

A FUTURE WE CAN ALL AFFORD

ALTERNATIVE
BUDGET **2027**

Labour 

CONTENTS



Introduction	02
Cost of Living and Energy	05
Work and Social Protection	10
Care	16
Climate	23
Housing	33
Community	40
Education	47
Health and Disability	54
Budget Balance Sheet	62



INTRODUCTION

LABOUR'S 2026 BUDGET STRATEGY

A FUTURE WE CAN ALL AFFORD

In so many ways, Ireland, at a macro level, has never had it so good.

Yet, sitting alongside overflowing business tax revenues and record employment is the uncomfortable truth of the real Ireland of 2026.

18,000 people with no home, hundreds of thousands of children in poverty and rising energy and grocery prices, where working people are losing hope.

We have had sustained economic growth over a period that is unparalleled in our short history.

Yet, the question can be asked; what do we have to show for it? A rich country, that feels poor.

Little that's tangible to show during a decade of missed opportunities to truly transform housing, health and transport, to make our economy and society fit and ready for an uncertain future.

Labour is a party that has always put the interests of the country first.

For once, the lack of money is not our country's primary problem. It's a government bereft of ideas and vision. One that is content to be in office, but not in power.

Ireland's energy, poverty, housing and climate challenges cannot be solved in the long term by costly, universal and expensive payments programmed to 'rinse and repeat' by Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

In fact, it is the abject failure of successive FF and FG governments to address the structural problems – sub-par public investment, a failure to ramp up infrastructure when it was affordable to do so, poor delivery of retrofitting and renewables and a hardening of poverty and inequality – that has made this phase of what has now all the hallmarks of a cost of living permacrisis, all the more severe for too many of us.

We agree with government that it is important to take measures to help households and small businesses through a difficult winter. We make targeted cost of living interventions across our package, however, the bulk of our fully costed alternative budget package unapologetically addresses the real long-term problems that can only be tackled by transforming our economy and society and making the sustained investments we need to make Ireland better, fairer and more resilient. Here are three of Labour's key proposals on energy, incomes and child poverty:

- Energy supports for over 1.2m households with a €400 targeted energy credit paid for with a windfall tax on the profits of energy companies and data centres.
- €15 per week increases to core, weekly social welfare rates and the indexation of personal income tax and USC rates to take account of inflation and wage growth.
- A war on child poverty with an allocation of €770m for a targeted second tier of child benefit.

Responsibly and transparently funding Labour's Budget Package

Our alternative budget allows for net revenue increases totalling €3.7 billion as set out in the appendix and in line with our proposals over previous years. Transparent budgeting means being up front and clear about what it really costs to run our schools, hospitals and all the public services on which we all rely.

This provides for the sustainable growth of existing services to keep pace with demographic changes and inflation, but also new public service innovations, too.

The trailed initial pre-Budget Day framework from government suggests a total package of €8.5bn. Our proposals provide for net current spending increase of approximately €6.7bn, exclusive of existing levels of service (ELS), demographic and public service pay costs which we estimate at €3.4bn. We provide for an additional capital provision of €1bn above the published NDP ceilings, funded from the surplus, in addition to the proposed €1.2bn increase. We would also reallocate up to €600m of the existing capital envelope to new investment priorities.

This government, and its predecessor, has a real problem with honest budgeting. Ministers deliberately low-ball spending forecasts knowing that they can come back for more, midway through the following year. The Minister for Education requested and received a bailout of over €600m this year, with supplementary estimates amounting to an average of €2bn a year now the norm under this fiscally reckless government.

A clear example of this fiscal irresponsibility is the failure by the Minister for Public Expenditure to enter meaningful talks on a successor to the last public sector pay deal.

In an increasingly uncertain environment, pay certainty for public servants allows government to better plan the public finances and the development and delivery of services.

That government has failed to do so before this Budget is an abdication of their responsibilities, and casts further doubt on their collective credibility.

Labour has always been careful with the people's money. We were the only party in opposition to support the creation of, and continued investment in both the Future Ireland and Climate, Nature & Infrastructure Funds.

Where we believe more of our finite resources should be spent on the things that really matter, we are clear that we will raise revenue from sustainable sources, and in a way that does not impact on the productive economy, in order to pay for them. In other words, we can be socially and economically ambitious and fiscally responsible, too.

This approach is becoming increasingly important as Ireland's reliance on unreliable windfall corporation tax revenues to run the country becomes more problematic, and irresponsible.

We need an honest discussion on tax and spending, and how we can realistically address the demographic, work, welfare and true Just Transition challenges this country must grapple with.

For now, this is a debate this government has studiously avoided, thanks to the ready availability of large exchequer surpluses.

We need to broaden, deepen and rebalance our tax base, and that's why Labour believes we must revisit the recommendations from the Commission on Taxation & Welfare, and plan for a sustainable future, and sensibly.

That is how we ensure we have a future that we can all afford.

COST OF LIVING & ENERGY



COST OF LIVING AND ENERGY

The cost of food, energy and housing continues to rapidly increase, while more and more children fall into poverty. Budget 2027 must provide real and substantial relief for families and workers, and a dedicated focus on child poverty. Inflation will hit households and businesses hard, and this budget must deliver permanent reductions in the cost of living and energy costs. For this Budget we are proposing a wide-ranging series of targeted measures with a focus on energy poverty, child poverty, low and middle income families, renters, young people and those on fixed incomes.

LABOUR'S COST OF LIVING PACKAGE

As we once again demonstrate in our package this year, by using a combination of counter-cyclical tax increases and targeted windfall revenue raising measures it is possible to sustainably expand the resources of the State, in order to deliver substantive support to people's incomes and improve public services. In Budget 2027 our plan demonstrates that:

- Energy supports can be targeted to low- and middle-income earners while investing to permanently reduce the cost of energy.
- Real progress can be made on addressing child poverty alongside a €15 weekly increase to social welfare rates and major improvements to public services.
- Workers can be supported with pay rises and the indexation of the income tax system that protects their purchasing power and insulates wages from inflation.

DRIVING DOWN HIGH ENERGY COSTS

Ireland has some of the highest household electricity prices in the EU with double digit percentage increases already kicking in this winter from most suppliers. Targeted energy payments must form a central part of the Budget, along with an intensive effort from government to drive down energy prices.

Labour is proposing a series of targeted measures that we can fund from a 20% levy on the windfall profits of energy companies and a €20/Mwh surcharge on data centres which we know are driving up energy prices by soaking up new supplies of renewable energy. These interventions alone would raise over €650m to support 1.2m households, supplemented by €500m capital investment for targeted measures including:

- Targeted Energy Credits worth €400 supporting 1.2m households with incomes under €80,000 (€480m).
- Democratised access to solar power with a free plug-in solar unit for every suitable household eligible for an energy credit (€500m).

How Labour's targeted €400 Energy Credit would work:

- It would be an income tax credit worth €400 (refundable for those not earning taxable income).
- It would be administered through the Revenue Commissioners, and incomes would be means tested in a similar way to SUSI grants.

- One person per household would apply by submitting their MPRN, and the details of household income.
- Where a BER rating is available, MPRNs would be cross checked against the database to ensure credits go to those most in need (B2 or lower).
- Overpayments or double claims would be recouped through the tax and social welfare system in the usual way.
- It would establish the State's capacity to provide sophisticated targeted energy payments when necessary, building on the experience from Covid payments.

We would also commit €500m of once off capital spending to procure up to 1 million plug-in solar units. Once the household location is suitable, a unit would be made available to any household eligible for a targeted energy credit. It would permanently lower their energy bills, by savings of up to €150 a year. Further details are outlined in our Climate chapter.

In addition to these measures, Labour would extend the fuel excise reductions in full until February and taper to May, while keeping it under constant review. We would also seek emergency EU approval to reduce the VAT on home heating oil to 9%. We would further pause carbon tax increases as high oil prices are driving the policy objective of encouraging people to shift away from fossil fuels, and our Budget plans provide the increased revenue necessary to invest in a just transition. We would also remove the extra charges for the quarterly and half yearly payment of Motor Tax which penalises those unable to pay the full rate upfront.

• Bulk purchase of plug-in solar unit for up to 1 million homes.	€500m
• Targeted Energy Credits of €400 for up to 1.2m households.	€480m
• Extend excise reductions and taper to May 2027 (estimate).	€400m
• Reduce VAT on Home Heating Oil to 9% (estimate).	€60m
• Remove Motor Tax charge for quarterly & half-yearly payments.	€35m

Driving down the cost of electricity, increased rollout of retrofitting and more rapid development of renewable energy will eventually remove the need for targeted reliefs, and in our Climate chapter, Labour outlines our transformative plan to achieve cheaper energy and warmer homes.

ADDRESSING ENERGY POVERTY

Labour would provide for a series of targeted supports to help households most at risk of energy poverty. The ban on utility disconnections must be extended and long-term action taken to tackle persistent energy poverty.

The Household Benefits package is paid to over half a million households including all over 70 and has not been changed since 2013. It provides a €35 per month electricity or gas credit and we would increase this by €10 to €45 per month to ensure all older people receive additional support this winter.

The cost of home heating oil and other fuels has massively increased, and we would increase the Fuel Allowance by nearly €400, with an extra €7.50 a week (worth €210) and commit to

paying the four week increase again in 2027 (a further €182). The Department could not provide a costing for increasing the fuel allowance weekly income limit cut offs, so we allocate for a €50 increase to cover an estimated 15,000 further households. We also provide for a 10% increase in funding for Additional Needs Payments to give more help with utility debt and home heating oil purchases.

Access to in-person face to face public services is a vital support for vulnerable and older people, as well as people with literacy difficulties or without fluent English. Labour would recruit an extra 50 Community Welfare Officers who would be available to meet people and visit them in the community to ensure those in need have direct access to social welfare supports. We would also use the Social Protection budget to protect the Post Office network and expand and restore Citizens Information Centres.

• Increase weekly rate of Fuel Allowance by €7.50 and provide for an extra four extra weeks.	€180.5m
• Increase Fuel Allowance income threshold by €50 per week (Est).	€22m
• Increase by €10 the monthly Household Benefits Gas or Electricity payment to €45.	€67.4m
• 10% increase in Additional Needs Payment fund to provide ENPs and UNPs for relief from utility debt.	€6.1m
• Recruit an extra 50 Community Welfare Officers.	€3.8m
• Use the Social Protection Budget to protect the Post Offices network and expand Citizen Information Centres.	
• Extend Winter Ban on Utility Disconnections through 2027.	

INDEXATION OF INCOME TAXES

PAYE workers were abandoned by government in last year's budget, leaving tax bands untouched so that workers who saw modest income increases immediately lost them. Our spending plans provide for the indexation of income tax and USC credits and bands at a rate of 4%, equivalent to expected wage growth. The benefit of this would be clawed back from high earners through the withdrawal of tax credits on incomes over €100,000. This would ensure low and middle-income earners retain the benefit of salary increases, along with the support of our refundable Energy income tax credit and a doubled rent tax credit.

Labour would introduce a legally binding commitment that as part of the annual Budget process, proposed increases to social welfare payments and changes to income taxes are indexed in line with a basket measure of inflation and wage growth which would be published in July and then confirmed in October. The level of increase would be independently confirmed by the Fiscal Advisory Council. Any additional rise on top of that would then be confirmed as part of the Budget process so people will know if they are receiving real increases in their purchasing power.

To ensure the sustainability of our social insurance system and address Ireland's under-taxation relative to the EU average we would continue with the scheduled PRSI increase of 0.15% but only on Employer's and self-employed rates. We would also remove the Employer PRSI exemption on share-based remuneration. Now is the right time to act, with Ireland experiencing full employment and continued jobs growth expected in 2027. The proceeds

would be used to boost social insurance entitlements like paid family leave, and we would also restore PRSI Dental benefits to those treatments that were in place pre-2010 including oral exams, gum cleaning, fillings, extractions, and root canals.

• Index Income Tax and USC credits and bands at 4% (first year).	-€1,100m
• Restoration of PRSI Dental Benefits and 10% increase in fees.	€78m

PROTECTING FIXED INCOMES AND OLDER PEOPLE

Recent increases to social welfare benefits and assistance payments have been well below the rise in the cost of living, eroding the real value of payments for people with no practical means of improving their income. To provide some insulation against higher costs we would apply an increase of €15 per week to all social welfare payments, in line with moving towards meeting a minimum essential standard of living (MESL).

The Living Alone Allowance has not increased since 2021, so we provide here for a €5 per week increase to support increased costs instead of another once off payment. Labour is committed to the Pension Promise campaign and would provide new funding of €30m to restore the bereavement grant for PRSI contributors. These increases compliment the commitments on energy costs and child poverty.

• Increase weekly Social Welfare Payments by €15 per week.	€1,110m
• Increase the Living Alone Allowance by €5 to €27 per week.	€67m
• Restore €850 PRSI Bereavement grant.	€30m

HELPING FAMILIES

We have provided for a comprehensive package of funding to address child poverty and provide for a targeted child income support payment in the Care chapter. The universal Child Benefit payment has not been increased since 2016, and we provide for a monthly increase of €10 extra. In recognition of rising food costs, we would provide a €100 grocery supplement per child in December through the Child Benefit payment system, at the same time as the social welfare Christmas bonus, and then provide for a further payment in January 2027. We would also increase the thresholds of the Working Family Payment by €50 a month and develop a mechanism through Revenue to ensure parents are informed of their eligibility. This would provide additional support for thousands of families and keep up with wage growth.

Labour is committed to reducing the cost of living for families. In our budget package this year we show how investing in public services delivers a much greater reward through the social wage. Ireland can afford to provide free GP for all children, make education truly free by removing back-to-school costs and voluntary contributions, cap the weekly cost of childcare at €200 a month and make travel free for children.

• Increase child benefit by €10 a month.	€152m
• Provide for a once off €100 grocery supplement in December 2026 (Christmas Bonus) and again in January 2027.	€127m
• Increase Working Family Payment Thresholds by €50.	€80m

WORK & SOCIAL PROTECTION



WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

PUBLIC SECTOR PAY

It is fiscally reckless that the government has not engaged in meaningful negotiations on a new public sector pay agreement. It has created great anger. Labour would allocate €1.15bn from our ELS provision of €3.4bn to provide the basis for a new pay deal. This would allow for phased pay increases across 2027 in line with projected wage growth. We also provide for matching pay increases in outsourced public services provided such as Section 39, 56 and 10 organisations and community programmes.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phased pay rises of 4% in Public Sector Pay across 2027. | €1.15bn |
|--|----------------|

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ireland is a high cost, and for far too many a low wage economy, putting huge pressures on working people and families at a time of record corporate profits. Something simply must give. Labour will continue to campaign for workers to secure pay rises, along with radical improvements in public services that will directly reduce their out-of-pocket costs. Significant progress must be made in Ireland to improve collective bargaining rates and the Action Plan must be backed up with legislative change to increase coverage up to 80%. As part of our mission of ending low pay and giving workers more power at work, Labour would:

- **Use the €17bn+ public procurement budget** to support decent incomes, raise the wages of low paid work and reward collectively bargained earnings.
- **Lift low and precarious incomes** with employer-trade union Joint Labour Committees across all low paid sectors of the economy, end the employer veto, deliver a living wage over the next 12 months, strengthen the gender pay gap legislation, ensure all apprentices and interns earn the minimum wage and create an automatic presumption of employee status.
- **Give workers and those who want to work greater control** over their work and life with a real right to flexible work, regulate the use of algorithmic management and AI in recruiting, remunerating and managing in the workplace, introduce a "stop and switch" scheme to allow mid-career workers to reskill and change careers, introduce a real right to switch off and ensure that reproductive health leave is available to all workers who need it.

Labour would restore tax relief on trade union subscriptions and increase funding for both the Workplace Relations Commission and the Health and Safety Authority by 10% for the increased recruitment and deployment of inspectors. Too many workers live on low pay in Ireland, and we would scrap sub-minima rates for young people and apprentices. The government must recommit to delivering a living wage and not give in to employer pressure. We would increase the minimum wage by 79 cent in 2027 to €14.94 as recommended by the Low Pay Commission and complete the transition to a living wage of at least €15.40 in 2028.

• Restore tax relief for trade union subscriptions.	€37m
• Increased funding for WRC and HSA Inspectors (10% uplift).	€6.1m
• Provide a Living Wage for all workers by 2028, increase the NMW by 79 cent an hour to €14.94 in 2027 and end sub-minima rates for young people.	
• Increase the Eating on Site Allowance from €5 to €6.20, the Working from Home Allowance from €3.20 a day to €5 and maintain flat rate expenses.	

A FULL YEAR OF PAID LEAVE

Labour supports the Year of Care campaign. Parents should be able to take up to a year of paid leave and not be placed under financial pressure, but current rates of payment are far too low. Parents should benefit from their social insurance through greater income protection. As a first step we would increase the payment rate to €350 a week, up from €299 at present, but we need real commitment from government for the introduction of a pay-related leave benefit scheme that links to the real wages parents are paid. In this Budget we would extend the amount of paid parent's leave available by a further 3 weeks, taking it to twelve weeks each. Since Labour first brought in two weeks of Paternity Leave in 2016 it has not increased, so we would also progressively increase this entitlement over a number of years. Combined with Maternity and Parent's Leave benefits, this would provide 52 weeks of leave. We would also introduce reproductive leave for early pregnancy loss and fertility treatments.

• Increase Maternity and other leave benefits to €350 a week.	€51m
• Extend Parent's Leave Benefit by a further 3 weeks to 12 weeks.	€36m
• Increase Paternity leave by 2 weeks in 2027.	€16m
• Provide up to 20 days of reproductive health related leave.	€15m

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES

Small businesses are suffering from increased costs and need support. Labour would reintroduce the ICOB grant at a rate of €2,000 and further expand the R&D payment threshold for SMEs from €87,500 to €150,000, which will have a once off timing cost. We would invest in the promotion of tourism with an extra €10m for the Overseas Tourism Marketing Fund and increase advisory supports for SMEs and social enterprises through the Local Enterprise Office network. We would facilitate the creation of Employee Ownership Trusts based on the UK model and create a new state agency to support the hospitality sector. This body would be modelled on Teagasc with a mission to boost sustainability, competitiveness, and productivity, and provide research, advisory and training services. We would drive down energy costs with our renewable energy plans, reform the commercial rates system and invest in our town centres.

• €2,000 Increased Costs of Doing Business Grant for SMEs.	€150m
• Increased budget for tourism promotion through Failte Ireland and the Overseas Tourism Marketing Fund.	€20m

• New funding for Local Enterprise Offices to support SMEs on energy costs and extend support to all social enterprises.	€5m
• Agency to support the Hospitality sector, modelled on Teagasc.	€2m
• Increase the R&D credit payment threshold for SMEs to €150,000.	N/A
• Facilitate the creation of Employee Ownership Trusts with clear Revenue guidance and cost neutral changes to the tax rules on discretionary trust tax, CGT transfers and deferral.	

HELPING WORKERS WHEN THEY NEED IT

Our social insurance contributions are pay-related but fund social welfare benefits that aren't. A form of pay related jobseekers' benefit is now available but Ireland is still out of line with comparator EU countries. The Department of Social Protection must begin to develop proposals to achieve pay related leave benefits and Carer's Benefit. Proposals for a non-means tested rent benefit should also be developed for support during short term unemployment. We would also remove the three waiting days for Jobseekers Benefit and move towards a system based on hours rather than days worked, reflecting modern work patterns.

• Develop proposals for introduction of further pay related social insurance payments.	TBC
• Waive the three-day waiting period for Jobseekers Benefit and amend rules to move towards deductions based on hours.	€3.2m

DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

Ireland has the lowest rate of employment in the EU for people with disabilities, who are not adequately supported by the system to stay in work or secure employment. Labour would reform disability payments to introduce a single, taxable benefit, protect secondary benefits like medical cards and the free travel pass, and phase in a Cost of Disability payment in 2027 starting with a €30 per week payment, rising to at least €55 in 2028.

As an interim step, we would also increase the Disability Allowance weekly income disregard from €165 to €250 for those in work. We would also invest in schemes with a proven track record and protect and reform the Wage Subsidy Scheme. We would increase the link to the NMW to 55% for Band 1, 65% for Band 2 and 80% for Band 3 of the WSS costing €3.6m, increase the grant for Employment Assistance Officers to €60,000 and reduce the minimum hours to 8 for those with more significant disabilities. We also would provide for additional places on the Employability and WorkAbility schemes.

• Phased two-year introduction of a Cost of Disability Payment starting with €30 in 2027.	€387m
• Increase the income disregard for Disability Allowance to €250.	€24.8m

Improvements to the Wage Subsidy Scheme banding and increased funding for places and support staff.	€8m
20% increase in funding for the Employability and WorkAbility programmes to support people with disabilities in the workplace.	€5m

SUPPORTING LONE PARENTS

A significant proportion of single parent households are consistently at risk of poverty, with higher rates of deprivation. They are also the demographic that struggles the most with escaping poverty, having few options for improving their circumstances. We provide for targeted income support measures in this budget. Lone parents transfer to the Jobseeker's Transition Payment (JST) from One Parent Family Payment when their youngest child turns 7 but there are still several anomalies between the two, for example those on OPFP can access WFP but those on JST can't. We would:

Extend eligibility to WFP for lone parents on JST.	€56m
Increase OPFP and JST income disregard to €250.	€34.8m

TRUSTING YOUNG PEOPLE

We would restore full adult Jobseekers rates for young people and provide the €500 cost of education grant to all back to education allowance recipients. Under our Community proposals we provide for a significant investment in youth services and for increases to the salaries of youth workers and other support staff in line with a future public service pay agreement.

Restore full adult Jobseekers to those under 25.	€78.5m
Provide the €500 Cost of Education grant to all BTEA recipients.	€1.9m

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY WORKERS

We would increase again the payments for workers on CE, Tús and RSS schemes, increase the Community Employment materials grant by 10%, and raise the individual training budget from €250 to €500. We would make changes to the eligibility rules on all programmes to support uptake such as reducing qualifying access period to 6 months on CE and extending time on Tús to two years. Participants on the CE Drug rehabilitation scheme should be provided with free travel. Labour would also ensure CE supervisors and other community workers receive pay increases in 2027 in line with those agreed in public sector pay agreements.

In the Community Services Programme, we would benchmark funding to a living wage for workers (€5.9m), restore the non-wage grant of €7m and provide increased funding for manager salaries through an overall investment package of €19.3m that also provides for a 10% increase in funding targeted for sustainability projects.

• Community Services Programme (wages and other measures).	€19.3m
• Increase Community Employment, Tús and RSS top-up to €40.	€10.7m
• 10% increase for CE Materials and double training grant to €500.	€6m
• Pay increases for CE, Tús, RSS and JI supervisors in line with public service agreement (estimate).	€5m

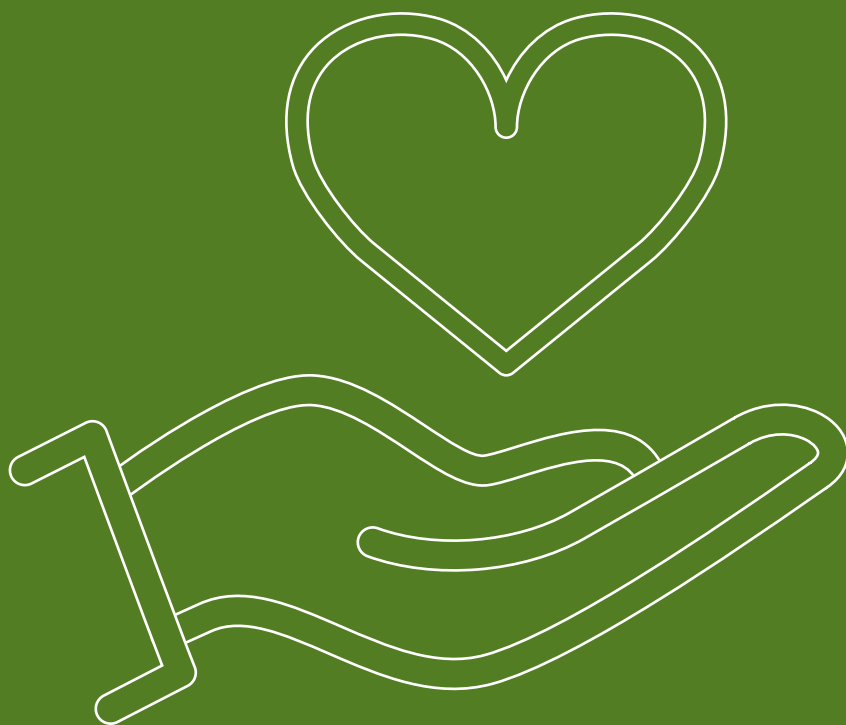
EXPANDING THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET

Labour would develop as a permanent feature of our employment and social protection safety net a Wage Subsidy Scheme to support workers and businesses when a downturn or future recession strikes. This short-term working scheme, which we call ObairGhearr, would protect employees from lay-offs with state subsidies when companies encounter difficulties and need time to adapt. This ensures SMEs can retain staff and skills. Importantly, like the German 'Kurzarbeit' scheme, it would guarantee that each worker has an individual training or upskilling plan to both improve productivity and prepare workers for potential new opportunities. This would be funded from the Social Insurance Fund and National Training Fund and act as an automatic stabiliser in future recessions, so doesn't have an immediate upfront cost.

Labour would also unlock a portion of the surplus in the National Training Fund to allow workers who are mid-career to 'stop and switch' and pursue upskilling or a new career direction. This would be managed by Solas and be demand driven where a worker has a minimum of 10 years of continuous social insurance contributions inclusive of credited leave. When in work, upskilling opportunities are most often controlled by the employer. We want to give workers the personal freedom to choose for themselves after making many years of contributions by funding skills vouchers and free part time third level courses from the NTF.

• Introduce ObairGhearr - a Short Term Working Scheme.	SIF & NTF
• Free part-time third level courses and skills vouchers for workers.	NTF

CARE



CARE

We believe in a society that values care and invests across the life course, so that people always have access to the services they need. We outline here proposals for public early years education and childcare, tackling child poverty, protecting vulnerable children in care, supporting family carers, and delivering a new Fair Deal for older people.

A RADICAL APPROACH TO CHILDCARE

The current system of early years in Ireland is not working for parents, staff or providers. It clearly needs a new and radical change of direction. However, public funding for childcare in Ireland remains well below other peer European countries. Campaigning for **Equal Early Years**, Labour has long called for a guaranteed, publicly funded pre-school place for every child, as is in place for primary school children. Parents need affordable, accessible childcare while early years educators deserve decent pay and conditions. Most of all, all children deserve an equal start. The best way to deliver this is to develop at scale a public service and introduce a model to allow providers to opt into it. That is why Labour will bring forward over the coming months a new roadmap for a public system of early childhood education and care.

OUR GOALS	OUR PLANS
Equality for Children Affordability for Parents Fairness for Professionals	A universal Public Childcare Scheme Cap childcare fees at €200 a month Dedicated funding to increase pay

While we wait to see more detail of government plans to cap costs and provide state led services, our Budget Package for childcare seeks to deliver on each of our political goals by guaranteeing places through a universal public model, capping costs for parents at €200 a month, and delivering pay improvements for childcare workers as the first step towards a nationalised wage bill.

A Public Childcare System

The current plan for eight state led childcare facilities is simply not ambitious enough. Labour would begin the rollout of a public childcare system by delivering 6,000 new places a year, with annual first year operating costs of approximately €80m across 100 to 150 locations. Capped fees will bring the net cost closer to €65m. To ensure the sustainable growth of the system, each year a further €80m will be allocated so that over 5 years up to 30,000 new places could be delivered. Over that time the allocated budget can also be used to support private operators transition to the state led model.

Areas with a shortage of places would be prioritised first. New locations would be identified through existing publicly owned sites and buildings in the education sector and local authorities. Administration such as payroll and corporate services would be initially built out through existing systems in Education and Training Boards bringing early childhood education and care into the education system. Support will continue to be provided for new community and not for profit co-operative services. Over time overall responsibility for the public system would transfer to the new state agency for early learning childcare and school age childcare.

A new, additional capital allocation of €55m a year will be provided for the delivery of appropriate new public childcare facilities, building on the existing €135m (over five years) available through the NDP. This will need to increase further once existing facilities are utilised.

Cap Costs for Parents at €200 a month

Labour was the first party to campaign for a €200 a month, €50 a week cap on childcare costs for parents. The estimated costing provided in 2026 for a cap of €50/week was €207m at existing demand levels, and we proposed to progressively lower fees for parents over two years, thus bringing costs closer to the European level. This year the Department was unable to provide an updated figure as it develops its own proposals. We have therefore increased our allocation by 5% to €218m, or €109m in 2027, with effect from January. Any additional demand for places from capped fees will be met from the places provided through our public early years model.

Professional Pay

As the first step towards nationalising the wage bill in the early years sector, Labour would commit €130m in ringfenced funding to deliver improved pay and conditions for early years staff. Surveys by SIPTU, the early years union, have highlighted how the sector is struggling to retain staff with turnover at over 25%. The funding allocation would guarantee a 10% uplift on existing rates of pay and deliver improvements to recognise experience and qualifications. We would also review pre-school staffing ratios with a view towards lowering it closer to 1:8.

Pilot Public System opt-in for Private Providers

Labour would commit a fund of €12m to develop a pilot programme to allow existing private providers in the early years sector to tender into a new public system. This would provide an enhanced capitation system with a direct subsidy for wages, while retaining some aspects of the current private model, but with a cap on profits, and certainty on costs, allowing a transition to a public model over time. It builds on our previous proposal for a 'childcare in situ' scheme where the State would take over the operation of existing services that wish to transfer to the public scheme or buy out those that indicate their intention to close or withdraw from core funding.

Inclusion and Equality

The Access and Inclusion Model supports children with disabilities to participate in pre-school and we would increase funding up to €100m to provide improved supports to younger children under three, and ensure swifter decisions are made on supports. A further €5m is allocated for the full rollout of the Equal Start programme supporting children experiencing disadvantage to participate fully in early learning and childcare.

• First stage of public childcare scheme rollout with 6,000 places across approx. 100-150 locations.	€65m
• Cap childcare fees at €200 a month over two years.	€109m
• Ringfenced funding to deliver a 10% increase in early-years staff pay with recognition of experience and qualifications.	€130m

• Pilot Public System opt-in for Private Providers.	€12m
• Bring budget for Access and Inclusion Model to €100m to support children with additional needs access early years.	€16m
• Increased funding for Equal Start (estimate).	€5m

CAPITAL

• Additional funding for provision of public childcare facilities.	€55m
--	-------------

A CHILDREN'S BUDGET TO END POVERTY

In a country as rich as Ireland it is shocking that one in five children live in poverty when housing costs are included, as outlined in recent ESRI research and SILC data. Almost 100,000 children live in consistent poverty and over 200,000 are at risk of falling below the poverty line. The cost of living crisis will drive that higher. Despite the creation of a dedicated unit in the Department of An Taoiseach to address child poverty and wellbeing there has not been the necessary political follow through.

In 2023 the ESRI published a report on the introduction of a new targeted child income support payment (CISP) as a second tier of child benefit, a position previously recommended in 2022 by the Commission on Taxation and Welfare. This reduces child poverty by a quarter and the child poverty gap by half. Labour has advocated since then for the introduction of this payment instead of untargeted VAT cuts. We consistently noted that significant design work would be needed to deliver this and avoid unintended consequences from interactions with secondary benefits and means tests. Labour will once again allocate €2.5m for the creation of a dedicated Departmental team focused solely on the goal of designing and introducing this new payment and we have allocated the estimated €770m necessary for a second tier.

• Introduce a targeted Child Income Support Payment.	€770m
• Dedicated Departmental team to design and introduce a CISP.	€2.5m

However, while the government shows no intention of bringing forward a second targeted tier of child benefit in 2027, we recommend that the following child poverty reduction measures be taken within the €770m budget envelope, and outline through other chapters specific measures to address child poverty. The Child Support Payment should be increased by €18 for the over 12s rate, and by €10 for younger children. Lone parents especially need more targeted support and we would provide for increases in the Working Family Payment and extend it to JST recipients, increase the income limits for Fuel Allowance and the income disregards for lone parent payments. We also provide for a general increase in Child Benefit and a €100 once off grocery supplement.

The TUSLA Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme, set up by Labour, is an area-based funding measure intended to address multidimensional child poverty and we would continue the current 12 locations, and extend it to five new locations.

Alternative Child Poverty Reduction Measures to CISP Introduction

• Increase the Qualified Child Payment for Social Welfare payments and BTWFD by €18 for children aged 12 and over to €96, and by €10 for children aged under 12 to €68.	€193m
• Increase Child Benefit by €10 a month and provide for a €100 grocery supplement in December and February.	€279m
• Increase Working Family Payment thresholds by €50 and extend eligibility to JST recipients.	€136m
• Increase Income Disregard for OPFP and JST to €250 and increase income threshold for Fuel Allowance.	€57m
• Extend Area Based Childhood programme to 5 new locations.	€3.3m
• Make education free (Education), end child homelessness (Housing), tackle the scandal of waiting lists for child disability services and therapies (Health), invest in youth services and increase income supports for children in Direct Provision (Community), and make travel free for children (Climate).	

PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

News reports regularly document failures in the care provided to vulnerable children and there must be a root and branch review of child protection services, and a new strategy mapped out to address deficits in care. Tusla has been set up to fail and is under significant pressure to deliver in an under-resourced system. Child protection referrals increased by 125% over the past 10 years. A new approach is needed to improve staff recruitment, retention, morale and critically, continuity of care for children.

As a first step we would invest more in foster care and kinship care to support children in family settings. We would provide pension security for Foster Carers, increase the allowance by 10%, and align the aftercare allowance rate with the main payment over two years. Kinship care from a relative, often grandparents, provides a vital support to a child when a parent can't. We would increase the level of the Guardian payment by €100, improve processing times, and ensure access to appropriate therapeutic and social supports including respite and medical cards. We would ensure Family Resource Centres are provided with minimum core funding of €255,000, and access to dedicated capital funding streams for securing and improving accommodation and buildings.

The historic lack of investment in public residential places has left Tusla reliant on private providers. We provide for a 10% budget increase for Tusla to meet existing levels of service, fill vacant posts, meet increasing demand, and implement a reform programme with a new workforce plan to train, recruit and retain more social workers.

The majority of children needing care are placed with private providers. Tusla has 119 statutory residential care beds and has struggled to staff and deliver new public capacity despite a 50:50 target. We commit increased investment over 3 years to deliver over 260 spaces and reduce reliance on private accommodation.

The challenge in providing additional special care provision beds is in securing suitably qualified staff for a challenging working environment. There is capacity to provide such beds if staff can be hired at a significant cost of over €1m per bed but a high support 'step down' placement facility needs to also be developed again.

• 10% increase in Tusla current funding to maintain ELS and bring forward a new social work workforce development plan.	€118m
• Provide for a 10% increase in the Foster Care Allowance, align aftercare rate with main allowance and extend pension security.	€25.1m
• Support Kinship Carer's with €100 increase to the Guardians payment and quicker processing time of applications.	€10.5m
• Minimum of €255,000 in core funding for Family Resource Centres and access to capital funding.	€9.4m
• Over 260 new public residential care units over 3 years (Capital).	€37m
• Fund to secure staffing for Special Care provision beds, and provision of new step-down placements.	€6m

SUPPORTING FAMILY CARERS

There are over 500,000 family carers in Ireland, and their unpaid work saves the State more than €20 billion a year. It is well over twenty years since Labour first called for the abolition of the means test on Carer's Allowance and we would complete that work in 2027. The Budget 2026 income disregard increases only came into effect in July so data on increased uptake was not available, though the PBO estimated last November that the remaining cost would be €259m. We would also increase the Support Grant by €150 and increase the hours a Carer can work or study per week.

The application and appeals process for Domiciliary Care Allowance is simply not fit for purpose and requires urgent reform. We would increase the payment rate by €20 and extend eligibility up to 18 years of age.

• Abolish the Carer's Allowance means test in Budget 2027.	€259m
• €150 increase in Carers' Support Grant to €2,150.	€27.3m
• Increase the cap on hours a Carer can work or study per week from 18.5 hours and increase the income threshold.	€9m
• Increase Domiciliary Care Allowance by €20, extend it up to 18-year-olds and reform the application and appeal process.	€49.4m
• Fully fund the Carer's Guarantee.	€3m
• Replace Mobility Allowance and Motorised Transport Grant with long promised Transport Support Scheme.	

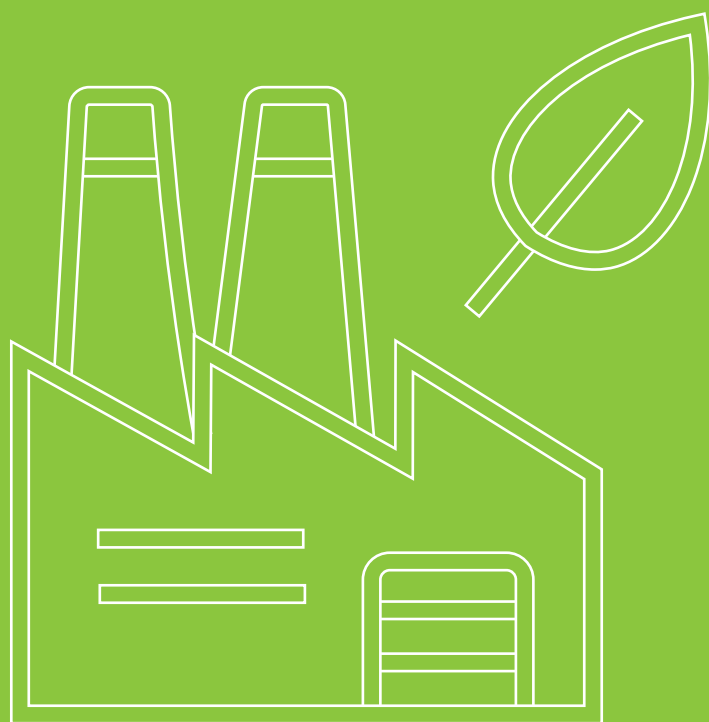
A NEW FAIR DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The development of a statutory home support scheme is still no closer, the work of the Commission on Care is significantly delayed, and the shortage of home care staff can only be addressed with improved pay and working conditions. Older people want to age in place and allowing people to receive the care they need in their own homes is crucial to a fair and humane care system. Where residential care becomes necessary, a key objective for Labour is investing in public services to reverse the privatisation of care and deliver a further 140 publicly run long term residential care beds a year, as outlined in our Health proposals.

The 2026 budget for Fair Deal is €1.37 billion, supports over 24,500 people, and over 80% goes to private nursing homes. We would allocate €87m under ELS to support an additional 750 placements next year and want to see it extended to cover more costs that incur additional charges. As a priority the Fair Deal scheme also needs to be reformed to allow people to remain, and be cared for, in their own homes as this has the potential to deliver substantial savings on residential care and should be pursued on a cost neutral basis. We would also appoint and resource a Commissioner for Older People and Aging. Further care measures are outlined under Health and Disability.

Allow families to draw down Fair Deal funding for care at home.	TBC
Provide over 2 million additional home support hours to clear waiting lists and improve care workers terms and conditions.	€80m
ELS funding for Nursing Home Support Scheme (Fair Deal).	€87m
Fund the work of the Commission on Care and appoint a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing.	€1m

CLIMATE



CLIMATE

We have just lived through the warmest summer on record in Ireland, and the devastating and dramatic impact of climate change is clear as record-breaking temperatures and flash floods become the norm. With every year Ireland is less likely to meet our 2030 climate targets and could face fines of up to €26bn. Budget 2027 must address climate breakdown and accelerate our transition away from unreliable, expensive and destructive fossil fuels.

Driving ongoing annual emission reductions will require significant investment, and the government is not delivering. Capital investment by the Department of Climate, Energy and Environment will increase by only €200m in 2027 under the NDP, while the SEAI is failing to spend its existing allocation. We need to rapidly electrify, and Labour would deploy an additional €5bn over the next decade specifically from the Apple windfall to support long term financing of retrofitting, renewable energy, and major public transport projects. This will complement the future allocations from the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund and give confidence that major projects will proceed, and that we are on a credible pathway to meeting our targets. Now is the time to invest as oil prices soar.

We need swift and decisive action to support people and communities this winter by addressing Ireland's dependence on harmful fossil fuels. Ordinary workers and their families must be supported through this change and also see the benefit of moving to a carbon neutral economy, through a *Just Transition*. Labour would invest more in plug-in solar and retrofitting programmes, frontload investment in active travel and city bike schemes, equip farmers to meet sectoral emissions, and make targeted interventions to protect and rebuild biodiversity and sustainability.

ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES AND RENEWABLE HEATING

Improving the energy efficiency of our built environment is an immense and expensive challenge for Ireland. For too many people upgrading their home or installing solar is outside their financial reach even with generous grants and a low-interest loan product.

Labour's priority is to first improve the energy efficiency of households with the lowest income, who are also most at risk of energy poverty. That's why we will democratise access to renewable energy by mainstreaming plug-in solar, a simple technology that is suitable for all kinds of households.

We will turbocharge retrofitting and the rollout of renewable energy sources and heating systems by improving access to energy efficiency upgrades with five key actions:

1. Create a Community Energy Advice Service and reform SEAI grants.
2. Permanently lower electricity bills with over 1 million Plug in solar units.
3. Provide energy independence to low-income households.
4. Introduce a Rural Retrofitting Programme and fund a heat pump revolution.
5. Invest €2.5bn of equity into a new SEAI fund for whole area upgrades.

Local Community Energy Advisors and SEAI grants

To encourage retrofitting in private and rented homes, Labour would create a Community Energy Advice service with 100 advisors. These will work to boost uptake of existing programmes, provide advice on how to save energy, what solutions will work best for your household, and build momentum for whole area retrofitting. Critically it would promote how we are making retrofitting more affordable and accessible.

Cost is a major barrier for many working people who want to retrofit their home. While the **Better Energy Homes Scheme** and other SEAI programmes offer significant grants there is still a gap for too many households. Labour would reform the SEAI grant system to link higher grant rates to households on low and middle and lower incomes. We would also introduce a zero-interest loan product like models in France and the Netherlands and pair it with a new **Home Retrofit Tax incentive** modelled on the Home Renovation Incentive, which would be available to households earning less than €100,000, and claimable on the first €10,000 of work. This would complement available grants and zero loans and help bridge the affordability gap in a targeted way.

Permanently lowering Electricity Bills with Plug in Solar

Over time more rooftop solarPV will be installed on homes across Ireland, but it takes time, and the cost is still too much for many. However, small plug-in solar units will soon be approved for use in Ireland, and it is an opportunity to quickly help households permanently lower their electricity bills with a small piece of equipment. Due to the energy crisis, Labour would allocate €500m of once off capital funds from our National Retrofitting Fund to bulk purchase up to one million plug-in solar units that would be made available for free to households that qualify for targeted energy credits. It is an interim solution that could cut bills by 10-15% or €150, reducing the impact of price increases over the next year.

Provide Energy Independence to Low Income Households

The SEAI **Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme** provides free of charge energy efficiency upgrades to low incomes households. It has a 2026 budget of €340m to retrofit about 11,500 homes. There are long delays of up to two years from application to completion, and demand is high, yet the allocation last year was not all spent. The average cost was €32,804 per home in the first half of 2026. We would allocate a further €49m of capital to cover a further 125 homes a month, or 1,500 a year, taking the total number of low-income households for retrofit in 2027 close to 13,000. We would also allocate a further €10m for increased solarPV installation and use the €120m SEAI underspend from last year for the installation of solar panels on houses completed in 2025 and 2026. We would also expand the Warmer Homes scheme to cover HAP tenancies on the condition of longer-term leases with claw back conditions.

The annual energy efficiency retrofit budget for local authority housing is now at €140m, providing upgrades for about 3,500 dwellings a year. Based on an average cost of €40,000 per unit, to ensure 5,000 homes are progressed next year would require an extra €60 million factoring in efficiencies of scale. We will also provide €40 million in this package for the installation of renewable heat systems and/or solarPV where possible to address energy poverty bringing the extra cost to €100m, for a total allocation of €240m in 2027.

Rural Retrofitting and a Heat Pump Revolution

Ireland has a target of installing 400,000 heat pumps by 2030 but the numbers being installed are nowhere near this. Replacing fossil fuel heating systems will have the greatest impact on lowering our emissions, improving air quality, and addressing energy poverty. However, price is a real concern as heat pumps can cost up to €20,000 (though SEAI grants of up to €12,500 are available), often require new radiators, and an uncertain operating charge can drive much higher electricity bills.

Storm Éowyn showed the vulnerability of rural homes and the electricity network. We would introduce a new Rural Retrofitting Scheme for a trial period that would fully fund the installation of up to 4,000 heat pumps a year for low to middle income households in rural and socially deprived areas. We would pair this with a battery storage grant of up to €3,000 which would be installed alongside solar panels. Combined in the future with an electric car, and the right adapter a household could go off grid when power is knocked out. We would also seek to develop a subsidised heat pump social tariff through an Energy Guarantee Scheme to deliver a cheaper rate of electricity for operating heat pumps for low-income households. High temperature heat pumps must also be incentivised as a like for like replacement for oil and gas boilers without having to redo radiators through a full retrofit. The cost of other upgrades to bring the home to be heat pump ready would be met from existing SEAI schemes.

National Retrofitting Fund

Using an equity investment of €2.5bn from the Apple escrow, Labour would create a National Retrofitting Fund under the SEAI to be deployed over the next decade that would recoup installation costs over a much longer timescale. It will also take time to build up sufficient capacity in the sector and not detract from homebuilding. €1.25bn of the total would be delivered through new Community Energy schemes as follows:

- €1bn for area-based retrofitting consisting of street by street, estate by estate or whole parish plans, where the State would facilitate the cost of energy efficiency upgrades, co-ordinated by local Community Energy Advisors. An offer would be made to cover all homes, with some level of clawback for higher incomes households and rental tenancies. The efficiencies and market certainty of delivering upgrade works in designated areas would provide for quicker delivery.
- €500m would be allocated for apartment complexes, MUDs and AHBs.
- €500m would be immediately deployed for plug-in solar purchases.
- €250m would be available to SMEs and the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The final €250m would be ringfenced for public sector pathfinder projects for upgrades of schools, Garda stations, hospitals, and other public buildings.

• Appoint 100 local Community Energy Advisors.	€19m
• Targeted Home Retrofit Tax Incentive to bridge the affordability gap and introduce the residential retrofit loan guarantee scheme.	€30m

Develop and introduce a subsidised heat pump electricity tariff for up to 5 years, waive the €827 gas network disconnection fees, and introduce a zero-interest rate retrofitting loan scheme.	TBC
--	------------

CAPITAL

Double the Local Authority Energy Efficiency Programme to up to 5,000 council homes per year and install solarPV.	€100m
Increase the Warmer Homes Scheme budget to cover solar PV and retrofitting for a further 1,500 low-income homes.	€59m
Provide up to 4,000 free installations of Heat Pumps per year as part of a Rural Retrofit Programme.	€68m
Introduce a Battery Storage Grant for rural households.	€12m
Equity for a National Retrofit Fund over 5 years.	€2.5bn

OUR ENERGY TRANSITION

The reliance on gas and fossil fuels for electricity generation has exposed Ireland to some of the highest prices in the EU, and the government will soon spend close to €1bn on a state-owned floating LNG terminal that will lock in future fossil fuel use and higher costs. The huge energy demands of data centres is also keeping prices high and absorbing new renewables. We would apply a levy of €20 per megawatt hour on data centres raising over €170m and reform the PSO to ensure they contribute equitably. The rapid deployment of offshore wind infrastructure is needed to diversify our grid, and Labour would direct the ESB and BNM to scale up delivery. Labour believes the State should commit at least €1bn in direct equity stakes in offshore wind projects to ensure delivery. We would also commit €80m to a new Strategic Ports Infrastructure Fund to support offshore construction.

The planning and regulatory system must be resourced with the expertise to support our climate objectives, and we allocate €3m in dedicated funding to prioritise renewable energy projects. In parallel we would create a new Wind Energy Centre of Excellence in a Technological University and fund over 1,000 Skillsnet places for green tech, renewable energy and climate change courses. For many years, Labour called for flagship community energy projects such as the installation of solar panels on school roofs. This is now happening, and these projects have huge symbolic value, demonstrating the urgent need for collective climate action. We would extend this further with €30m to install solar panels across the public sector estate and provide a further €5m for the development of district heating in 2027.

With billions in direct public equity now committed to Eirgrid and ESB Networks, they must rapidly scale up the resilience of our transmission network so that the grid becomes more robust, with increased investment in battery and thermal storage options. Funding for the EV charging network needs to increase and local authorities must provide on street e-charging facilities. The innovative EnergyCloud project to direct surplus waste renewable energy to low-income households in fuel poverty should be expanded.

• Increased resourcing and expertise in the planning system and public sector bodies for delivery of renewable energy projects.	€3m
• Create a Wind Energy Centre of Excellence and provide 1,000 Skillnet places in the climate and renewable energy sector.	€2.5m

CAPITAL

• Off-shore wind direct equity investment fund through ISIF/FIF.	€1bn+
• Strategic Port Infrastructure fund.	€80m
• Solar panel installation across the public sector estate.	€30m
• District Heating Development Fund (grand funding).	€5m
• Develop a more robust electricity grid, increase the EV charging network including on-street e-charging, and expand EnergyCloud.	

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

In a cost-of-living and energy crisis now is not the time to increase fares for commuters but rather to incentivise the use of public transport. Labour would commit €70m to stop fare increases in 2027, provide €47m for a 5% increase in funding for new PSO services and €19m to extend free Leap Card travel for children aged up to 18.

Under the revised NDP the transport capital budget is due to reach €4.175bn in 2027, an increase of over €700m on 2026. We fund our additional capital proposals from within that funding envelope but more ambition and certainty is needed. We believe a further €2.5bn of the Apple escrow fund should be deployed over the next decade to progress the Metro, LUAS extensions, Bus Connects, DART+, Western rail corridor, other rail upgrades and balanced regional development.

We would also allocate an additional €35m to fund capital investment in public transport to meet increased demand due to the energy crisis, including the purchase of 50 more electric buses. We provide funding for a 10-year capital plan to make all public transport stations accessible along with a national programme to provide covered bus shelters on routes across the country. It rains a lot in Ireland and if we want people to take the bus, then we should provide some shelter.

We also commit €3m for the national rollout of the Independent Travel Support Scheme to support people with disabilities to travel independently, and €9m to fund the initial rollout of a transport police and increased security presence at DART stations.

As fuel prices soar, Budget 2027 should deliver on Labour's Cycling Package as the uptake of active travel is central to reducing emissions and the number of cars on our roads. We are calling for the introduction of an SUV tax like that in France, based on weight and size to tackle the dangerous bloat of cars over the last decade delivered through both the VRT and the annual motor tax system.

Labour has long called for the Cycle to Work tax scheme to be expanded to allow parents to purchase bicycles for their children; and we estimate this 'Cycle to School' scheme would cost €1.4m. The current tax scheme does not support students, those out of work or self-employed to purchase a bike so we would allocate €5m through support grants of up to €250 to support those who want to buy a bike, and reduce VAT on bicycles, e-bikes and safety equipment.

France has a scrappage scheme that provides grants for those who trade in an old car in exchange for an e-bike or cargo bike. There are hundreds of thousands of cars in Ireland that are over 10 years old. Many of these are the second car in a household. Labour would provide €5m for a pilot scheme that would allow for grants of up to €2,500 for cargo and e-bikes in exchange for trading in an old car. This would support the removal of up to 2,000 cars from the road. We would also provide seed funding for community cargo bike clubs.

We would provide €16 million in capital funding for the expansion of the City Bike scheme with €10m for Dublin and the remainder allocated to other cities, and up to €500,000 for the rollout of the scheme to five new towns such as Drogheda, Dundalk and Swords. There would also be provision for more e-bikes to facilitate longer distance travel. A further €2m would provide a 50-cent subsidy per trip to support operating costs. We would expand the active travel budget to account for construction inflation and include over €6m to support maintenance of the existing network.

We would repeat the ICE2EV pilot car scrappage scheme and double it to 4,000 cars but ensure that households from rural areas with lower incomes are given priority. Extra funding is also needed for a rural hackney service, rural transport schemes and the Local Link service while Labour would look to integrate the School Transport Scheme with local services where possible. For improved road safety we provide €10m for the installation of automatic number plate recognition cameras for speed limit enforcement and to monitor junctions and bus lanes; and €108m for the maintenance and improvement of a further 700 km of road pavement on the condition of the inclusion of segregated cycleways and upgraded paths.

• Reverse public transport fare increases and provide for a 5% increase in PSO funding.	€117m
• Introduce an SUV/Car bloat tax based on weight & size (estimate).	€86m
• Extend free TFI Leap card travel for children aged up to 18.	€19m
• Lower 9% rate VAT on bicycles, e-bikes and safety equipment.	€10m
• Rollout of transport police and increase security at DART stations.	€9m
• Funding for Rural Hackney Service and Local Link services.	€7m
• Bicycle grant funding for those outside Cycle to Work scheme.	€5m
• National Independent Travel Support Scheme to support those with disabilities using public transport.	€3m
• 50 cent subvention per trip for city bike schemes.	€2m
• Introduce a new 'Cycle to School' tax scheme (estimate).	€1.5m

HIGHLIGHTED CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS:

• Fund over next decade for major public transport projects including Metro, Luas, Bus Connects, DART+ and rail upgrades.	€2.5bn
• Increase investment in active travel projects and provide a maintenance budget for upkeep of routes (€6.3m).	€35m
• Targeted investment in new public transport routes including purchase of 50 additional electric buses.	€35m
• Income linked repeat of the €5,000 ICE2EV scrappage grant scheme for 4,000 cars in rural areas.	€20m
• Make public transport stations fully accessible over ten years for people with disabilities (first year funding).	€17m
• Expansion of public City Bikes and expanded City e-bikes scheme.	€16m
• Up to €2,500 Cargo or E-bike grant from car scrappage scheme and €1m seed funding for Community Cargo Bike clubs.	€5m
• Increasing funding for road safety and installation of ANPR cameras for enforcement of speed limits and junctions/bus lanes.	€10m
• Delivery of covered bus shelters across the national bus network over five years (total €31m) with bike stands.	€6m
• Expand Zero Emissions Heavy Duty Vehicle Purchase Grant.	€4m
• Additional funding for park and ride facilities and include parking costs in TaxSaver scheme.	€4m
• Safety upgrading and improvement of a further 700km of local and regional roads a year inclusive of cycleways and paths.	€108m

JUST TRANSITION, BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

We would introduce a new Just Transition Fund to support 60 projects targeted outside the Midlands and ensure the Just Transition Commission is fully resourced. We would invest in the NPWS to support commitments under the National Biodiversity Action Plan, restoration of land and waterways, and increase funding for the Farm Plan Scheme by 50% as well as funding 20 new sustainability projects through the Community Services Programme. Air pollution causes 1,400 premature deaths in Ireland a year, and we would expand EPA air quality monitoring to allow for mobile stations to be installed in communities that believe their air quality has declined. We provide for increased funding to tackle water pollution in places like Lady's Island lake in Wexford, a review of all discharge licenses, and the installation of sondes, which measure water quality, in rivers like the Blackwater and the Glyde subject to unexplained fish kills.

We would explore the development of a National Recycling and Repair Company within the BnM structure and provide seed funding provided from the Climate Action Fund to pay a bonus to encourage people to have clothes and shoes repaired to tackle fast fashion.

• Create a new Just Transition Fund for projects across Ireland.	€22m
• Funding for a further 38 EPA mobile real time air quality monitoring stations allowing communities apply for installation.	€6m
• 10% current funding increase for NPWS to support biodiversity, conservation and restoration of land and waterways, and expand Farm Plan scheme (€2m) to over 800 holdings.	€10.7m
• Improved monitoring of water quality in rivers and lakes with deployment of sondes, and a review of all discharge licences.	€5.5m
• Community Services Programme new sustainability projects.	€5.2m
• Annual Radon testing of 50,000 homes in at risk areas, and funding for remediation works in 2,500 homes a year.	€5m
• Seed funding for pilot Repair Bonus project to tackle fast fashion.	€3m
• Funding increase for the National Biodiversity Data Centre and new scheme to tackle invasive species.	€1m

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

If the agriculture sector is to meet ambitious emission reduction targets, then new capital investment is needed. Labour would increase the allocation for farm rooftop solar to support another 500 holdings in 2027 on top of the existing budget and provide additional funding under TAMS for slurry storage and LESS to improve water quality. Labour would introduce a new equine tracing system which would have a once of establishment cost of up to €2m and provide for a 50% increase in animal welfare spending including a new fund to support emergency veterinarian visits.

Labour is committed to improving our food security and growing more of what we eat, in Ireland. We would transform Teagasc to support this objective and substantially increase investment in organic farming as part of a five-year plan to expand coverage to a fifth of all farmed land. Within the next CAP from 2027 we would seek to develop a new basic income scheme to support new growers of fruit and vegetables. We would reintroduce the Horticultural Exceptional Payment Scheme and expand it to soft fruit growers to protect our home-grown food sector. To reverse the decline in cereals being planted we would provide a 10% increase in funding for tillage and protein crop schemes to support new planting of grain and fodder crops, and the cultivation of beans, peas and other related crops. We would also allocate €1.8m to support community gardens and allotments to secure new land and develop regional networks. We provide €50m of new funding for areas of natural constraint and would ensure more farmers can access ACRES.

Despite the Forestry Programme, the annual target of 8,000 hectares of new planting is nowhere near being met with 2,527ht planted in 2025, an increase of about 1,000 on 2024. Labour would look at increasing planting grants and premia by up to 10% within the existing budget and EU rules as we need renewed effort to meet the ambitious targets for afforestation. An extensive promotion campaign is also needed combined with increased numbers of active forestry advisers.

To encourage generational change, we would reintroduce the Early Retirement Scheme for farmers, providing an annual payment of up to €15,000 for 100 farmers a year. We would ensure EU funds are being best used to aid the fishing sector and develop measures to support decarbonisation of the fleet.

• Increase ANC funding to €300m and pay on time.	€50m
• Expand the Organic Farming Scheme to support over 2,700 more farmers and growers (50% increase).	€29.3m
• Reintroduce the Horticultural Exceptional Payment Scheme.	€3.7m
• 50% increase in animal welfare allocation with new fund for emergency veterinarian visits.	€3m
• Increase tillage and protein crop supports for new planting (10%).	€4m
• New Equine Tracing System (once off cost) and initial operation.	€2m
• Increased funding for community gardens and allotments to allow for LA land purchase and support regional networks.	€1.8m
• Reintroduce an Early Retirement Scheme for farmers (100/year).	€1.5m
• Forestry promotion campaign and examine increases of up to 10% to grants and premiums within existing budget allocation.	€1m

CAPITAL

• Solar Capital Investment Scheme increase for another 500 farms.	€9m
• Increased funding rate for slurry storage and LESS.	€2m

HOUSING



HOUSING

FF and FG are failing on housing. Housing for All utterly failed and the most recent plan has abandoned annual targets. They sought no election mandate for the rent increases, smaller apartment sizes or tax breaks for developers since implemented. Despite implementing a long list of demands from developers, private sector housing construction has not substantially increased. Proposals recently floated about increasing the level of Help to Buy or cutting stamp duty for first time buyers shows the policy bankruptcy of the governing parties, resorting to fiscal measures that will only drive prices higher.

The Central Bank now forecasts delivery of only 39,500 new homes in 2026 and 41,000 in 2027, while the ESRI has warned about decreasing planning permissions. The energy crisis will drive construction inflation and higher interest rates will limit private investment. The last decade of failed market-led housing policies shows that only the State can deliver at the scale we need to deliver more than 50,000 new homes a year.

While substantial additional capital investment was delivered to housing and water infrastructure under the revised NDP, more is still needed. In the last election, Labour set out our state led ambition on housing. Ireland at a minimum must build at least 50,000 homes a year for the next decade. We also need to retrofit up to 50,000 homes every year and bring back into use vacant and derelict properties. That is 1 million homes to build or renovate over a decade. This is the scale of what is needed to address our housing crisis, to meet our climate targets and to ensure the sustainable use of our building stock. Our construction workforce planning must recognise the competing demands between building new and restoring old, and it must ensure that we have enough workers to do both.

Young people are deeply frustrated, caught in a cycle of ever rising rent and house prices. Labour would double rent tax relief in this budget and strengthen tenant rights but we need more supply. The private sector cannot and will not build the homes for sale we need. The current housing crisis is a crisis of the inability of the private development sector to meet need. The Land Development Agency must take a much more central role in the market. Its mandate must be refocused and equity base strengthened. Labour would deploy a further €6bn of the Apple windfall as equity funding into the LDA and transform it into a **State Construction Company** to build tens of thousands of affordable homes. Our plan will resource it to build up substantial land banks and engage in the long-term planning needed for the development of houses and apartments at the necessary density, along with the infrastructure and administration to engage in direct building for sale or cost rental.

- Equity Funding from Apple tax windfall for the Land Development Agency to transform into a State Construction Company.

€6bn

The State must also use its deep financial pockets through the HFA, ISIF and NTMA to underwrite longer term financing for Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to support the development of more affordable cost rental and social housing.

Overall, in the context of Budget 2027 we would allocate over €1.8 billion more in voted capital to provide for the delivery and refurbishment of over 6,000 new social and affordable homes to bring us closer to a 50,000 total target a year.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION

With the private sector failing to deliver sufficient new build housing for sale or rent, only the State has the capacity to act. As outlined in our housing policy, 'Build More Homes', Labour would over time invest enough to deliver over 20,000 social and affordable homes a year by significantly increasing capital investment. This is essential to address the over-reliance of the State on private developers and rental accommodation to provide social housing through current expenditure programmes like HAP, RAS and social leasing. Our goal is the phasing out of such schemes, to remain only as a short-term measure until a person or family with an identified housing need is permanently housed in a publicly owned building, a home owned through an approved housing body, or can purchase their own affordable home.

We would invest a further €800m in the Social Housing Capital Investment Programme to build an extra 1,750 local authority homes per year to take total delivery above 13,000 in 2027. Cost rental and affordable housing are funded through a variety of schemes, and we provide increased financing of €483m to support the delivery of up an additional 2,000 units of each of cost rental (€308m) and local authority affordable purchase. Lower cost, longer term financing for AHBs will also increase the viability of projects. To support the growth of sustainable communities Labour would commit €20m a year for local infrastructure and increase the funding available for regeneration, pilot modular housing, and the refurbishment of existing stock and estates.

CAPITAL

• Build 1,750 more local authority homes a year on publicly owned land to bring 2027 delivery to over 13,000 units (All in cost).	€797m
• Financing to ensure delivery of a further 2,000 cost rental units, and 2,000 affordable purchase homes a year.	€483m
• Funding to double modular housing prototype pilot to 300 units in Limerick, with additional staffing for delivery.	€80m
• Community Infrastructure Fund for local authority and AHB building projects over 50 units.	€20m
• New funding for the Regeneration Scheme and refurbishment.	€15m
• Increase funding for An Coimisiún Pleanála and Local Authority Planning Departments (current spending).	€4.8m

POLICY CHANGES

• Prepare for the transformation of the LDA into a State Housing Construction Company, which would embed decent terms and conditions, good jobs, and sustainable building methods in its ethos.

- Cut red tape for local authorities carrying out the building of social homes by devolving construction budgets for their direct management.
- Increase social housing net income limits to €45,000 per single person, extend Dublin cost rental income limits to the greater Dublin area and other cities, and make cost rental a condition of Croí Cónaithe (Cities) funding.

Increasing Residential Supply and the Construction Workforce

- Provide a detailed five-year investment plan outlining the proposed new public housing and Uisce Éireann infrastructure planned under new NDP allocations.
- Encourage conversion of redundant commercial properties to residential use, and disincentivise construction of speculative offices and other commercial and industrial properties - such as data centres - by using emergency development levies and increasing non-residential stamp duty.
- Pay apprentices at least the minimum wage and abolish apprenticeship fees; support training using the NTF surplus and stamp out bogus self-employment.
- Make the Housing Agency responsible for promoting construction careers, and attracting skilled workers to Ireland, including emigrants.
- Launch an international recruitment campaign with industry partners and widen the categories of construction work jobs on the critical skills list.
- Provide local authorities with the power to levy tourist taxes on hotel beds and short term lets, and return the revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax, Residential Zoned Land Tax, and planned Derelict Sites Tax to councils.
- Introduce a stamp duty exemption for rightsizers, and a moving grant.

Tackle Vacancy and Dereliction, end speculation and land hoarding

Vacancy and dereliction represent a scourge across our communities. High levels of visible dereliction in our urban centres has a deeply negative impact on community solidarity, while vacant and derelict site registers kept by each local authority only reflect a small portion of the real levels. The continued presence of far too many empty homes represents a serious indictment of Government policy on housing. These buildings could be much-needed homes for people. Labour would resource Local Authorities to act with €125m of additional funding to CPO such properties and return them to use under schemes like Buy and Renew.

The most recent CSO report shows there were over 70,149 vacant dwellings in Ireland in 2024. Many more properties that could be homes either above shops, or in dereliction could be quickly converted. In 2025, only around 2,300 home were liable for the vacant homes tax, and just €2.2m was collected. Labour would increase the VHT to 10 times the rate of LPT with a minimum charge of €5,000 per year and increase compliance. The purpose of this tax is not to raise revenue but rather to encourage the putting back into use of vacant homes. If an identified property remains empty, then Vacant Housing Officers in each local authority will be resourced by Labour to proceed with CPO proceedings. Each local authority should have

targets on returning vacant and derelict properties into use, vacant property refurbishment grants should be available in instalments and paired with the low interest retrofitting loan scheme.

• Funding for hiring of Local Authority staff to tackle vacancy, dereliction, and CPO of properties.	€5m
• Increase Vacant Homes Tax to a €5,000 minimum charge, charge at 10 times LPT base rate and increase compliance.	€12.8m

CAPITAL

• Funding for compulsory purchase and refurbishment of up to 500 additional vacant and derelict properties a year by councils.	€125m
• Increase capital grants for Built Heritage Investment and Historic Structures Fund by 20%.	€2.3m

POLICY CHANGES

• Establish a comprehensive national building survey to review and upgrade the vacant and derelict buildings registers maintained by each local authority.
• Comprehensively reform the law covering CPOs as recommended by the Law Reform Commission and introduce Compulsory Sale Orders.
• Make vacant property refurbishment grants available in instalments.
• Introduce a local authority low interest loan scheme linked to the retrofitting scheme for those who want to buy and refurbish vacant and derelict buildings.
• Apply a minimum 20% Stamp Duty levy on bulk sale of houses and apartments to private investors.
• End social leasing under Part V and provide local authorities with a capital funding stream to purchase these units.

A FAIR DEAL FOR RENTERS

The new government rules will continue the trend of soaring rents while tenants continue to be evicted into homelessness. We would resource the RTB to develop a Rents Register and deposit protection scheme and support the development of reference rents as recommended by the Housing Commission. The Minister must revise HAP limits by benchmarking to the RTB 35th percentile to accurately reflect current market rents and the discretionary levels already being paid. In the medium to long-term, HAP and RAS should be phased down through greater investment in publicly owned housing, and this will also have the effect of increasing the availability of private rented accommodation.

• Double the Rent Tax Credit to €2,000.	€205m
• Ensure every new HAP tenancy is inspected within 12 months and that 25% of all tenancies are inspected per year.	€11.2m

• Develop a Rents Register and Deposit Protection Scheme (RTB).	€3m
• Phase in HAP Limit increases of up to 15% to reflect market rents	€65m
• Pass Labour's Renter's Rights bill to introduce a three-year rent freeze, restrict reasons for evictions, and develop a Rent to Buy scheme.	
• Finally regulate short term lets to return more homes to the rental sector.	

HOMELESSNESS

The rate of homelessness continues to rise by nearly 10% a year. Urgent change is necessary to end homelessness and the State has the power to act by investing in prevention. When Housing for All launched in September 2021 there were 8,475 people homeless including 1,005 families with 2,344 children. The figures for August now show 17,885 people homeless with 5,830 children in emergency accommodation. Child and single people homelessness reaches higher records every month. Emergency measures should now be taken to recognise the worsening situation. Such change will also deliver much more effective use of state funding. Apart from the appalling human cost of homelessness, the cost of maintaining a household in emergency accommodation is estimated to be over €40,000 per annum. This is money that could be better spent on housing delivery and should be refocused into turning around and repurposing vacant homes and buildings for use as housing.

There are nearly 3,000 vacant council homes across the state with more than 800 of these empty over a year but Councils are only provided with refurbishment funding of €11,000 per unit for up to a total of 2,300 a year. We would double this to €22,000 and extend it to cover 3,000 'voids' a year. The Tenant in Situ scheme is a proven short-term solution to homelessness and Labour would ensure the budget available is demand led until sufficient new supply is built.

• Ensure every child in homelessness has a Tusla Child Support Worker, dedicated School Transport, and mental health supports.	€2.5m
• Allocate funding to pilot a Housing First for Families programme to support those with complex needs.	€4m
• 10% funding increase for homeless services targeted towards prevention measures, and to address Section 10 pay deficits.	€51.4m
• Put in place a ban on the eviction of children into homelessness and pass Labour's Housing Homeless Families Bill.	

CAPITAL

• Double the funding allocation for refurbishment of 3,000 vacant council housing 'voids' from €11,000 to €22,000.	€41m
• Continue Tenant-in-Situ provision of €373m into 2027 and increase allocation to €500m.	€127m

OTHER HOUSING MEASURES

Limits for the Housing Adaptation grant scheme for people with a disability were increased to €40,000 in 2024 but still don't address the real costs of having work done and the increasing demand. Labour would provide for grants of up to €60,000 and ensure when work is approved that it is aligned with the SEAI Warmer Homes scheme to deliver energy upgrades at the same time. Clarity must be provided on funding for the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People and a review opened of the Capital Assistance Scheme to simplify acquisitions and approval processes, and reconsider price ceilings for larger homes. As interest rates rise, many households still have their mortgages owned and serviced by 'vulture funds' and their agents. The State should allow performing mortgage holders to refinance their loans through the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme.

CAPITAL

• 40% increase in Housing Adaptation Grant funding, align with SEAI retrofitting work, and increase the €40,000 limit to €60,000.	€52m
• €100m direct state investment in affordable, public student accommodation.	€100m

CONSTRUCTION DEFECTS

Labour would provide €2.5m of initial funding for the establishment of the Building Standards Regulator and fund 100% redress for Construction Defects and MICA with a 2% recurring levy on profits from construction activities (€50-60m/year) over a decade and provide for a 10% increase in Defective Concrete Block remediation grant limits and fund the replacement of foundations.

• Establish the Building Standards Regulator (initial costs)	€2.5m
--	--------------

COMMUNITY



COMMUNITY

SUPPORTING CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Labour has a proud record of supporting our arts, culture and all who work in these sectors. Culture should never be a luxury, and to support their work and invest in young people we would introduce a new €250 'All Access Culture Card' for 18- to 24-year-olds. This culture card could be used on a range of cultural, artistic, entertainment, and sporting events, and would break down financial barriers.

The chronic shortage of space for the Arts is one of the most critical issues in the sector and we commit to a €25m annual fund to help Local Authorities and artists to wholly or part fund the purchase of new premises or refurbish vacant properties, and in the long term to set up a Culture Infrastructure Company. It is also vital that specific supports are made available to help arts and cultural spaces to decarbonise, and that licensing laws are reformed to support the nighttime and culture economy. Allowing local authorities to apply a levy on bed nights would expand the funding available for cultural investment. The Basic Income for Artists scheme must also now be expanded, but this must not distract from improving wages in the sector. Disabled artists must be properly supported by the tax and welfare system, a diversity taskforce established, and the Arts Act updated to protect the intellectual property and labour rights of artists. We must continue to invest in our national cultural institutions by increasing their core funding and ensure that they can be more widely accessed by extending their opening hours.

Labour would introduce a 5% audio-visual media content levy that would raise €50m to support Irish independent producers, animation sector, and broadcasters. We would continue ringfenced support for radio and local news reporting and remove the increased levy on local radio. In the 1990s, Labour's vision transformed the Irish film industry. The industry is nothing without its skilled performers and crew and Labour would amend Section 481 tax credit regulations to provide for an 8% regional uplift, and critically to bring the rights, pay and terms and conditions of performers and crew up to the standards in place in peer countries.

• €250 All Access Culture Card for 18–24-year-olds.	€88m
• Increase Arts Council funding up to €160m with increased Creative Ireland funding to maintain and expand programmes.	€20m
• Maintain and expand the Basic Income for the Arts scheme by 1,000 places.	€17m
• Increased funding to Culture Ireland to bring budget up to €10m.	€1.2m
• Extended opening hours for National Cultural Institutions and 10% funding increase for national and regional institutions.	€11m
• Support diversity in the arts and reform social welfare and medical card rules to recognise disabled artists.	€2m
• Remove the increased levy on local radio with CnaM funding.	€1m

CAPITAL

• Funding for Local Authorities and artists to develop, secure and refurbished studio and cultural spaces.	€25m
• Screen Ireland increase for local production and IP retention.	€5m

AN GHAEILGE

Credimíd gur cóir infheistíocht suntasach a cur in áit don teanga Gaeilge a chur chun chin. Is mór an tabhachtach go bhfuil níos mó infheistíocht le fáil do Foras na Gaeilge agus sna ionad cultúrtha Gaelach. We would provide a total Irish language funding increase of €52.5m.

• Phased multiannual funding increases for Foras na Gaeilge.	€5.3m
• TG4 core funding increase, and support for Raidió Rí-Rá.	€12m
• Balance of 2027 funding for An Plean Fáis proposals such as An Taibhdhearc, language planning, and educational initiatives.	€20.2m

CAPITAL

• €15m capital funding over three years to Údarás na Gaeltachta for Gaeltacht housing, infrastructure and jobs package.	€5m/yr
---	--------

INVESTING IN YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

The Youth Sector has been chronically underfunded for many years as highlighted by NYCI and youth work projects. We provide for an increase of more than €13.5m in current funding to support existing services, address unmet demand and increased costs. Youth worker salaries must be improved, and vulnerable communities like LGBTQI+ and new Irish provided with increased supports. Over two years we would provide for over €14m in new capital funding for youth spaces through a 25% increase in funding for the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and an expansion of the successful Community Centres Fund by €2m.

The community, voluntary and charity sector provides incalculable supports and services across our country, and we would invest in their work, staff, and volunteers. Significant funding has been lost from the Leader Programme and SICAP in recent years and we would implement increases for each. We would provide an annual support grant of €2,000 to Men's and Women's Sheds, expand the Community Engagement Programme to a further ten areas of deprivation, and provided increased funding for offshore islands, libraries, Senior Alerts Scheme and Meals on Wheels.

• 15% increase in funding for Youth sector and services to meet service demand, support vulnerable youth and improve salaries.	€13.5m
• Increase LEADER funding by €10.2m and SICAP by €6.1m back to €55m over 2 years.	€16.3m
• Invest in dedicated workforce skills, training framework and digitisation for the Community and Voluntary Sector (NTF).	€9m

• 25% increase for Town and Village Renewal Scheme and increase Community Centres Investment Fund to €22m (Capital).	€7.3m
• Bring Charity VAT Compensation Scheme to €15m.	€5m
• 10% increase in day-to-day funding for the Islands.	€1.2m
• Expand Empowering Communities Programme to 10 deprived areas with hiring of more Community Engagement Workers.	€1.3m
• €2,000 annual support grant for Women's and Men's Sheds.	€1.2m
• New funding for Rural Recreation Officers and Walk Scheme.	€1m
• Increased funding to €9m to support and develop local libraries.	€0.9m
• Expand Senior Alerts Scheme to provide for assistive technology and expansion to adults with disabilities.	€0.5m

SPORT AND RECREATION

The recent successes of Irish athletes in the Olympics, European and World Championships across a range of sports shows the reward for investing in talent, and Labour has long called for increased funding for the international carding system and national governing bodies. We would increase the betting levy by 1% to raise €57m to fund this. The FAI must continue to improve governance and deliver reforms, but we remain committed to a range of football investments including a dedicated focus on grassroots and League of Ireland football. We would allocate funding for new changing facilities for women and girls, and increase grants to promote inclusivity and access within sports clubs and organisations. There is enormous demand for playing pitches in communities across Ireland, and we provide funding for 50 additional community pitches in 2027 for towns with populations over 5,000, and this would form a key part of delivering on the vision of the FAI. There are 26 towns with a population over 10,000 without a public swimming pool and Labour would commit to funding an additional three a year over the next decade.

• Increased investment in grassroots and League of Ireland football including new academy structures in League clubs and secondary schools.	€11m
• Improved changing facilities for women and girls, and new grants to promote gender equality.	€6m
• Support 70 more athletes under the International Carding Scheme (50% increase) and raise individual payments by 25%.	€4.2m
• 10% increase in funding for sporting national governing bodies and Youth Field Sports programme.	€3.3m

CAPITAL

• Funding programme for delivery of community multi-sports playing pitches and equipment grants in 50 locations.	€25m
• Build three new public swimming pools a year.	€27m

DOMESTIC, SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

A key priority for Labour is the establishment of a new €3m SAFE fund to support victim survivors of domestic abuse. We would also increase the budget for CUAN, to provide for more awareness and prevention campaigns, provide a 10% increase in funding for DSGBV services including refuges and Rape Crisis Centres, and a multiannual funding commitment. We also fund a new role of Commissioner to act as an independent advocate and voice for victim survivors, the provision of effective training for legal professionals working in the area, and the speedier development of a comprehensive database of sentencing decisions.

To meet the Istanbul Convention recommendation of one family refuge place for every 10,000 of population, Ireland would need well over 500 places. The current government strategy is to double provision to 282 places and based on 1 unit per 10,000 women rather than one place per 10,000 population. That means Ireland would still need at least 250 places, and our population continues to grow. A more ambitious five-year plan is necessary, and Labour would fund a further 50 emergency accommodation places every year above current plans, providing €10m for operating costs, and €30m in capital funding in 2027, and roll this provision forward in the years after that.

• Funding for additional 50 refuge places towards meeting commitments under the Istanbul Convention (€30m Capital).	€40m
• 10% funding increase for CUAN funded DSGBV services including Rape Crisis Centres and refuges to cover cost pressures.	€8m
• New SAFE fund to support victim survivors of domestic abuse.	€3m
• Establish a Victims Commissioner, resource the sentencing database and guidelines, with training for legal professionals.	€2.5m
• CUAN core funding for awareness & prevention campaigns.	€1.2m

JUSTICE, POLICING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Our communities need more Gardaí, so the offer for new recruits must be improved. Labour would resource An Garda Síochána to recruit an additional 1,000 trainees in 2027 and boost recruitment by increasing the training allowance of €354 a week close to the Garda starting salary, worth more than €700 per week. We would also provide enough funding to hire 200 more civilian staff, thus freeing up more frontline Gardai to patrol our streets and keep our communities safe. Over two years we would double the size of the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau and hire more forensic accountants to tackle money laundering, financial fraud, and corruption, and invest in expanding the Garda College (€5m), new Garda vehicles (€5m) and ICT to support modern policing.

Our Justice sector funding package would resource Fiosrú to reduce delays; provide for Coroners Support Staff and a new Coroners Service; and replace Gardaí as prosecutors at District Court level with state solicitors, to again free up Gardaí for frontline policing.

Prison overcrowding must be addressed by investing in the Probation Service to provide for greater use of Community Service Orders, alongside bespoke alternatives to counter recidivism and support social reintegration, with increased addiction, mental health

counselling services, and education supports. We would increase criminal and civil legal aid funding and establish a dedicated forensic Unidentified Remains Unit.

• Resource the recruitment of 1,000 additional Garda trainees in 2027 and provide for at least 200 additional Community Gardaí.	€32m
• Expansion of the Garda College, new Garda vehicles and improvements to ICT and digital evidence management (Capital).	€25m
• Increase Garda Training Allowance to starting salary (estimate).	€14.5m
• Funding for an extra 200 Garda civilian staff.	€14m
• Over two years double the size of the Economic Crime Bureau.	€6m
• Increase funding and income thresholds for civil legal aid (€10m) and address issues in Criminal Legal Aid scheme.	€15m
• Funding for the Probation Service and Prison Service supports.	€5.3m
• Justice sector funding for Fiosrú, Coroner Support Staff, Courts Service and Public Prosecutors at District Court Level.	€4.7m
• Establish a new forensic Unidentified Remains Unit.	€1m

CITIZENSHIP AND INTEGRATION

Labour wants the system of Direct Provision abolished, but in the interim we would increase funding for payments, cut citizenship fees, and increase funding for integration. The revised NDP and purchases last year provided the capital base to progress the development of publicly owned reception centres and reduce the extensive costs of securing privately owned accommodation.

• Reduce Citizenship Fee to €500 and waive it for children.	€11m
• Raise Direct Provision payments in line with SWA and CSP.	€12.7m
• Extend Child Benefit to children in Direct Provision.	€11.6m
• New funding for anti-racism campaign through Asylum and Migrant Integration Programme.	€2m

DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The greatest risk to our national security is the reduced strength of our Defence Forces due to long running recruitment and retention issues, and the lack of capacity to patrol our territorial waters and airspace. Labour supports increased investment to meet the Level of Ambition 2 objective, but that will be wasted money if we can't manage to meet the current establishment strength of 9,500, never mind higher targets. Issues around pay, terms and conditions still need to be addressed, and the working time directive implemented, starting with a time and attendance system which we provide funding for. As recommended in the Commission report, a new Lance Corporal Rank and long service increments should be introduced but no costing was available on these. Several pay measures can be taken immediately with the implementation of the Working Time Directive, and an increase in the Daily Food Ration from

€8 to €10.50. Longstanding issues with pensions for members recruited post 1994, and post 2013 must be addressed as part of the public sector pay talks.

The NDP provides for an increase in Defence capital spending of €40m in 2027 taking the overall allocation to €340m. Labour welcomes work to improve barracks and the acquisition of primary radar capability. However, recognising the changed threat environment and technological advancement, we would immediately move to acquire advanced sea and air patrol drone platforms.

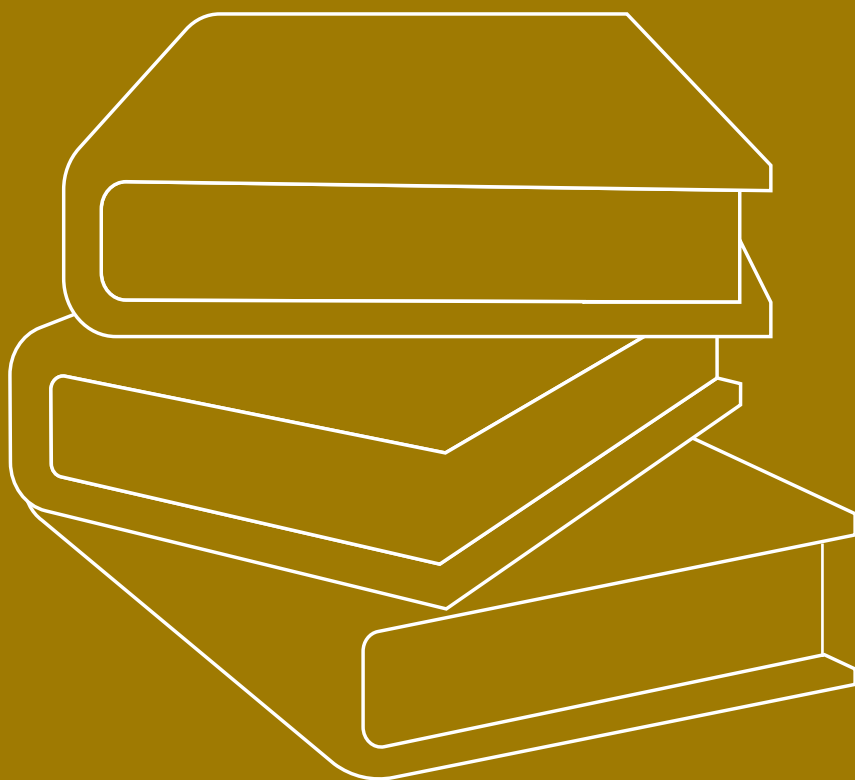
• 25% increase in funding for the National Cyber Security Centre.	€3m
• Double Reserve Defence Forces and restore allowances, with provision for the Military Service Allowance for reservists.	€3.5m
• Increase the Daily Food ration by €2.50 to €10.50.	€1.7m
• Address pension concerns for post 1994 and post 2013 cohorts.	TBD
• Initial implementation costs for Working Time Directive (Capital).	€1m
• Introduce Lance Corporal Rank, WTD & long service increments.	TBD
• Seed funding for a new Institute for Neutrality and Peacekeeping.	€1.5m
• Prioritise the purchase of maritime drone and UAS/V capabilities.	NDP

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Labour would provide for a 15% increase in overseas development aid to take the allocation above €2.2 billion in 2027 and put Ireland on a pathway to meet a target of 0.7% of GNI by 2031. We would further increase the international climate finance budget and increase investment in global citizenship education, taking a cross-departmental approach, accounting for inflation and moving towards a widely recognised target of 3% of ODA. We would open a new Passport Office in Belfast and provide a printing machine in Cork, funding the capital costs for each from the existing budget. We also allocate a further €5m in capital to allow for the expansion of our global diplomatic footprint. This would fund at least one new embassy a year.

• Increase in funding for Overseas Development Assistance, towards meeting Ireland's target of 0.7%/GNI by 2030.	€300m
• Take International Climate Finance Budget to €250m (From ODA).	€25m
• Staffing and operational costs for a Passport Office in Belfast.	€6.8m
• Expand our global diplomatic presence with at least one new Embassy a year (Capital).	€5m

EDUCATION



EDUCATION

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Labour welcomes the adoption by government of our proposal for a National Convention on Education, but it must plan for a modern, secular, and equality-based education system, to separate Church and State, that will include a Citizen's Assembly, the voices of young people and sectoral stakeholders. The school divestment process to multid denominational patronage must be reinvigorated and we would provide increased funding to support this, and the reconfiguration of schools.

• Funding to provide for a renewed divestment model, reconfiguration grants and material costs for patronage change.	€3.1m
• Phase out subsidy for private fee-paying schools over 5 years.	-€30.1m

RESOURCING DEIS PLUS AND TACKLING DISADVANTAGE

The DEIS Plus scheme must now be adequately resourced and disadvantaged schools left outside the scheme given the opportunity to secure critically needed resources to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and trauma in areas with long term socio-economic and education disadvantage. We provide a further package of over €50m to tackle disadvantage in the education system, and there will need to be strong co-ordination with other agencies and the budgets provided for health, mental health, and disability therapies.

The City Connects pilot project in the NEIC provides a model for a comprehensive system of student support to ensure that every student receives all the services and resources they need to succeed and thrive in school and achieve their full potential. We propose expanding this further to all DEIS Band 1 schools. For many years Labour has called for an increase in dedicated funding for DEIS schools, and we provide allocations for reducing class sizes and increasing capitation for other DEIS schools. We would extend the Summer School meals pilot to all DEIS schools and provide further increased funding for the school completion programme.

• Expand DEIS Plus to a further 10 schools.	€3m
• Expand City Connects programme to all DEIS Band 1 schools (first year costs).	€7.7m
• Cut DEIS schools class size ratio to 15:1 (phased, first year cost).	€15.5m
• Additional 50% increase in capitation for DEIS schools to cover increased energy and operational costs.	€13.7m
• 10% increase in School Completion Programme funding.	€3.9m
• Appoint 20 additional Home School Community Liaison positions.	€2m
• Extend Summer School Meals Pilot to all DEIS schools.	€1.3m

MAKE EDUCATION TRULY FREE

We want a fair start for every child, and Labour will make education truly free for parents. Labour would ban voluntary contributions and substantially increase capitation rates for schools by €50 per pupil to meet increased operating costs. Parents still face other costs, and every child should be supported for clothing and footwear costs with a universal payment. At present BTSCFA supports over 290,000 children but there are over 866,000 that got no back-to-school support. We would extend Hot School Meals over five years to all remaining primary and second level schools with a focus on DEIS schools first.

We would permanently abolish State exam fees and remove all charges on school transport including recent fee increases costing €13m and invest a further €20m to provide enough additional places to meet demand. We would provide a further €15m for electronic devices to address the digital divide for use in the classroom and at home and increase funding for the purchase of ingredients and materials in practical subjects.

• Universal Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (€160 for 2-11 and €185 12-22).	€188m
• Rollout Hot School Meals to all remaining schools over 5 years.	€53m
• Increase primary school capitation by €50 per pupil while banning voluntary donations (first year costs).	€9.5m
• Increase second level school capitation by €50 per pupil while banning voluntary donations (first year costs).	€6.5m
• Free School Transport and additional places to meet demand.	€33m
• New funding for digital devices under Free Schoolbooks Scheme.	€15m
• Permanently abolish State Examination Fees.	€12m
• Extra funding for materials and ingredients for practical subjects.	€2m

SUPPORTING SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

While significant progress has been made to increase the number of special education classes and schools, more coordination is needed to ensure places are available locally at the start of the school year. Labour would deliver an Education Guarantee that invests in better planning and provision to ensure suitable places and supports. To support inclusive education, we would fund a new post of responsibility, called an SEN Coordinator at an assistant principal rate in any school with 3 or more SET posts.

To ensure every child with additional needs receives the special education support they need in September 2027 the Department estimates that first year funding of €46.3m would be needed. This for example would fund over 1,500 SNAs and 1,300 special education teachers. An extra €40m is also allocated for new classrooms.

In other measures, we would phase out the 72-hour obligation for SNAs, provide funding for SNAs to reach a relevant QQI level 6 equivalent and increase Summer Programme Fees by 5%. As recommended in the report of the Oireachtas Special Committee on Autism we provide funding for an autism friendly audit of every school building over four years, and suitable

CPD autism training for all education professionals, including free upskilling special education courses for teachers.

• Additional Special Education funding for 2027/28 school year to meet demand (From ELS/Demographics).	€46.3m
• 2027 funding for special classes and schools (Capital – first year).	€40m
• Rollout of the Educational Therapy Support Service providing OT and SLT within more schools to all special schools.	€8m
• Phase out SNA 72-hour obligation and provide training to QQI Level 6 equivalent.	€7.6m
• Over two years develop Special Educational Needs Coordinators as a Post of Responsibility across the primary school network.	€7.1m
• Autism Audit of all schools (over four years) – capital costs.	€4.9m
• Increase Summer Programme Fees by 5%.	€2.1m
• Autism and Special Education CPD Training for school staff.	€1.5m

WORLD CLASS SCHOOLS

There have been long running issues in teacher recruitment and retention that must be addressed, and Labour would establish a working group to address the prevalence of temporary and part time posts, incremental credit for teachers who work abroad and want to come home, the length of the PME, the restructuring of pay scales, and allowances for Irish and Gaelscoileanna, location and qualifications. Some of these may be addressed through local bargaining, but that will not be sufficient to ensure fully staffed classrooms. We will reduce class sizes at both primary and secondary level as Ireland has some of the largest in Europe, bringing primary schools closer to the EU average of 1:19, and as already outlined substantially increase capitation as Ireland has some of the lowest education funding in the OECD. We would also launch a new pilot trial programme for DEIS schools placing a second teacher in up to 100 Junior Infant classes. Labour would ensure secretaries and caretakers receive pension parity.

Labour would undertake a full review of the grant funding system for primary and secondary schools. The ICT grant was cut from €50m to €35m in 2025 but we would restore that missing €15m this year and increase the overall grant by 10% next year. Leaving Cert reform and curriculum changes have created major concerns that must be addressed. Labour would double the budget for laboratory modernisation and science equipment with a further €5m and create a pilot scheme to fund a lab technician for 232 DEIS post-primary schools. The Education capital budget will not increase in 2027 under the revised NDP but we provide a further €200m for increased investment in the building programme, school libraries and PE Halls. The Minor Works Grant has remained unchanged since 2006 and we provide for a 20% increase to reflect construction inflation.

• Reduce Primary School classes by 2 points to 1:19 (first year cost), employing an additional 1,000 teachers.	€20m
--	-------------

• Trial a second Junior Infant teacher in 100 DEIS school classrooms (doubling up).	€6m
• Reduce secondary school class sizes by 1 point (first year cost).	€32m
• Recruit school laboratory technicians for each DEIS post-primary school to support the new Leaving Cert programme.	€11.6m
• Recruit school laboratory technicians for each DEIS post-primary school to support the new Leaving Cert programme.	€11.8m
• Expand NEPS with 10 more educational psychologists and additional funding for critical incidents and capacity building.	€1.5m
• Targeted educational supports for homeless, traveller and migrant children.	€5m
• School resourcing and training of educational staff in medical emergencies such as epilepsy and allergies.	€1m

CAPITAL

• Expansion of school building programme after reduction in pupil-teacher ratios and provision for construction inflation.	€114m
• Increased School Library Funding.	€20m
• Ensure every second level school has a PE hall (over 5 years – ramping up to €100m in year 3, and €204m in year 5).	€12m
• New funding for modernisation of science equipment and laboratory upgrades.	€5m
• Increase Minor Works Grant by 20% to reflect increased costs.	€6m
• Restore ICT grant to €50m and increase by a further 10% for primary and secondary schools.	€20m

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Students remain under severe financial pressure due to the increased cost of living and accommodation crisis. We would cut student fees permanently by €1,000 with effect from this college year. There needs to be a comprehensive review and reform of the SUSI grant system to both reflect the real cost-of-living and adjacency rates; and the lived reality of students today with a system that recognises estranged students, those in international protection, and those who wish to study part time with an increased exemption for holiday earnings. In this Budget we would increase SUSI grant amounts by 10% with immediate effect and raise income limits by 10%. We also provide funding to increase PhD stipends, improve taught post-grad supports and grants, and begin phasing in a grant to support students on mandatory placements.

We would increase the Student Assistance Fund to €20m with a dedicated fund for emergency accommodation and ensure students from International Protection qualify. We would allocate a further €5.3m to the Fund for Students with Disabilities to meet demand and extend it, and

the SAF, to the FET sector. We provide €4.3m to set up a Materials Fund for Creative courses and provide access to specialist software like Adobe Suite. We would abolish apprenticeship fees to incentivise construction careers, provide for a further 144 apprenticeship bursaries, and invest in publicly owned affordable and subsidised student accommodation through HEIs.

• Permanently reduce Student Contribution fee to €1,500.	€109.2m
• Increase SUSI grant income limits by 10% (first year costs).	€14.5m
• 10% increase to SUSI grants and extend to part time students.	€22.4m
• Increase PhD stipends to €28,000 over two years.	€18m
• Remove Apprenticeship Fees.	€15.5m
• Increased financial supports and grants for post grad students.	€11m
• Permanently increase Student Assistance Fund to €20m.	€10.9m
• 50% increase to Fund for Students with Disabilities to meet demand and extend to FET sector.	€5.3m
• Material Funds and specialist software fees for Creative courses.	€4.2m
• Double the size of the Access to Apprenticeship Programme.	€3.2m
• SUSI mandatory placement grant of €200 to help cover costs.	€2.1m

CAPITAL

• Additional direct State investment in Student Accommodation.	€100m
--	--------------

FUNDING FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Our goal is to achieve publicly funded education at all levels of the system. The Department was once again unable to provide costings for public sector pay, demographic costs or Funding the Future requirements in the further and higher education sector. Based on IUA estimates nearly €60m is required in 2027 to meet standstill costs which we would fund from ELS. There also remain historical funding shortfalls. Government plans to spend €1.5bn of the accumulated National Training Fund surplus of over €2.2bn by 2030 across a range of measures. However the NTF will still have an annual surplus in 2026 of €173m and Labour has long advocated for this sustainable revenue to be allocated to fund further and higher education which provides the skills and talent that drive our economy. A portion of new state funding would also be ringfenced for increasing the number of courses and semesters taught through Irish and also supporting the mental and physical health of students and staff through the hiring of more counsellors and clinical staff in campus health services.

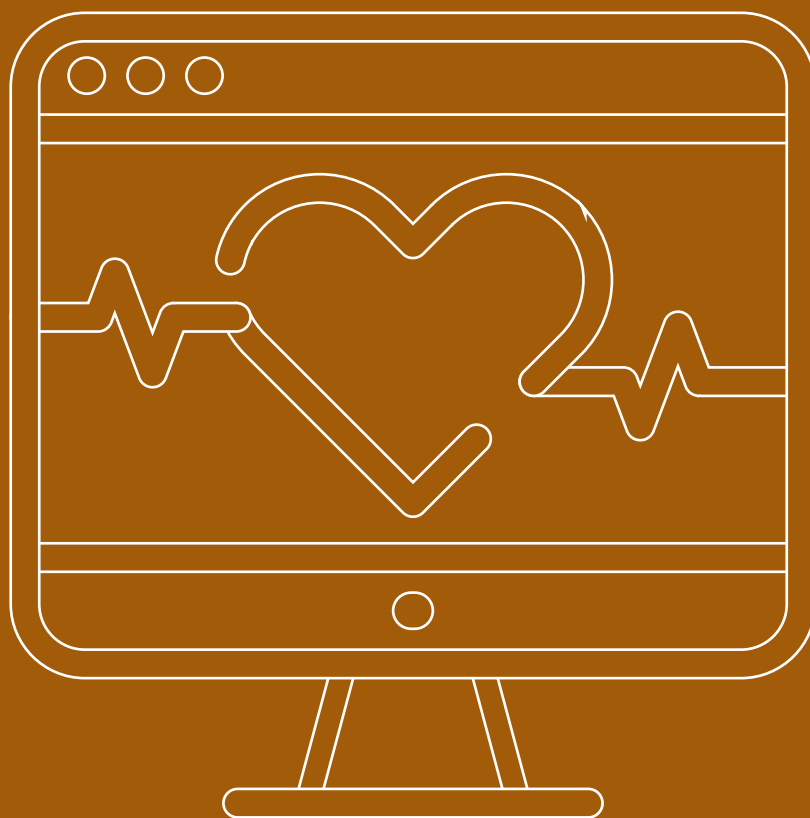
We commit to further new capital investment in research infrastructure and laboratory equipment, and to increase core research funding. Workers who want to upskill or change career after many years of PRSI contributions face barriers. Labour would fund skills vouchers and free part time third level courses from the NTF to give you the personal choice and freedom to pursue new careers or skills.

• Costs for public sector pay and demographics in the HEI sector.	€60m
• Address Funding the Future deficit and rising operational costs from NTF with increased supports student and staff health.	€131m
• Introduce free part time third level and skills vouchers for those at work.	NTF
• Increase Research Ireland funding and provide for a further 50 principal investigator awards over 5 years.	€27m

CAPITAL

• New investment Programme in Research Infrastructure.	€100m
--	--------------

HEALTH & DISABILITY



HEALTH AND DISABILITY

As waiting lists grow close to one million people, the health service will record a deficit of nearly €1bn this year. Real progress that has been made over the last decade is now being eroded due to poor forecasting, bad budgeting, and chronic underfunding in certain parts of the health service. The government has run out of ideas on how to fix our health service.

We have an exceptional health service staff, many of whom are overstretched and undervalued. While there has been an extension of specialist health services over the past decade, the core issues of timely and affordable access to primary care and step-down care remain unresolved. Pressure on our hospital system is getting worse, not better.

There has been incredible waste in how the health budget has been spent. Government has spent many millions recruiting to create six mini HSE's, one for each region, only for that regionalisation model to be upended just 18 months in. There has been a lot of talk about facing down expensive agency spend but no real action. An unwillingness to invest in step down care means that we have an unprecedented blockage of delayed transfer of care within the acute system. We have examples of significant state investment going into new surgical units but no staff to operate and hospitals under financial controls having to stand down diagnostics equipment because of recruitment embargoes. Activity-based funding was promised 10 years ago and critically, a decade on, it is still not in place for outpatient or emergency department activity.

Labour's priorities for our health service are about tackling health inequality, investing in prevention, and ensuring the right care, at the right place and at the right time. We need to keep the vision of Sláintecare and an Irish National Health Service alive and on the agenda. Key features of Labour's Alternative Budget 2027 are:

1. Contain wasteful spending:

- (i) **Establish a new HSE National Locum Service** to end the waste of agency spend and offer those staff positions with flexible work arrangements within the new service. This would initially target acute services, costing €100m.
- (ii) **Dramatically reduce delayed discharge of care** by funding more than **two million additional home care hours** and investing in publicly run step down care, at a cost of €184m.

2. Give much greater priority to prevention:

- (i) **Make the Shingles vaccine freely available for over 65's**, costing €43.6m.
- (ii) **Fully resource childhood dental screenings within 3 years** so that all children receive timely screenings by the end of this decade, costing €22.3m.

3. Directly target health inequality

- (i) **Create a GP Premises Fund** to assist with the significant set up costs for general practitioners, particular smaller practices, targeting more disadvantaged, more rural and less serviced areas of significant need, and to allow for expansion of current services, at a cost of €34.5m.
- (ii) **Provide additional funding for the GP Urban Social Deprivation grant** and expand eligibility to community pharmacies, at a cost of €12.3m.

- (iii) **Extend free GP care for all children aged 8-12**, costing €25m from our overall Access to GP funding package of €89.1m.
- (iv) **Expand the Public Health Nursing workforce** particularly targeting deployment of new staff to areas of social deprivation and where caseload prioritisation procedure are currently in place, at a cost of €15m.
- (v) **Help with the cost of living** with reduction in the Drug Payment Scheme threshold from €80 to €70 at an estimated cost of €19m.

4. Investing in hospital bed capacity and health infrastructure.

- (i) **Deploy significant capital funding of €500m** for additional acute hospital beds above those already committed to and enhance ICU capacity.
- (ii) **Enhance community and step-down capacity** to reduce delayed transfer of care.

5. Fully resource Disability Services with a renewed focus on expanding Children's Disability Network Teams and addressing the backlog in assessments of need.

COMMUNITY AND PRIMARY CARE

Central to addressing overcrowding in our acute hospital system and improving outcomes for patients is investment in community and primary healthcare. Labour would invest in GP care and primary care centres to deliver on the promise of community centred healthcare. We would invest in community diagnostics and assessment hubs, and work towards treating more chronic diseases in the community such as dementia, diabetes, asthma, and a range of other conditions.

Unfortunately, there is no even distribution of GP practices across the country, some patients face excessively long waits to see their GP's and we know that some GPs are hugely over stretched in meeting the demands, particularly in rural practices and those in less well-off areas. Labour would substantially increase the GP urban social deprivation grant by €10m and expand it to Community Pharmacy. We would also establish a €34.5m fund to help GPs establish new services and expand existing clinics in disadvantaged areas. We would also fund the training of a further 50 new GPs a year above the current 350 costing €7.25m.

There is an immediate need to secure and expand existing GP provision in economically deprived areas while longer term plans are developed to ensure sufficient GP coverage across the country. The HSE must commence a salaried GP programme for up to 50 positions to provide immediate support in rural and socio-economically deprived areas. No parent should worry about money when their child is sick, and Ireland is the only country in western Europe without universal access to GPs. We would immediately act to provide free GP care to all children under 12, expanding eligibility for 200,000 children aged 8 to 12, with a further phased extension of free GP care to all aged 18 and under over the next two years.

Urgent action is needed to address the backlog of early development checks for children through the Public Health Nursing (PHN) service. There are over 110 vacant funded PHN positions, and hundreds more PHNs are needed by 2031 if we are to ensure Sláintecare recommendations on child health and wellbeing are implemented.

- Phased addition of Asthma, IBS, and Crohn's Disease Ulcerative Colitis to the Long-Term Illness Scheme.

€30m

• Extend free GP care for all children aged 8-12.	€25m
• Fund an extra 50 GP training places and recruit 50 salaried GPs.	€17.3m
• Increase and target the GP Urban Social Deprivation Grant and extend to Community Pharmacy (€2.3m).	€12.3m
• Prioritise the recruitment and training of an additional 140 Public Health Nurses.	€12m
• Develop a resource package for 7 integrated health areas in P1 status to ensure child development checks are taking place.	€3m

CAPITAL

• GP Premises Fund for establishing new clinics and expanding existing services in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.	€34.5m
• Primary Care Centre funding for community diagnostics and assessment hubs, and other related services.	€5m

REDUCE OUT OF POCKET PRIMARY CARE COSTS

• Reduce Drug Payment Threshold to €70/month (Estimate).	€19m
• Phase out prescription charges over two years, with reduction to 50c per item and cap of €5 a month in 2027.	€36m

VALUING STAFF

Labour would resource and implement a comprehensive workforce planning strategy to support the training, recruitment and retention of staff and address the impact of conditions on staff morale. These linked issues must be addressed in collaboration with higher education institutions, including ensuring that graduates in areas of shortage and significant need are offered permanent contracts upon completion of their courses.

Meanwhile in 2026 the amount to be spent on agency staffing will likely exceed €850m, after €960m was spent in 2025. There will always be a need for some flexibility and agency staff, but clearly many of these should be full time positions. Labour would commit €100m to the development of a new national locum service panel, funded from savings on agency staff. This is a model that has worked successfully in the NHS and would initially be targeted at acute services.

The health service needs an additional 2,000 nurses and midwives WTEs for each of the next three years to provide ongoing service improvements and meet demographic demands, and we allocate €152m for 2027. We would implement the Framework for Safe Nurse Staffing and Skill Mix, underpin it in legislation and fully fund Phase 2 in 2027 at an estimated cost of €13.2m. We would also allocate €40m to provide for future pay increases to Section 39 and Section 56 organisations delivering health, social and other vital community services in line with a future public service pay agreement.

The healthcare workers who sacrificed so much for public health in the pandemic cannot be abandoned, and we again commit to funding an occupational illness scheme for those with

long covid. The housing crisis remains a key barrier to the recruitment and retention of staff. The HSE has a portfolio of over 200 vacant buildings, and we are providing €24m to refurbish a portion of these to provide affordable accommodation for healthcare staff. We would continue to invest in improving conditions for Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors, carry out a review of the success of the NCHD Taskforce report recommendations and invest further in post-grad medical training places. With hundreds of vacant, funded consultant posts across the HSE, so much work is needed to address this and improve staffing.

• Fund 2,000 additional nursing and midwife positions in 2027 funded through Agency saving reductions.	€152m
• Develop a new National Locum service panel targeted initially at acute services.	€100m
• Phase 2 funding of Safe Nurse Staffing and Skills Mix Framework.	€13.2m
• Section 39 and 56 funding for staff salary increases (estimate).	€40m
• Key Worker Housing - refurbish vacant HSE property for use as accommodation for health staff (once off capital funding).	€24m
• Improving conditions for NCHDs and more post-grad places.	€5m

CAPITAL SPEND

The Health capital budget up to 2030 of €9.2bn is insufficient, with an increase of only €160m in 2027 and with at least €3bn needed for the four new elective hospitals. Labour is providing a further increase above profile of €500m that will be available in future years to fund the additional beds and long-term residential care places needed to meet demographic demand and further increased allocations will be needed at the next three year review of the NDP. Using €1bn of windfall receipts Labour would seed a Sláintecare Transition Fund to reinvigorate progress and dedicate €500m of that to support the rollout of electronic health records in the new Regional Health Areas. Over the coming years, Labour would seek to allocate further funding to the Transition Fund from any future windfall gains.

• Sláintecare Transition Fund with commitment to future increases.	€1bn
--	------

BED CAPACITY AND HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Safe staffing and safe hospital occupancy levels depends on the provision of appropriate bed and health infrastructure capacity. Labour would provide an additional €600m of capital investment to deliver a mix of new beds as the first step towards building a modern, fit for purpose national health service.

This additional funding would provide for a further 300 acute beds, 20 ICU beds, and a mix of step down and rehabilitation beds. A portion of this recurring budget would be allocated from 2028 for the delivery of the new hospital for the Midwest at the Raheen site in Limerick as plans are due to be finalised by next summer. Labour strongly supports public long-term care and would invest in 140 new community nursing home beds every year. In total 5,000 additional public hospital beds will need to be funded by the 2030s.

• Operating costs for new hospital beds (exclusive of other staffing and service commits in Labour's Health proposals).	€145m
---	-------

NEW CAPITAL

• Funding for 300 additional acute hospital beds as part of a five-year programme to deliver 1,500 total, above existing plans.	€327m
• Provide 140 new Community Nursing Home beds a year.	€112m
• Develop 75 new Step Down/Transitional Care beds, and 75 new Rehabilitation non-acute beds.	€104m
• Deliver a further 20 ICU critical care beds in 2027.	€37m
• Increased capital investment in primary care centres, diagnostic equipment like PET scanners, and upgraded infrastructure to support cancer care.	€8m

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

The delivery of the Digital for Care strategy, electronic health records and improved ICT across the health service is essential to boost productivity, improve outcomes and provide quicker access to care. €263m of capital is allocated in 2026 alongside current funding of €410m for digital health services. Estimates for the rollout of electronic records in each of the new HSE regional health areas could be €200m per region or €1.2bn total with annual operating costs of €40m for each, on top of existing levels of service costs. The proposed future budget will not be enough, and Labour would allocate a long-term fund of €0.5bn from windfall revenue to increase existing and planned capital funding by €100m a year and provide €42m in new operational funding for 2027 above the allocation for existing levels of service.

• Increased operational funding for ICT improvements above ELS.	€42m
• Additional capital for digital health records over next 5 years.	€500m

DISABILITY SERVICES

There is massive unmet demand for disability services as outlined under the Disability Capacity Review and the commitments in the Disability Services Action Plan. Labour is committed to funding these essential services. We allocate €227m in new funding to provide for the service improvement planned in 2027 covering residential care, day services, PA hours and home support, respite care, and therapy services including Children's Disability Network Teams.

Disability Services Action Plan - Funding for new measures.	Total:	€227m
• 200 new CDNT WTE posts as per roadmap.		€16m
• Adult multi-disciplinary services (€19.2m total over 3 years)		€7m
• 1,210 additional day service places.		€38m
• 10% increase in respite services budget		€20m
• 800,000 additional Personal Assistant hours.		€26m

• 40,000 additional Home Support hours.	€1.3m
• 300 new residential placements (dependent on level of acuity)	€119m
• Ongoing funding for de-congregation (Capital):	€40m

Other measures we would take include:

• Complete rollout of community neuro-rehabilitation teams.	€2.6m
• Extension of Personalised Budgets Pilot Project to 3,000 people.	€2m

A commitment to hiring at least 200 additional Children's Disability Network Team posts next year is essential to the Progressing Disability Services (PDS) programme and meeting the commitments in the Roadmap for Service Improvement in relation to Disability Services for Children and Young People. Better workforce planning is still needed, as it is not known how many funded posts are presently vacant, and beyond 2027 a further 200 posts will still be needed to fully staff CDNTs.

Even with extra funding in 2027 too many children will be waiting for assessment and therapy. There will be around 14,000 applications for an Assessment of Need under the Disability Act in 2026, with 23,282 overdue at the end of June. Tens of thousands more children are waiting for therapies under Children Disability Network Teams. We provide an additional €17m in 2027 under the Waiting List Initiative to outsource AONs for the 5,000 children waiting longest while capacity is built up in the public service.

• Additional funding for Targeted Waiting List initiative to provide diagnostic assessments for children.	€17m
---	------

MENTAL HEALTH

Significant new funding is required for mental health services in 2027 towards meeting the long-term goal of securing 10% of the overall health budget. We allocate €105m for new service development and have addressed ELS and community costs in other budget lines. In 2027 we want to see proposals developed for the inclusion of severe mental health illnesses in the Chronic Disease management programme. Labour would also target investment to improve CAMHS services to reduce waiting lists, ensure teams are fully staffed and develop new beds and care pathways. Another key priority is perinatal mental health and the opening of the in-patient Mother and Baby unit. There is an urgent need for 24/7 emergency mental health crisis support, including referral pathway to out of hour CAMHS services for all major hospitals. We will also focus on increased supports and staffing for the national clinical programmes covering eating disorders, ADHD, early intervention in psychosis and dual diagnosis to build up teams and develop the right model of care.

• New Mental Health funding to support implementation of Sharing the Vision, and adequate resourcing of CAMHS.	€105m
--	-------

GENERAL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

• Expand medical card provision, including those with a spinal cord injury.	€35m
• Funding for new drugs and treatments for rare diseases.	€28m

• Increased funding for Cancer treatment including improved access to radiology and drugs and expanded Cancer Screening.	€23m
• Development funding for the National Cancer Strategy.	€20m
• Develop a new National Maternity Strategy and fund the employment of 100 public midwives and 10 obstetricians.	€13.8m
• Fund Dementia Model of Care recommendations over 3 years.	€12.5m
• Increase staffing on the Public Dental Service to enhance child dental checks with an extra €15m in funding and lift DTSS fees by 10%.	€22.3m
• Expand free Contraception Service from 35 up to 45 and provide free GP appointment for HRT.	€12.1m
• Increased funding for National Ambulance Service.	€7m
• Investment needed to fully staff acute stroke units.	€5.5m

TARGETED SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

• Phased introduction of free Shingles Vaccine for older people.	€43.6m
• Extend free Winter Flu Vaccine to 50-59 year olds.	€16m
• Multiannual funding for homeless health and addiction facility in Ushers Island and increase Drug and Alcohol taskforce budgets.	€13.9m
• Funding for Women's Health initiatives including an endometriosis centre of excellence, new post-natal maternity hubs, public IVF and free of charge sanitary products.	€11.5m
• Fund implementation of the National Breastfeeding Action Plan; provide for an extra 35 hospital based-, and 20 community based-lactation midwives; and develop a Milk Bank.	€5.5m
• Increased funding for children's palliative care.	€5.1m
• Set up a taskforce to develop a 10-year National Diabetes Strategy and fund continuous glucose monitors.	€5m
• Establish a national Clinical Genetics Service over two years.	€4.5m
• Funding for scoliosis treatment and spinal surgeries abroad.	€2m
• Access to gender affirming healthcare services.	€1.5m
• Multiple Sclerosis physiotherapy service and Sligo-Leitrim post.	€1.1m
• Refund the Laura Brennan HPV Vaccine catchup programme.	€1m
• Funding for sexual health services, HIV reduction and STI clinics.	€1m

REDUCE OUT OF POCKET HOSPITAL COSTS

• Reduce car parking charges by half in public hospitals with free parking for patients.	€9m
--	-----

LABOUR BUDGET 2027 - BALANCE SHEET

Table 1 – Overview of Financial Commitments

Government Initial Budget Package for 2027 composed of:	€8.5bn
Government Tax Package	€1.5bn
Government Capital Increase	€1.2bn
Estimated Government Current Spending for new measures	€2.4bn
- ELS, Demographics, Public Sector Pay deal (estimated)	€3.4bn
A. Balance of Government Budget Package for new spending	€5.1bn
B. Labour additional Capital Increase (from surplus):	€1.0bn
C. Labour Net Revenue Increases (for current and capital)	€3.5bn
Total Labour Budget Package for new spending measures (A+B+C):	€9.6bn

NET TAXATION AND REVENUE MEASURES

Tax receipts in Ireland have become increasingly concentrated on income and corporation taxes. As recommended by the Commission on Taxation and Social Welfare, there is a need to broaden the tax base. The Labour Party would increase taxes on wealth rather than on work, and close loopholes that allow the rich to save millions. In government we would begin detailed design work to introduce a net wealth tax along the lines of the Spanish with an annual recurring levy of 1% on assets worth over €2m excluding (up to specified limits) the family home, pension assets and family businesses and farms.

Table 2 – list of proposed tax raising measures and tax expenditures.

WEALTH TAXES – TOTAL	€1.7bn
Increase Bank Levy to a net €500 million.	€500m
Increase CGT by 3%.	€279m
Increase Dividend Withholding Tax to 33% on REITS & IREFs (estimate).	€264m
0.3% increase in Stamp Duty on Shares and apply to share buybacks.	€225m
2.5% increase Stamp Duty on Non-Residential Property to 10%.	€190m
Increase CAT by 3%.	€92m
Abolish CGT Section 604A relief (based on 2023 figures).	€76m
Stamp Duty of 20% on bulk housing purchases including apartments.	€49m*

ENVIRONMENTAL TAXES – TOTAL	€0.8bn
20% Windfall Levy on Energy Company profits.	€485m
Levy of €20/MwH on Data Centre energy usage.	€170m
Weight based VRT charge on heavy and large cars such as SUVs.	€86m
€50 a tonne Waste Recovery Levy.	€66m
Paused Carbon Tax increases.	€22m
Reduced rate VAT on bicycles, e-bikes and safety equipment.	-€10m
PAYROLL AND INCOME TAX CHANGES – NET TOTAL	-€0.4bn
4% indexation of Income Tax and USC credits and bands.	-€1,100m
Withdrawal of Tax Credits on incomes over €100,000 (first year).	€565m
Refundable €400 Energy Tax Credit for 1.4m households.	-€480m
Application of Employer PRSI to share based remuneration.	€369m
Phase out Help to Buy tax relief scheme.	€253m
Increase Rent Credit to €2,000.	-€205m
Scheduled Employer and Self-Employed PRSI 0.15% increase (first year).	€150m
End Special Assignee Relief Programme.	€56m
Restoration of trade union subscription tax relief.	-€37m
Introduce a Home Retrofit Tax Incentive capped to incomes of €100,000.	-€30m
OTHER TAXES AND EXPENDITURE CHANGES – TOTAL	€1.4bn
Reverse the 9% VAT rate reduction from Budget 2026	€720m
50% Phase out of refundable element of R&D tax credit on MNCs.	€450m
Improved tax collection rates.	€100m
Double the excise rate on e-liquids and add 50c on tobacco.	€77m
Reduction of VAT to 9% on home heating oil (Estimate).	-€60m
1% increase in Betting Duty.	€57m
5% AVMSD Content Levy.	€50m
Remove charge for half yearly and quarterly Motor Tax payments.	-€35m
HSE Recovery of Benefits and Assistance Scheme.	€16m
Minimum €5,000 Vacant Homes Tax and taxed at 10 times LPT base.	€13m
Increase Charity VAT Compensation Scheme to €15m.	-€5m
Net Total	€3.5bn

**Minimum estimate, purpose is to disincentivise bulk purchases.*



NOTES

Notes section containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.



2 Whitefriars, Aungier Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. D02 A008
Tel: +353 1 6784700 Email: info@labour.ie
www.labour.ie