, through the Government's Emigrant Support Programme. The additional funding will also allow more scope for supporting organisations in regions with growing numbers of younger Irish citizens [Department of Foreign Affairs]

- €0.5m to promote responsible dog ownership [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- Continuing support for arts and culture: Additional funding for the Arts Council; Additional funding for Culture Ireland to enhance the overseas promotion of Irish creatives; Additional funding for the audio visual industry [Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media]
- Continuing support for broadcasting: Additional funding for TG4 to support delivery of their strategy including increasing the level of bespoke Irish language content available to Irish audience, particularly younger audiences; funding for the Media Fund to include funding for the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme and the Courts Reporting Scheme which will provide comprehensive coverage of matters related to local democracy along with other stories of public interest, and to support comprehensive, professional and publicly accessible reports of court proceedings at a District and Circuit Court level. [Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media]

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **connections, community and participation** aspect of well-being:

- €150m to support a variety of discounts including 20% average fare, Young Adult Card and 90-minute fare. This funding will enable the Department to retain these fare discounts to the end of 2024 [Department of Transport]
- €55.6m to support the implementation of the Action Plan for Disability Services. There will be a focus on developing supports and services that are person-centred and support people with disabilities to live ordinary lives in ordinary places. Funding will support improvement and expansion of services in areas including:
 - Residential Services to respond to the demand for priority placements,
 - Adult Day Services for new school leavers in 2024,
 - Respite - to explore innovative ways of providing additional forms of respite alongside more traditional delivery methods,
 - Additional Personal Assistance and Home Support
 [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth]
- €8.5m to support the rollout of the Roadmap for Service Improvement for Disability Services for Children and Young People which will seek to provide a renewed focus on children's disability services in order to provide responsive and timely services to meet the needs of all children with disabilities and their families. Funding will primarily focus on additional therapy assistant posts, additional supports across a number of targeted children's services and on the expansion of educational programmes in this area [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth]
- Extension of Free Travel scheme (€8.5m) – Extend the Free Travel scheme to people medically certified unfit to drive, from July 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- €50m in additional funding for the School Transport Scheme to continue to support the transport of children to and from school [Department of Education]

- €2m to provide additional support to Rural Transport Local Link services [Department of Transport]
- €29m to support the ongoing operation of our local authorities, particularly in the area of fire service provision, and to support the establishment of the State's first Directly Elected Mayor in Limerick [Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage]
- €10m for the Community Recognition Fund which will support the ongoing development of over 880 projects to deliver community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities in every county across the country welcoming and hosting arrivals from Ukraine and other countries [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €2m to continue to support circa. 900 Tidy Town groups nationwide and the Agricultural shows (122 in 2023) right across the country [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €1.8m combined for the Local Improvement Scheme to improve access to homes, farms and outdoor amenities and CLÁR for small-scale infrastructural projects to support sustainable development in identified areas by attracting people to live and work there [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €0.5m to support transport services for offshore islands [Department of Rural & Community Development]
- €1m to support the creation of a new funding scheme for projects that advance enlargement-related reforms in EU candidate countries, and that help to consolidate core EU values in existing EU Member States [Department of Foreign Affairs]
- Continuing support for Gaeltacht and the Irish language: Additional funding for Irish language support schemes; Enhanced funding for Údarás na Gaeltachta [Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media]

Additional funding announced in Budget 2024 supports measures that will enhance the **subjective well-being** aspect of well-being:

- Extension of Hot School Meals (€42.5m) – Extend Hot School Meals in 2024 to non-DEIS primary schools, from April 2024 [Department of Social Protection]
- €41m to support continued enhancements to the National Childcare Scheme (NCS), with more than 150,000 individual children to benefit from a range of supports, including an increased sponsorship rate, an increase in the minimum subsidy to €2.14, and with approximately 2,000 children to benefit from the NCS opening up to childminders, with enhanced Tusla registrations and inspections [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth]
- €10.5m to support continued implementation of Core Funding, with enhancements in Year 3 of the scheme to support improved affordability and accessibility for families, improved pay and conditions for the workforce and improved

sustainability for providers [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth]

- €1.7m to support Workplace Relations Commission [Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment]

