



## COMMUNITY PLATFORM CHALLENGING POVERTY & INEQUALITY

### Our Four Tests for Budget 2016

Dublin, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015

As a point of reference for of today's budget, the Community Platform's presents 'four tests for Budget 2016'. These tests build on the proposals in [The Future Perspective of the Community Platform](#) published in June 2015.

People on low incomes, women and minorities, who gained least in the boom years, have suffered most in the recession. Over a quarter of the population are now officially counted as experiencing deprivation, including many who are working, because of unemployment and service and welfare cuts. **Budget 2016** must urgently address the widespread suffering reported by our members and the people they represent and work with and signal a medium term strategy to build a more equal and inclusive Ireland.

**ATD Ireland ([www.atdireland.ie](http://www.atdireland.ie)) with all Community Platform members will judge Budget 2016 particularly in terms of the following four tests.**

#### **Test 1: Will Budget 2016 redistribute income towards the poorest 20% of the population and compensate those who have lost most over the last seven years?**

*Goal 1 and Goal 10 in new Sustainable Development Goals*

#### **The Community Platform believes the Government should:**

- Make the tax system more progressive, closing loopholes which undermine the effective rates of corporation tax and of income tax at the higher levels.
- Immediately restore the social welfare rate to pre-cuts level and in future budgets benchmark all social welfare rates at a level which is sufficient to both lift people above the poverty line and provide them with a Minimum Essential Standard of Living.

- Give Child Benefit to all children, including children of asylum seekers, regardless of nationality or status. Anyone resident in Direct Provision for 6 months or more, should be given the right to work and replace direct provision accommodation with a rental allowance or housing assistance payment and a cash allowance that will ensure an adequate standard of living.
- Introduce a refundable tax credit system for people on low incomes.

## **Test 2: Will Budget 2016 strengthen access to quality employment?** *Goal 8 in new Sustainable Development Goals*

### **The Community Platform believes the Government should:**

- Ensure that the Public Employment Service develops the capacity to respond to the needs of all people of working age seeking employment and that access to programmes is based on wider criteria than a person's Live Register status.
- Change the criteria for access to Jobseekers' payments and base them on hours rather than days
- Maintain in-work income supports such as Family Income Supplement, reduce the hours requirement to 17.5 hours and increase the earnings threshold for access. Reform FIS so that those who qualify for it automatically receive it.
- Ensure that people who are unemployed and have literacy and numeracy needs and or low education attainment have access to a specific intensive programme at QQI level 3 which includes a work placement.
- Ensure that the current review of the minimum wage delivers an adequate return on work and is adjusted in line with growth and inflation

## **Test 3: Will Budget 2016 provide the funding needed to restore and strengthen services which are of particular importance to people on low income?**

*Goal 3, Goal 4, Goal 6, Goal 9 and Goal 11 in new Sustainable Development Goals*

### **The Community Platform believes the Government should:**

- Deliver on proposals to increase access to housing, especially social housing and strengthen rent regulation and control.
- Ensure that Rent Supplement levels across all local authorities are sufficient for all social welfare recipients to access rental accommodation.

- Tackle the homeless crisis through providing adequate resources
- Increase the resources available to support the provision and expansion of a comprehensive and affordable early years and after-school care infrastructure in Ireland, including investment in training and improved pay scales for childcare providers.
- Increase provision of and access to public childcare supports for those seeking to access activation or training programmes, including Qualified Adults.

## Test 4: Will Budget 2016 put in place mechanisms to ensure that all areas of policy, including the budget itself, work to reduce poverty and inequality?

*Goal 1, Goal 10 and Goal 17 in new Sustainable Development Goals*

### The Community Platform believes the Government should:

- Carry out comprehensive and transparent poverty, gender and equality impact assessments of all relevant taxation and spending decisions, including but not confined to welfare and public services, and take action on the findings.
- Set aside funding for pilot projects with the aim of developing long-term participatory processes in which people with experience of poverty and their organisations could contribute to the assessment and monitoring of areas of policy

## And coming soon: A new test suggested by ATD Ireland. Is Budget 2016 matching the new 17 Goals of the universal 2030 Agenda ?



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



## **COMMUNITY PLATFORM**

**CHALLENGING POVERTY & INEQUALITY**

The Community Platform is a network of 29 national networks and organisations in the community and voluntary sector working to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality

- **Age Action Ireland**
- **All Together in Dignity (ATD) Ireland**
- **Community Action Network**
- **Community Workers Co-operative**
- **Cairde**
- **Debt and Development Coalition**
- **European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland**
- **Focus Ireland**
- **Gay & Lesbian Equality Network**
- **Immigrant Council of Ireland**
- **Irish Association of Older People**
- **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 Network of Women's Refuges & Support Services**
- **National Traveller Women's Forum**
- **National Women's Council of Ireland**
- **Older Women's Network**
- **Pavee Point**
- **Rape Crisis Network Ireland**
- **Simon Communities of Ireland**
- **Threshold**
- **Voluntary Drug Treatment Network**
- **Vincentian Partnership for Justice**
- **Women's Aid**

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