



Giving women and their families a break

**SINN FÉIN'S
2020
ALTERNATIVE
BUDGET**

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INTRODUCTION

GIVING WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES A BREAK

Tá athrú suntasach sóisialta agus eanamúil i ndiaidh teach tar Éirinn le fiche bliain. Athrú dearfach ar an mórchuid ach tá an míchothromas ag dul in olcas agus tá teaghlaigh thíos go mór leis.

Ireland has undergone significant social and economic change over the last two decades. Much of this change has been positive, yet inequality is deepening, and families are paying an enduring cost.

Family homelessness continues to rise, a full-time job no longer guarantees an affordable secure roof over your family's head and people with a disability face inequalities day and daily.

With Brexit looming we again face uncertain times. That is why we must invest now and stimulate the wider economy.

Each year Sinn Féin sets out ambitious deliverables in our alternative budgets that can and will make immediate differences in people's lives. Our measures are costed by the Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure and our economic analysis is one that places investment centre stage.

For government's the annual budgetary process provides an opportunity to begin or progress policies that can deliver transformative change in the medium to long term. Budgets are about today, but they are also about next year and the year after.

Sinn Féin's alternative Budget 2020 document deals with the threat posed by Brexit; sets out a sustainable fiscal strategy; commits to a just transition; invests in public services; introduces new structures to support and protect women and give women a break in the here and now.

Leis na moltaí atá againn tugtar léargas duit ar an gcineál Rialtais a bheadh ann le Sinn Féin. Bhí mná agus a gclann chun tosaigh i gcónaí agus polasaí á dhréachtú nó cinntí polaitiúla á ndéanamh againn agus is amhlaidh an scéal i gcónaí.

Our proposals give you an insight into what a Sinn Féin government would look like. Women and their families have always been and will always be a priority when shaping policy and making political decisions.

Mary Lou McDonald TD, Leader, Sinn Féin



SINN FÉIN'S KEY ALTERNATIVE BUDGET 2020 PROPOSALS FOR WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Provide two free GP visits for the 2.8 million people who do not have a GP visit or medical card as a first step to deliver universal GP care

Implement an emergency freeze of rents for three years and provide renters with a tax break equal to one month's rent during this period

Deliver a comprehensive women's health strategy to include hiring an additional obstetricians and gynaecologists, increasing funding to BreastCheck and CervicalCheck, repatriating CervicalCheck screening, rapid funding the maternity strategy and launching an awareness campaign

Provide funding for the HSE to implement a state-sponsored contraception scheme that includes long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC)

Universal access to counselling without charge on a GP referral basis

Commence a transformational 5-year programme of childcare reform that ensures childcare workers are properly paid and childcare fees are slashed by two thirds for parents

Introduce an annual 'Back to School Bonus Child Benefit Payment' of €140 to help families overcome the costs of education

Establish a child maintenance service

Establish a network of child contact centres

Introduce a system of independent regionally based statutory multiagency domestic homicide reviews within three years

Universal access to counselling without charge for victims of rape and other sexual abuse



RAISING INCOMES

We want to deliver the structures that ensure work pays and pay packets deliver security and a good quality of life.

Likewise we want to ensure that social welfare rates are sufficient to secure a decent life.

Women continue to populate the lowest paid professions in the public and private sectors, and with nearly one quarter of all workers on low pay, we have the third highest proportion of low paid workers among developed economies.

Too many people who are unable to work in the labour market due to disability, which comes with its own additional cost burdens, or because they are caring for others are also suffering from desperately inadequate incomes.

This places a huge strain on the ability of homes to handle high living costs. Sinn Féin want to change that by making our economy work for everybody.

We are committed to the introduction of a Living Wage. Higher incomes are good for everyone. They lift women and their families out of poverty, increase productivity and provide the revenue needed to deliver first world public services.

The State as an employer should also show leadership on this issue, and that is why Sinn Féin would make the civil service and public sector a living wage employer from January 1st 2020.

IN BUDGET 2020 WE WOULD:

- ▶ Introduce the Living Wage across the public sector – **€3.8 million**
- ▶ Legally oblige those employers that can afford to pay the Living Wage of €12.30 per hour to do so
- ▶ Introduce a living wage employment scheme for artists through local authorities - **€4 million**
- ▶ Reform the Wage Subsidy Scheme as per the recommendation from the cross-party Oireachtas Disability Group - **€7 million**
- ▶ Provide for pay restoration in Section 39 organisations over three years - **€20 million** in 2020
- ▶ Deliver full pay equality for public servants in 2020 - **€58 million** in 2020 (€67m in 2021)
- ▶ Establish a Social Welfare Adequacy Commission to advise government on payment rates - €0.48m (Year 1)
- ▶ Increase all weekly social welfare payments by €5 and Disability payments by €9 - **€305 million** in 2020 (full year €406.5m)
- ▶ Increase the Qualified Child Increase payment for children over 12 by €5 - **€30 million**



DELIVER A COMPREHENSIVE WOMEN'S HEALTH STRATEGY

Sinn Féin has led the way in offering solutions for our broken two-tier health service. In 2015 we published 'Better 4 Health' a fully costed ten-year peer reviewed plan to increase the capacity of our health service, achieve equality of access and ensure it is funded on a fair and sustainable basis.

That was followed by the All-Party Oireachtas Committee's Plan 'Sláintecare' which similarly provided for the development of a single tier, universal public

health service over ten years. In 2020 we would invest €1.1bn into the public health system and deliver a comprehensive Women's Health Strategy.

IN BUDGET 2020 WE WOULD:

- ▶ Provide two free GP visits for everybody without a GP card or medical card - **€268.8m**
- ▶ Open an additional 500 hospital beds - **€160.2m**
- ▶ Recruit 350 additional nurses - **€18.547m**
- ▶ Recruit 150 additional midwives - **€8.121m**
- ▶ Hire 100 directly employed GPs - **€12.372m**
- ▶ Invest in a comprehensive Women's Health Strategy (**€70m**) to include –
 - *A women's health education and awareness campaign*
 - *Increase funding to BreastCheck and CervicalCheck*
 - *CervicalCheck repatriation strategy*
 - *Recruit an additional 50 obstetricians and gynaecologists*
 - *Rapid fund the National Maternity Strategy*
 - *Provide funding for the HSE to implement a state-sponsored contraception scheme to include long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) informed by key stakeholders and clinicians*
 - *Tackle period poverty*
- ▶ Expand Newborn Screening Services - **€1m**
- ▶ Increase the trainee GP intake to 240 per year - **€2m**
- ▶ Universal access to counselling without charge on a GP referral basis - **€25.396m**
- ▶ Establish an Equality Budgeting Advisory Body - **€1m**

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN WITH A DISABILITY

Our Budget 2020 set out an integrated set of policies, investment and supports for people with a disability and their families. We want to reform transport, employment, housing, social protection, education and healthcare to ensure women with a disability can achieve their full potential, and are supported to live with confidence, dignity and ambition.

IN BUDGET 2020 WE WOULD:

- ▶ Commence a 5-year programme of investment in public transport to make it accessible for citizens with disabilities - **€20 million** in 2020
- ▶ Clear the Home Support Services waiting lists entirely - **€59 million**
- ▶ Invest in an additional 1.5 million Personal Assistant hours - **€37 million**
- ▶ Recruit an additional 600 clinical psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists - **€34 million**
- ▶ Increase the Carer's Support Grant to €2,000 - **€40 million**
- ▶ Increase Carers Allowance and Benefit by €5 and Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension and Blind Pension by €9 - **€89 million** in 2020 (full year €118m)
- ▶ Increase respite care services - **€13 million**
- ▶ Increase housing adaptation grants by 25% - **€14 million**
- ▶ Reinstate the Rehabilitative Training Allowance - **€3.7 million**
- ▶ Reform the Wage Subsidy Scheme as per All Party Oireachtas Disability Group recommendation - **€7 million**
- ▶ Provide the WALK PEER employment support service model in all 26 counties in the south of Ireland - **€5 million**

INVEST IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION, SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

This year's International Women's Day marked Ireland's ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence or as it is also known the Istanbul Convention. If we are to uphold and advance in full the rights contained within the Convention we must ensure that we have the structures in place to protect women from domestic abuse and prevent future violent crimes in the home.

IN BUDGET 2020 WE WOULD:

- ▶ Invest in domestic violence housing support services - **€2.8m**
- ▶ Additional Capital Funding for Domestic Violence refuges – **€9 million**
- ▶ Introduce a system of independent regionally based statutory multiagency domestic homicide reviews within three years - **€1m (Year 1)**
- ▶ Cosc to develop and roll out online 'Creating Workplace Awareness of Domestic Violence' public information campaign - **€100,000**
- ▶ Universal access to counselling without charge for victims of rape and other sexual abuse

ESTABLISH A CHILD MAINTENANCE SERVICE

Establish a Child Maintenance Service that ensures children are central to all maintenance agreements and lone parents are assisted and supported throughout the process. Maintenance agreed through the service would include parental arrangements for lone parents, direct pay where agreement on the amount to be paid cannot be reached by the parents and a collect and transfer method where the non-custodial parent refuses to pay maintenance. - **€500,000 (Year 1)**

CREATE A NETWORK OF CHILD CONTACT CENTRES

In 2013 Barnardos and One Family published a final evaluation of their successful child contact centre pilot. The report emphasises 'the important role such centres can play in facilitating safe contact for children, especially in high conflict families.' The role of the centres will also extend to parents who self-refer where the relationship breakdown has become acrimonious. Sinn Féin will implement the recommendations of the Barnardos/One Family child contact centre pilot report by establishing a network of child contact centres professionally staffed. - **€5.874m**

ESTABLISH AN EQUALITY BUDGETING ADVISORY BODY

Sinn Féin has long advocated for the full introduction of 'Equality Budgeting' by Government. We have introduced legislation to provide for equality proofing of government policy and budgets and public bodies through impact assessments. This legislation would ensure that both government and public bodies, in exercising their functions do so in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of government policy outcomes. The establishment of an independent Equality and Budgetary Advisory Body underpinned by legislation is necessary to secure equality of outcome for citizens and would be a progressive addition to the budgetary framework. - **€1m**



To read our Budget 2020 proposals in full go to:
sinnfein.ie/Budget2020



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