



**2016**

**Programme for Government  
Annual Report 2016**

**Year 5: Shared Vision for Stability,  
Jobs and Inclusive Prosperity**



Department of the Taoiseach



PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

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# FOREWORD

## Shared Vision for Stability, Jobs and Inclusive Prosperity

This is the final annual report on the implementation of the Programme for Government agreed between the Fine Gael and Labour parties in March 2011, and of the Statement of Government Priorities agreed between the Taoiseach and Tánaiste in July 2014. There is significant progress to report.

In 2010, after years of reckless economic management, a banking and economic collapse locked our State and financial system out of the international markets, and forced the previous Government to seek external financial assistance from the IMF and our European partners.

Since then, the Fine Gael and Labour Government has followed a clear plan: fix our banks and the public finances quickly and get our people back to work.

Thanks to the hard work and resilience of the Irish people and Irish businesses, that plan is working.

Ireland is now the fastest growing economy in Europe. Since the end of the bail-out in 2013, our economy (in real GDP) grew by 5.2% in 2014 and is likely to have grown by at least a further 6.2% in 2015. Government borrowing fell from 11% of GDP in 2010 to less than 2% last year.

Businesses have added 135,000 jobs to the economy since the peak of the crisis in 2012, and unemployment has fallen from over 15% to 8.8%. That means we are now creating more than 1,000 jobs a week and close to having two million people at work. Behind every new job is a person or a family benefitting in their own lives from the wider recovery.

Unlike the unsustainable credit-fuelled construction boom and property bubble of the last decade, the economic recovery is now driven by growing exports, investment and productivity, and is diversified across a range of sectors.

The economic recovery has enabled us to reduce USC for workers, and increase Child Benefit for families and the State pension for older people. While these changes are modest, they are progressive steps in our wider plan: to spread the recovery in such a way that the benefits are felt by every household.

This is welcome progress, but it is not enough. Unemployment remains too high. Too many families still struggle weekly to make ends meet. Our public finances still need to be fully repaired, and public services and infrastructure need more investment.

The recovery that Ireland is now experiencing can be just the beginning of a more sustainable, authentic and fairer phase of long-term economic and social development and prosperity for our people.

If secured and strengthened, the recovery will continue to translate into real improvements in people's day to day lives.

But Irish people also know that the economic recovery remains fragile and incomplete.

While families and households are beginning to feel the benefits of economic recovery, they are not complacent about the risks ahead and the danger of slipping back.

They have witnessed how in other countries, hard-won economic progress has been too easily reversed.

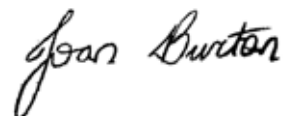
Our commitment to the Irish people is that – under this Government – we are never going back.

Fine Gael and Labour together have a shared vision for stability, growth and inclusive prosperity.

This Government will, if given the mandate, continue our work to keep the recovery going, and to strengthen its impact on the daily lives of our people.



Enda Kenny T.D.  
**Taoiseach**



Joan Burton T.D.  
**Tánaiste**





## SECTION 1

# **STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES 2014 - 2016**

# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

## Key Highlights

### Domestic Economy and Jobs for the Unemployed

- 135,800 increase in employment since the launch of the Action Plan for Jobs in 2012
- Unemployment rate down to 8.8% from a peak of 15.1% in 2012
- 4,000 full time and part time jobs were created by LEO supported businesses in 2015
- Record year for IDA and Enterprise Ireland supported companies with 22,000 extra jobs in 2015
- Unemployment has fallen by at least a quarter across all regions since 2012
- 3,200 Irish SMEs have benefited from Strategic Banking Corporation loans in 2015
- The Irish Strategic Investment Fund secured €4.9bn of investment supporting 12,000 jobs
- The first Luas tracks laid in 2015 for the Cross City Project
- Youth unemployment has fallen by a third from its peak of 31.2% in 2012
- 14,650 places filled on the Youth Guarantee Scheme by November 2015
- €818m in EU Cohesion Funding launched in 2015 through the Operational Programmes
- New tourism policy, *People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025* published March 2015
- On track for record year for tourism in 2015 with 7.9m visitors worth almost €4.2bn in revenue
- The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 has been enacted
- Energy White Paper published identifying actions to transform Ireland to a low carbon society
- Food Wise 2025 was launched in July 2015 setting out a ten year plan for the agri-food sector
- Milk quotas were abolished in March 2015 and generated over €700m in industry investment
- Eight Regional Action Plan for Jobs with €250m fund to target more job creation in every region
- €500k Start-up fund established to attract international start-ups to locate in Ireland
- New Start-Up tax refunds for Entrepreneurs scheme to assist new businesses
- A Competitive Start Fund of €500k for Female Entrepreneurs launched in November
- 2015 is on track to be the best year for Start-ups with 19,000 new companies registered
- The Capital Plan 2016-2021 detailing an exchequer investment of €27bn supporting 45,000 jobs
- New earned income tax credit to the value of €550 for the self employed
- 757,000 premises to benefit from State investment to deliver high speed broadband
- The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 provides for the reform of Part V regulations and the new vacant site levy
- Over 1,700 Trading Online Vouchers approved to encourage small businesses to invest in developing their online trading presence
- New Integrated Licensing Application Service launched for retailers in 2015
- New Dublin Office for the Data Commissioner which has taken on 16 staff with specialist skills
- Enterprise 2025, a ten year jobs strategy, was launched in 2015 to end cycle of boom-to-bust
- The *Pathways to Work* strategy has helped reduce long term unemployment by 95,000 since 2012
- Apprenticeship Council has advanced 15 new apprenticeship programmes
- *Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air*, the new tourism brand launched in October 2015 to grow the number of visitors to Dublin to 6.2m by 2020

## **Delivering Better Living and Working Standards**

- Budget 2016 increased social welfare pensions and child benefit and introduced measures to reduce the marginal tax rate
- Increases to the USC entry threshold have contributed to there being an estimated 700,000 income earners who will not be liable to USC at all in 2016
- Minimum wage increased further to €9.15 as recommended by the Low Pay Commission
- 10,300 families supported into employment through new Back to Work Family Dividend
- An extra free pre-school year will commence in September 2016
- A new two week paternity benefit to support fathers of new babies will commence in 2016
- A suite of supports to enable children with disabilities fully participate in pre-school care
- Free GP care for children under 6 and adults over 70 commenced
- A multi-partner Service Reform Fund worth €45m up to 2017 established to reform disability and mental health services
- A new cross-government *Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities* launched
- New Assisted Decision-Making legislation to help those with reduced capacity to make decisions
- Residential mortgage arrears have fallen for nine consecutive quarters
- Latest figures also show the first decline in long term mortgage arrears since 2012
- Bankruptcy laws reformed further reducing bankruptcy term to one year
- Personal Insolvency legislation strengthened so courts can review deals rejected by creditors
- Role of MABS enhanced to advise on bankruptcy, mortgage arrears and court actions
- Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 provides for collective bargaining reforms

- Workplace Relations Act 2015 sees significant reforms streamlining employment rights services
- A report on the prevalence of zero hour contracts and low hour contracts published in 2015

## **Improving Housing Availability and Affordability**

- New planning laws passed to tackle vacant and idle land and improve housing supply
- Measures to kick-start new housing construction and enhance supply at more affordable prices
- NAMA is to deliver an estimated 20,000 new housing units by 2020
- NAMA progressing Dublin Docklands Strategic Development Zone with new commercial, retail and residential units
- 13,000 social housing units delivered across all programmes in 2015
- €70m has been allocated for the homeless budget for 2016, an increase of €17m on 2015
- New 2015 homeless Winter Scheme providing over 200 extra emergency beds
- Additional supports to help homeless households compete in the private rent market
- 500 modular housing units in train with first 22 units ready in Ballymun in January 2016
- New statutory rent certainty measures to support tenants in private rented accommodation
- New flexible approach to rent supplement has protected 5,400 renting households
- 6,000 households across 18 local authorities supported under new Housing Assistance Payment
- 739 households exited from homelessness into sustained accommodation by Q3 2015

# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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## **Responsible and Sustainable Management of the Public Finances**

- Ireland continues to have the fastest growing economy in Europe
- Ireland's 2015 general government deficit expected to be about 1.5% down from 11% in 2010
- The Exchequer has moved from a deficit of €25 billion at the end of 2011 to a position of being broadly in balance at end 2015
- The General Government debt-to-GDP ratio has fallen from a peak of 120% in 2013 to a projected 93% in 2016
- NAMA has redeemed to date to €22.1bn, 73% of the €30.2bn of debt originally issued
- NAMA on track to meet its target to repay all Senior Debt by 2018, two years ahead of target
- Regulation underpinning the European Fund for Strategic Investments was agreed in June

## **Rebuilding Trust in Politics & Public Institutions**

- Ireland's first ever same-sex marriage took place on 17 November following the Yes vote in May, bringing the total to eight referendums held since 2011
- Freedom of Information has been extended to all public bodies in 2015
- New guidance for public bodies to enhance the protection available to whistle blowers
- The Register of Lobbying became a legal requirement from 1 September
- The Public Sector Standards Bill published to overhaul ethics framework for public officials
- New Independent Policing Authority established to oversee the performance of An Garda Síochána in relation to policing services in Ireland
- New measures delivered under Civil Service Renewal Plan to strengthen capacity, capability, accountability and leadership throughout the Civil Service including open recruitment

- First ever system of performance reviews commenced for Secretaries General in January 2016
- Programme of organisational capability reviews encompassing all Departments starting in 2016
- Ireland's Open Data Governance Board established to provide strategic vision and leadership for Ireland's Open Data Initiative
- All appointments to State Boards openly advertised with 266 vacancies advertised to date
- Following a review of the judicial appointments system legislative provisions are being drafted to reform and update judicial appointment procedures
- The Independent Working Group on Seanad Reform has published its report
- Public consultation undertaken by Joint Oireachtas Committee to inform the development of the Electoral Commission Bill
- Implementation of recommendations of the Report published by Working Group on the Protection Process including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers underway
- International Protection Act 2015 provides for the introduction of a single simplified and speedier applications procedure for international protection
- The *Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme*, launched in March 2015, with some 1,800 events to be held nationwide in addition to the formal State programme
- The Activity Based Funding Implementation Plan 2015 – 2017 for hospitals has been published
- Report on Advancing School Autonomy in the Irish School System published for consultation

### **Protecting and Enhancing Peace in Northern Ireland**

- *A Fresh Start: The Stormont House Agreement and Implementation Plan* was agreed in November 2015
- North-South cooperation continues under The Fresh Start Agreement through the NSMC Plenary meeting in December
- New joint taskforce has been established to help tackle organised crime on both sides of the border
- The Irish Government has committed a further €36m to the €71m provided under the Stormont House Agreement for the building of the A5 motorway to Derry

# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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## Domestic Economy and Jobs for the Unemployed

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### Reducing Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Ireland in December was 8.8%, the lowest it has been in 7 years. This is in comparison to a Eurozone unemployment rate of 10.8% in October 2015.

Since the Action Plan for Jobs was introduced in 2012, it has been one of the Government's key instruments to support job creation. This whole-of-Government initiative sees all Government Departments and Agencies work together to deliver on the agreed action points to creating a positive environment to support business start-ups and growth, drive exports and facilitate job creation and retention by the enterprise sector. The results of this concerted action since 2012 are seen by:

- 135,800 more people are at work exceeding the target of 100,000
- employment has grown in most economic sectors across all regions in the past year
- unemployment rate has fallen below nine percent for the first time since 2008
- improvements in competitiveness and an increase in the value of exports

In 2015, 18,983 new jobs were created by IDA client companies, a net increase of 11,833 and representing a year on year rise of 66% compared with 2014. Total employment in IDA client companies now stands at 187,983 people, the highest level in IDA's history. IDA estimates that for every 10 jobs created by FDI, another seven are generated in the wider economy and that in excess of 130,000 jobs are supported indirectly by IDA client companies.

During 2015, IDA approved 213 investment projects. This compares to 100 investments in 2014.

In 2015, IDA Ireland supported R&D investments which will leverage €1.2bn worth of expenditure over the coming years on the rollout of new projects. On an annual basis, inhouse company R&D expenditure increased from €948m in 2005 to approximately €1.4bn in 2013.

Enterprise Ireland (EI) again saw record numbers in 2015 with 21,118 new jobs created by EI client companies resulting in a net increase of 10,169

people employed within the EI client base. This brings the total employment in EI client companies to 192,223 – the highest recorded in the history of the Agency. EI is well on the way to exceeding its target of 40,000 new jobs created over 2014 – 2016 and to supporting client export sales of €22bn by end 2016.

The main areas of focus by *Action Plan for Jobs 2016* are meeting the skills needs of a growing economy; supporting regional development; scaling Irish companies; increasing entrepreneurial activity; improving access to SME finance; improving competitiveness; and increasing investment in research, development and innovation. It is also being informed by Government strategies including Enterprise Policy 2025, Pathways to Work 2016 – 2020, the successor to the SSTI and the National Skills Strategy.

*Enterprise 2025*, launched in November, is a 10-year jobs strategy aimed at ending the cycle of boom-bust and delivering sustainable, enterprise-based jobs growth. The Strategy sets a target of having 2.18 million people in employment; an unemployment rate of 6 percent; a 50% increase in exports by Irish companies; achieving and retaining a top 3 competitiveness ranking; and delivering 2-2.5% productivity growth per annum in Irish companies.

### Pathways to Work Strategy

The *Pathways to Work* strategy has effected a comprehensive reform of the State's approach to helping unemployed jobseekers return to work and have been successful in contributing to reducing the unemployment rate from a peak of 15.1% in 2012 to 8.8% in December 2015. Key actions delivered in 2015 include:

- the exit rate of people from the live register has risen to 41% in 2015 up from 33% in 2012
- the number of people long-term unemployed has fallen by 95,000 since 2012
- launch of *FirstSteps and JobsPlus Youth*
- *JobPath* launched and rolled out to 41 offices with over 6,500 jobseekers referred to early December
- 109,000 up to November 2015 one-to-one guidance interviews with jobseekers

- 180,400 up to November 2015 engagement sessions with jobseekers
- over 280 companies have signed the employers and youth activation charter
- 25,500 One Parent Family recipients migrated to other schemes by mid 2015
- JobsWeek 2015 held with over 160 events
- Launch of [www.mywelfare.ie](http://www.mywelfare.ie), a new on-line service for making an appointment for a PPSN or a Public Service Card with further services to follow
- New Community Employment Pilot Scheme for 62-66 year olds

The new Pathways to Work 2016 - 2020 which will be launched in early January 2016 reflects a change from activation in a time of recession to activation for a recovery. The Strategy will consolidate progress made to date with an initial focus on working with unemployed jobseekers, in particular people who are long-term unemployed as well as extending the approach of labour market activation to other people who have the potential and the desire to play an active role in the labour force. Targets include moving 50,000 long-term unemployed into employment by end 2020, full implementation of JobPath with at least 60,000 referred in 2016, reduce the persistence rate from 27% to 20% by the end of 2018; and target a progression to employment rate from training and employment programmes of 40%.

## **Stimulate Investment in Regional and Deprived Locations**

The eight Regional Action Plans for Jobs plans are targeted at supporting the creation of extra jobs in the region through the delivery of collaborative actions focusing on increasing the number of start-ups, developing the capacity of existing enterprises, and capitalising on the strengths and opportunities of the region. The goal is to have a further 10 to 15 per cent at work in each region by 2020 and to ensure the unemployment rate is within one per cent of the State average.

Government is providing €250m over the next 5 years to support the Regional Action Plan for Jobs Process. €150m is being made available through IDA Ireland's capital investment programme to

help attract more multinational jobs into each region and a further €100m will be made available through Enterprise Ireland to support innovative and collaborative approaches to support job creation across the regions.

## **Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland**

Since the first loans became available in March 2015, 3,200 Irish SMEs have, up to 30 September, benefited from Strategic Banking Corporation loans with almost €110m of the new lower cost loans drawn down.

The loans offering longer maturities and payment flexibility have been taken up by Irish SMEs across a range of sectors in all regions of the country. Flexible repayment is important to SMEs as the first repayments of a loan may be delayed to match the revenue generated from the investment.

Two non-bank on-lenders came on board in October and November. Finance Ireland will provide €50m to finance equipment, machinery and vehicles, while Merion fleet will make €25m available for leasing requirements. These new partnerships build on the €400m SBCI loans already available through AIB and Bank of Ireland.

## **Irish Strategic Investment Fund**

The National Treasury Management Agency Act 2014 established the €6.8 billion Irish Strategic Investment Fund. The Fund managed by the NTMA published its investment strategy in July setting out the long term strategic direction for the Fund. Key features of the Strategy include:

- seeking co-investors which is expected to more than double the fund available to support economic activity and employment in the State
- committing 80% of total portfolio to 'high economic impact' investments
- developing a broad-based portfolio across industry sectors, regions and asset classes

At the end of 2015, the Fund through a commitment of €2bn to the Irish economy has leveraged an additional €2.9bn of third party capital. This overall investment commitment of €4.9bn is directly and indirectly supporting over 12,000 jobs.



# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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## **Develop Dublin as an International City Region**

The new Tourism brand, Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air, was launched in October 2015 seeking to reposition the city and county as a destination and secure its appeal to overseas visitors for the long-term future. In the first phase, €1m will be invested in the new brand by companies in the private sector, Dublin Airport Authority, the four local authorities in Dublin and Fáilte Ireland. The aim is to grow the number of visitors to Ireland by 6.5% annually which would see 6.2m visitors coming to Dublin in 2020, growing tourist expenditure in the city to just under €2.5bn and creating 19,600 Irish jobs.

Sites under the control of NAMA-appointed receivers and investment partners in the Dublin Docklands Strategic Development Zone have the capacity to deliver 3.8m sq. ft. of commercial space and about 2,000 residential units. NAMA is also working with local authorities, developers and receivers to deliver up to 20,000 housing units to 2020, most of which will be in the greater Dublin area.

Work is well underway on the flagship capital projects being progressed under the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme including the GPO, Kilmainham Gaol, the Military Archives, with a Steering Group established and monitoring progress across each project for delivery over 2016.

## **Prioritise Cross City Luas Project**

The main infrastructure works commenced in July and the laying of the first track took place on O'Connell Street in October. The project which is due for completion in 2017 will see an additional 10 million passenger journeys and an additional 13 new stops, 8 of which are in the city centre.

## **Support Area Based Approach to Tackle Child Poverty**

The ABC Programme is a time-bound prevention and early intervention initiative, involving a joint investment with the Atlantic Philanthropies of €29.7m. It relates to evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in disadvantaged areas and break the cycle of child poverty. A key purpose of the ABC Programme is to identify the learning in and across the thirteen ABC sites and to transfer this learning into existing and established services. Over 2015 – 2016 it is estimated that:

- more than 700 parents will receive parenting interventions
- 75 pre-school centres, 631 staff and more than 4,000 children will benefit from professional development in pre-school centres
- 79 schools, 158 teachers and pre-school practitioners and 4,000 children will benefit from training in and delivery of programmes intended to improve social and emotional well-being and reduce behavioural difficulties

## **Youth Guarantee Scheme**

Youth unemployment has fallen from a peak of 31.2% in 2012 to 19.2% in December 2015. In line with the Youth Guarantee Scheme, early engagement is prioritised through Intreo to ensure that all young people receive expert advice and have access to progression options and a case officer is provided to help newly unemployed young people find and secure sustainable jobs. 28,000 places were made available under Youth Guarantee to young people in 2015. By end November 2015, 14,650 places were taken up.

## **EU Cohesion Funding**

The €320m investment package for the Border, Midland and Western Region was launched in May while the Southern & Eastern Region was launched in July with a €498m investment package. The Operational Programmes are about strengthening research and innovation in the region, improving ICT infrastructure, supporting SMEs, improving energy efficiency, and supporting sustainable urban development.

## **Planning Legislation to Support the Construction Sector**

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 introduced a number of reforms in relation to Part V regulations, the retrospective application of reduced development contributions and the introduction of a vacant site levy, which together are aimed at putting in place structural reforms that will support an increase in the output of housing to meet the needs of citizens.

In addition, the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2015 forms part of the Government's recently announced interim housing programme *Stabilising Rents, Boosting Supply*. The Act strengthens the status of aspects



of planning guidelines issued by the Minister for the Environment to local authorities on planning matters and will ensure their consistent application, particularly in relation to the issue of the December 2015 Apartment Standard Guidelines and streamlines the process for the making of modifications to Strategic Development Zone planning schemes.

The two Acts above have been complemented by the publication of a third piece of planning legislation in 2015, the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2015, which will implement a range of recommendations from the final report of the Mahon Tribunal, particularly the creation of an independent Office for Planning Regulation, along with the provision of a statutory framework for the preparation and approval, by Dáil Éireann, of a new National Planning Framework, which will succeed the 2002 National Spatial Strategy and will be published in draft form later in 2016.

## **Publish New Tourism Strategy**

A new tourism policy, *People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025* was published in March setting out a range of objectives and aims to grow tourism over the next decade so that, by 2025, revenue from overseas visits will increase to €5bn, enabling employment in the sector to rise to 250,000. A Tourism Leadership Group was established in July and is developing a three year Tourism Action Plan which will be published shortly.

Irish tourism will be a record year in 2015 with an increase of 14% in overseas visits to Ireland for the first eleven months of 2015 compared to the same period in 2014. Visits from Mainland Europe grew by 15.9%, North America increased by 14.2%, visits from Great Britain were up by 12.5%, and visits from the rest of the world increased by 13.3%. Visitor spending in the first nine months of the year was worth an estimated €3.335bn to the economy, a 17.5% increase compared to the same period of 2014.

## **Enact Climate Change Bill and Reduce Carbon Production**

The recently enacted Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 builds on existing efforts to decarbonise the economy and places the Government's adaptation efforts on a legal statutory footing. The Act provides for a National Mitigation Plan which will specify how we will achieve our

objectives as well as a National Climate Change Adaptation Framework which will provide a strategic policy focus.

Public consultations on the development of the National Mitigation Plan and the associated Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report were undertaken in 2015. The submissions received will inform the further development of the plan which is due to be completed later in 2016.

## **Energy Production**

The Energy White Paper, *Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030*, published in December 2015, is a complete energy policy update setting out a high-level framework to guide policy up to 2030. Its actions have been informed by a vision to transform Ireland into a low carbon society and economy by 2050, with 2030 representing a significant milestone.

The White Paper reaffirms Ireland's three core energy policy objectives; sustainability, security of supply, and competitiveness. It also sets out the strategies, plans and measures that will be implemented. Planned deliverables in 2016 include a:

- Public Sector Energy Efficiency Plan
- National Renewable Energy Action Plan (Third Progress Report)
- Affordable Energy Strategy
- Bioenergy Plan
- New support scheme for renewable electricity
- New support scheme for renewable heat incentive

In addition, the Energy White Paper commits to the establishment of a National Energy Forum modelled on the successful National Economic Dialogue. The first National Energy Forum is expected to take place in Q3 2016.

## **Growing the Agri-Food Sector**

The agri-food sector is our largest indigenous industry, contributing €26bn in turnover accounts for around 170,000 jobs. Figures for the first nine months of 2015 show that exports in the standard agri food sector have increased by 5.2% compared to the same period in 2014.

# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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Figures also show an overall growth in agri-food exports of 29% from 2010 to 2014.

*Food Wise 2025* was launched in July 2015 setting out a ten year plan for the agri food sector. The Strategy identifies ambitious and challenging growth projections for the industry over the ten years including an 85% increase the value of agri food exports to €19bn, a 70% increase in value added to €13bn, and a 65% increase in the value of primary production to €10bn, and the creation of 23,000 additional jobs all along the supply chain from producer level to high end value added product development.

Schemes under the Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 continue to be rolled out including: GLAS with approximately 38,500 farmers expected to benefit; the Beef Data Genomics Programme with 29,700 applications and the new Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme with €178.6m paid up to early December to over 83,864 applicants.

## Dairy and Meat sectors

The ending of milk quotas on the 31 March 2015 has already generated over €700m in investment by industry and even more at farm level and the Irish dairy sector is now very well placed to meet growing global demand.

A series of inward and outward trade visits at Ministerial level including Ministerial trade missions to the US in February and September; and Nigeria and Ghana in December have increased our market access including:

- US beef market was opened in January 2015 with exports to early November valued at €8.5m
- Canadian market opened to Irish beef after being closed for 19 years
- Certificate agreed with Hong Kong for the export of cooked meats with 25 tonnes already exported
- Certificate agreed with South Africa for the export of certain pork products in March
- The beef and sheep-meat markets in Oman were both opened and export certificates were agreed in October
- The ban on Irish beef imports was lifted in February and work is ongoing with the Chinese authorities on the detailed next steps to allow trade to commence

## **Local Enterprise Offices**

Since their establishment in 2014, the LEOs have increased the visibility and awareness of supports for entrepreneurs and businesses in their local regions. With over 6,000 clients, the LEOs are delivering grants to qualifying businesses as well as soft supports including finance, marketing, mentoring, and management, as well as advice, guidance and redirection to other support providers.

Efforts in 2015 to grow awareness included:

- a 'Local Enterprise Village' held at the National Ploughing Championship contributing to sales worth €600k across the 85 participant companies
- a number of procurement workshops held to encourage SME's to engage in public procurement
- Local Enterprise Weeks held to showcase a variety of supports to the business community
- a number of Trade Sharing Events hosted with Intertrade Ireland aimed at improving links between Northern Irish companies and Irish SMEs
- engagement in Pilot Projects under the Redz Economic Development Zone calls for funding where they are leading projects in Rural Economic Development

Provisional returns show that in 2015 approximately 4,000 full time and part time jobs were created by LEO supported businesses.

## **National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship**

An implementation group, chaired at Ministerial level, is driving progress on the National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship and delivered the following key objectives in 2015:

- launch of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs which includes a focus on entrepreneurship
- launch of a €5m fund for LEOs to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the country
- launch of the Startup Refunds for Entrepreneurs scheme
- an action programme of support developed for pre-investment High Potential Start-Ups

- the extension to 2018 of tax reliefs for new start-up companies
- the *Enterprise Engagement Strategy* published in July includes establishing entrepreneurship as a core feature of higher education and training
- a Competitive Start Fund of €500k for Female Entrepreneurs launched in November

Over 400 events took place across the country in October as part of the Start-up Gathering 2015 programme to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and Ireland's startup sector to national and international audiences. To attract overseas entrepreneurs, Enterprise Ireland has established a dedicated €500k Start-up fund to attract international start-ups to locate in Ireland.

There has been a 30% increase in the number of new registered companies, and a drop of more than a third in the number of receiverships and liquidations demonstrating a positive outlook for entrepreneurs in Ireland.

### **Improve the Seed Capital Scheme**

The Seed Capital Scheme was re-launched as the Start-Up Refunds for Entrepreneurs scheme in May 2015 to provide a source of much needed funds to new businesses who often find it difficult to source seed capital. A dedicated webpage has been created at [www.sure.gov.ie](http://www.sure.gov.ie) which enables potential entrepreneurs to get an estimate of their SURE refund with the new online calculator.

### **Enhance Regional Economic Planning**

The Capital Plan 2016- 2021 was published in September setting out exchequer investment of €27bn over the next six years to increase the State's infrastructure, support economic recovery and jobs, support sustainable communities throughout Ireland and provide modern, fit for purpose building.

The Plan, which will support more than 45,000 construction-related jobs, provides for an investment at national and regional level of €4bn in education; €4bn in environment; €3bn in health; €3bn in enterprise; €1.25bn in agriculture and €1bn in justice.

Work has begun on the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies which will replace the current Regional Planning Guidelines and run from 2016 to 2028. Work is also in progress on a new

National Planning Framework which will provide an overarching framework for the strategic planning of urban and rural areas, facilitate balanced regional development, as well as co-ordinate regional spatial and economic strategies and city and county development plans. Enabling legislation and a 'road map' document was published in December 2015 and it is intended that a draft National Planning Framework will be published by the third quarter of 2016.

### **Invest in National Broadband**

The National Broadband Plan outlines the Government's commitment to deliver high speed broadband to every citizen and business in Ireland through a combination of commercial investment and a State intervention.

The 2020 High Speed Broadband Map reflects the areas to be covered by commercial investment, leaving approximately 757,000 premises to be addressed under State intervention.

The procurement process for the State intervention, informed by a public consultation process, ongoing industry engagement and expert analysis, was launched on 22 December 2015. An updated Intervention Strategy detailing objectives and how these are to be delivered by the successful bidder(s) has also been published. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded towards the end of 2016 along with the commencement of the build out of the network.

### **Incentivise Use and Development of Vacant Sites**

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 provides for local authorities to apply levies to property owners in urban centres who leave their sites vacant and underutilised. Every planning authority shall, beginning on 1 January 2017, establish and maintain a register to be known as the vacant sites register. Charges and levies will apply for each year beginning with 2018 and shall be payable in arrears each year beginning in 2019 by the owner of a vacant site.

### **Get 1,000 More Small Business Trading Online**

To end 2015, over 1,700 Trading Online Vouchers have been approved by Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) to encourage businesses to invest in developing their eCommerce capability.

# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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In addition, thousands more businesses have benefitted from the advice and mentoring provided by LEOs as part of the Scheme.

A report on the impact of the Scheme which was published in July revealed that small businesses that move online experience a 21% average increase in sales, while over 70% of businesses surveyed expect to recruit new staff. A provision of €3m funding has been made for up to 1,000 additional vouchers during 2016.

## **New Integrated Licensing Application**

In July, a contract was signed with An Post to provide an Integrated Licensing Application Service which will be a single online portal for the application, renewal and payment of licences, reducing the amount of time in form filling required to comply with various licensing obligations.

The system is available from December 2015 with a pilot number of licensing authorities focussing on the retail sector and is available at [www.licences.ie](http://www.licences.ie). It will be expanded in 2016 to include additional licences for the retail sector and will also be broadened out to all sectors.

## **Data Protection and the Digital Economy**

Resourcing for the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner continues to be a key priority with a further increase in resources and personnel being provided for 2016. A permanent Dublin Office has been sourced at Fitzwilliam Square which will complement the existing base in Portarlinton, while in the past year, 18 new staff with specialist skills have been recruited.

A Government Data Forum has been established to examine issues and challenges arising from the increasing digitisation of modern life. It brings together the views from experts across industry, academia, and civil society, as well as the public sector, and is initially focussing on the societal implications arising from the associated significant growth in the generation and use of personal data

An Interdepartmental Committee on data related issues was established in 2015 and has become a platform for the development and sharing of good practice across the Civil Service. In addition, two major data protection awareness-raising events for the public sector were held during 2015, one targeted at the semi-state and state boards sector, and the other aimed at the Local Government sector.

## **New Apprenticeship Model**

Following the establishment of the Apprenticeship Council, 25 new apprenticeship proposals were announced in July following an evaluation process. The 25 proposals are focussed on a wide range of skills and sectors and will be offered at Levels 5 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Development plans for the new apprenticeships are being agreed and it is envisaged that apprentices will be registered on a number of the programmes in 2016.

In 2016, 4,000 young people will begin apprenticeships compared to just 1,200, 3 years ago.

## **Labour Market Council**

The Labour Market Council (LMC) took an active role in informing the drafting of the new Pathways to Work 2016-2020 strategy and this role will continue as the Strategy is implemented.

The LMC's Employment and Youth Activation Charter encourages employers to consider candidates from the live register when recruiting. Since its official launch in September 2014, an additional 256 companies have signed the Charter, bringing the total number of signatory companies to 280. 73 of the companies participated in Jobs Week 2015 and activities carried out included recruiting at Jobs Fairs, hosting jobseekers for job shadowing, providing business mentoring workshop for self-employed / small enterprises and hosting CV Clinics for jobseekers.

## Delivering Better Living and Working Standards

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### Low Pay Commission

In Budget 2016, Government implemented the recommendation by the Low Pay Commission in its first report to increase the national minimum wage by 50 cent to €9.15 per hour. The new rate came into effect on 1 January 2016.

The Commission has been requested to report, by end February 2016, on the legal sub-minima rates and in particular, to its impact on youth unemployment rates and participation in education. It is also to report, by end October 2016, on the prevalence of women on the national minimum wage.

Energy company SSE became the first corporate in Ireland to sign up to the voluntary Living Wage initiative guaranteeing all its 750 employees a minimum of €11.50 per hour as of 1 January 2016. The Living Wage is an independently assessed and measured rate of income considered necessary to meet basic needs, such as housing, food, clothing, transport and healthcare.

The Low Pay Commission was put on a statutory footing following the enactment of the National Minimum Wage (Low Pay Commission) Bill in July 2015.

### Supporting Families into Employment

The Back to Work Family Dividend commenced on 6 May 2015 and aims to help families move from a weekly social welfare payment into employment. It gives financial support to people with children who were in receipt of a jobseeker or one-parent family payment and who take up employment, increase their hours of employment or become self-employed.

As of the end of November 2015, there were 10,300 families in receipt of the Back to Work Family Dividend benefitting 17,200 children.

### Increase Access to Subsidised Childcare

The Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Future Investment in Early Years and School Age Care and Education Services was published in July with proposals to enhance affordability for parents, improve the quality of services and outcomes for children, and promote greater accessibility in the sector.

A number of measures were advanced in Budget 2016 including:

- an extension to free pre-school from September 2016 at a cost of €47m
- a suite of supports to enable children with disabilities fully participate in pre-school care and education at a full year cost of €33m in 2017
- a single Affordable Childcare programme to make childcare more affordable for more families
- an additional 8,000 childcare places on the Community Childcare Subvention programme targeting low income families
- a €3m capital fund to develop after-school services using existing school and other accessible community facilities

### Tax and Social Welfare

A package of tax reliefs were introduced in Budget 2016 including:

- the entry threshold to USC has been increased to €13,000, removing a further 42,500 workers from the charge in 2016
- the three lowest rates of USC have been reduced bringing the marginal income tax rate for middle income earners down to 49.5%
- a tapered PRSI credit is being introduced to ensure that low income earners will see a significant improvement in net incomes
- the home carer's tax credit increased to €1,000 for 2016 and the home carer's income threshold increased to €7,200
- a new Earned Income Credit of €550 is being introduced

Benefits to social welfare rates include:

- an increase of over €250m in Welfare Support Package for 2016
- the Christmas bonus increased to 75% for all long-term welfare recipients – up from 25% in 2014
- the weekly pension increased by €3 for pensioners and carers aged 66 and over

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- child benefit increased by €5 extra per child per month
  - a new paternity benefit will commence in 2016
  - the carer's allowance will be paid for 12 weeks (currently 6 weeks) after the death of the person being cared for
  - fuel allowance increased by €2.50 to €22.50 per week
  - family income supplement threshold increased by €5 per week for families with one child, and €10 per week for families with two or more children
  - the earnings disregard for Jobseeker's Transitional Payment has increased from €60 to €90 per week for existing and new recipients
  - an increase of €2.50 in top-up payments for Community Employment, Rural Social Scheme, Gateway, Tús and JobBridge participants
- 3.9 million hours of personal assistant / home support hours being delivered to 2,300 adults
  - 1,400 young people who left school and rehabilitative training programmes received new services and supports
  - support for the reorganisation and expansion of therapy services for children with disabilities under the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People Programme

A multi-partner Service Reform Fund, comprising €45m from 2015 to 2017 has been established to support the implementation of reforms in disability and mental health services. There will be four key priorities: a transition to a person-centred model of service and supports; developing capacity; research and evaluation; and develop an advocacy framework for people with disabilities.

Departments are working together in a concerted effort to address the barriers and challenges that face people with disabilities. A new National Disability Inclusion Strategy will be put in place in early 2016 and is being developed in consultation with all stakeholders to ensure interested parties can make recommendations in key areas such as service provision, accommodation, health, employment, and education.

A new *Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities* was launched in October 2015 to ensure that people with disabilities, who are able to, and want to work are supported and enabled to do so. The Strategy which sets out a 10 year approach is based around six strategic priorities including building skills, capacity and independence; providing bridges and supports into work; and making work pay. An Inter-Departmental Implementation Group has been established to oversee the implementation of the Strategy. Key targets include increasing the employment rate of people with disabilities by 15% by 2024 and specifically doubling the public service employment target from 3% to 6%.

An additional €4m was allocated in 2014 and 2015 to assist in implementing the Progressing Disability Services Programme for children. This equates to approximately 80 / 90 additional therapy posts to expand the provision of speech and language therapy in primary care and the development of therapy services.

## Introduce Free GP Care

Free GP care for children under 6 was introduced on 1 July and by the late December over 219,000 children and 93% of GPs had signed up. GP care without fees for persons aged 70 and over was also implemented in July and over 50,500 people have signed up to this GP service.

These steps to universal healthcare mean, for the first time, some 800,000 of the eldest and youngest in our society are now able to access GP care without being charged. Budget 2016 announced the plan to extend universal GP care without fees further to include all children aged 11 years and under, subject to the negotiation of a comprehensive new GP contract with the Irish Medical Organisation.

## Disability Services

Funding of approximately €1.5bn was allocated to the Disability Services Programme for 2015 providing:

- residential services to around 9,000 people with a disability at more than 1,200 locations
- day services to over 22,000 people with intellectual and physical disabilities
- respite residential support of 190,000 overnights for people with intellectual and physical disabilities



Since placing the regulation and inspection of residential and respite care disability centres on a statutory footing in November 2013, more than 1,000 inspections have taken place to date and the lessons learned from those inspections are continuing to improve the quality of services.

The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act provides for an appropriate legislative framework for individuals, including those with an intellectual disability, whose capacity may be in question and who are admitted to or detained in approved centres for treatment. The report of the review of the Mental Health Act 2001, published in 2015, sets out 165 recommendations reflecting the change in approach to mental health care in Ireland in terms of a focus on recovery and respect for a person's autonomy, and will guide the updating of the legislation.

## Roadmap for a New Retirement Savings Scheme

Since its establishment in January 2015, the Universal Retirement Savings Group has:

- undertaken research on a universal system including consideration of mandatory and automatic enrolment with member opt out models
- initiated analysis of potential features of scheme design, operations and administration, costings and investment management structure
- undertaken a consultation process involving key stakeholders
- engaged with a range of international/Irish subject matter experts to inform the deliberative process

## Mortgage Arrears

The number of residential mortgages in arrears continues to decline with Q3 2015 figures at 92,291 representing the ninth consecutive quarter of decline and a year on year improvement of almost 22%. Latest figures also show the first decline in long term mortgage arrears since 2012.

In May, the Government announced a number of new measures to further support mortgage holders who are in arrears including giving Courts the power to review and approve insolvency deals that have been rejected by creditors and providing an enhanced role for MABS in offering information, advice and assistance to borrowers in arrears.

## Insolvency Service of Ireland

A review of the operation of the Insolvency Service and of the personal insolvency and bankruptcy legislation was completed in December 2014. Arising from the review, the Personal Insolvency (Amendment) Act 2015 has:

- provided more detailed supervisory powers for the Insolvency Service of Ireland
- increased the amount of debt which may be covered by a Debt Relief Notice from €20,000 to €35,000
- strengthened the powers and functions of the Insolvency Service of Ireland regarding awareness-raising, information and communication with the public on personal insolvency and bankruptcy matters
- provided the Courts the power to review, and where appropriate, to approve insolvency deals that have been rejected by creditors

The new Bankruptcy (Amendment) Act 2015, provides for:

- a reduction in the normal duration of bankruptcy, from 3 years to 1 year
- a reduction in the normal maximum duration of orders requiring payments to creditors from any income of the bankrupt person, from 5 years to 3 years
- an extended bankruptcy term (up to 15 years in serious cases), and extended duration of payments to creditors, if the bankrupt person tries to hide income or assets, or does not co-operate with the bankruptcy process
- a bankrupt person will regain their ownership of their home, subject to any mortgage, after 3 years, if steps have not been taken to sell it for the benefit of creditors within that period
- some key reforms to modernise and streamline bankruptcy procedures, and remove unnecessary delays and costs to the parties and the taxpayer

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## **Strengthen Independent Mortgage Advice**

The role of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) has been enhanced to enable it to provide further assistance to people struggling with debt and mortgage arrears with key measures including:

- the appointment of dedicated mortgage arrears advisors with nationwide coverage
- a pilot project comprising a Public Personal Insolvency Practitioner underway in Waterford MABS
- a pilot project on the provision of bankruptcy advice in Cork MABS
- a national network of Court Mentors has been established since 1 October 2015 to attend Courts with clients and offer support and advice on Court proceedings
- the publication of a Court Guide to support borrowers facing an action for repossession

To complement these initiatives, the Government approved a new scheme in November to assist people access independent expert financial and legal advice. The scheme is expected to operate for a maximum of three years and provides for:

- financial advice from a Personal Insolvency Practitioner or other financial advisor, as appropriate
- legal aid for homeowners in mortgage arrears, operated by the Legal Board
- legal aid for homeowners related to the new Court review of refused Personal Insolvency Arrangement proposals, to be put in place and operated by the Legal Aid Board

The take-up, outcomes and budget adequacy will be reviewed after six months, and annually thereafter, with the results of such review to be reported to Government.

## **Enact Collective Bargaining Legislation**

The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 provides for significant reforms to Ireland's industrial relations laws by:

- providing an improved framework for workers who seek to better their terms and conditions where collective bargaining is not in place

- containing strong anti-victimisation elements to protect workers who pursue such claims
- providing for any collective agreement to be enforced through the Circuit Court, should an employer refuse to do so

## **Reform Workplace Relations Structures**

The Workplace Relations Act 2015 commenced on 1 October representing the biggest reforms to the State's employment rights and industrial relations machinery in 70 years. The reforms which provide modern and flexible workplace relations institutions saw the existing five employment rights bodies merged into two bodies, the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court. As a result:

- the delay for equality cases has been halved
- the backlog for Rights Commissioners hearings has been reduced from over 20 weeks to an average of 8 weeks now
- the Workplace Relations Commission is targeting the waiting time for hearing employment rights complaints to three months from date of receipt
- employers are notified, on average, within 10 working days of the complaint being lodged, thus increasing the possibility of a resolution being reached without a hearing
- there are now a total of two e-forms to be used – one for the first complaint, one for appeals – replacing the 44 paper forms that existed previously
- the process is less legalistic and more informal to encourage early resolution
- the Labour Court will now deal with all employment rights and equality cases on appeal

## **Study on Zero Hour Contracts**

The report on the prevalence of zero hour contracts and low hour contracts was published in November. The study found that while zero hour contracts are not extensively used in Ireland it suggests there is an increasing use of 'if and when' contracts that, when used inappropriately, drive precarious working conditions. A consultation process on the report's findings and recommendations was recently concluded with employers, trade unions and other interested parties, and recommendations will be brought to Government in early 2016.



## Improving Housing Availability and Affordability

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### New Planning Legislation

Following a full independent review of the operation of Part V of planning legislation, a range of legislative changes were incorporated into the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, which was commenced on 1 September 2015. The aim and priority is to kick-start construction activity and secure social housing units on-site with the practice of developers making cash payments in lieu of social housing discontinued under the new legislation.

It also provides for a new vacant site levy on housing or regeneration lands suitable for housing but not coming forward for development and revisions to social housing and development contributions requirements.

### Encourage Phased Development of Projects

As part of the new measures recently announced to deliver rent certainty and boost housing supply, a once-off initiative development contribution rebate scheme will be introduced from January 2016 for two years to kick-start an increased supply of new and more affordable housing in Dublin and Cork. The scheme, to be administered by local authorities and the Department, will accelerate delivery of up to 7,000 more affordable houses and will be supported through an Exchequer funded Infrastructure Fund to meet rebate costs.

### NAMA Delivery of a Strategic Development Zone

NAMA is making significant progress in terms of delivering new commercial retail residential, and community space in the Dublin Docklands Strategic Development Zone.

- Development works have commenced on over 780,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 246 residential units – including Boland's Mill and 8 Hanover Quay
- Planning permission has been granted for a 608,000 sq. ft. and 161 residential units – Project Wave, 76 Sir John Rogersons Quay, 5 Hanover Quay
- Planning submitted for a further 1.2m sq. ft. commercial space, 450 residential units, and a 169-bed hotel
- Pre-planning phase for 1.25m sq. ft. of commercial space and 1,168 residential units

## Increasing the Supply of Social and Low Income Housing

Housing is a priority for Government as evidenced by the Social Housing Strategy 2020 which set out clear, measureable actions and targets primarily to increase the supply of social housing to meet the housing needs of all households on the social housing list. In total, the Strategy targets the delivery of 110,000 new social housing units through current and capital programmes.

The Strategy has been supported by two successive budgets with €1.7 billion allocated to housing. Given the pressing need to recommence a house building programme around €3 billion in capital funding will be provided in support of the Social Housing Strategy through the Government's Capital Plan 2016-2021.

The latest data indicates that over 13,000 units have been delivered across all social housing programmes in 2015, representing an 86% increase on the 7,000 units delivered in 2014. While this represents very tangible progress, in order to deal comprehensively with the housing list, further ambitious targets will be set annually starting with 2016 where the target is to deliver over 17,000 units. In the period 2011 to 2014 in excess of 26,000 new social housing units were provided through current and capital programmes. The Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government will present a more comprehensive report on progress on social housing output in 2015 in the coming weeks.

The new Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) introduced in 2014 as a new form of housing support for households who qualify for social housing support continues to be rolled out. The scheme is now operational in 18 local authority areas supporting over 6,000 households since its introduction.

Recognising the wider importance of stimulating activity in the housing construction sector, Government announced new measures in November as part of the Stabilising Rents, Boosting Supply package to boost housing supply including:

- enhanced supply of more affordable starter homes in key locations through a targeted Development Contribution Rebate Scheme in Dublin and Cork for housing supplied under certain price levels in 2016 and 2017

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- updated statutory Planning Guidelines on Apartment Standards, issued by the Minister for the Environment under Section 28 of the Planning Act in December 2015 which will boost supply of new apartments in city centre locations driven by increasing employment and investment by various sectors of the economy, including Foreign Direct Investment by enhancing the viability of investment in apartment development
- streamlined review procedures for Strategic Development Zones to enable swifter adjustments to meet market requirements
- consideration of investment by the National Treasury Management Agency backed Irish Strategic Investment Fund in housing infrastructure on a case-by-case basis

These measures will complement legislative changes already enacted in 2015 including the introduction of a new Vacant Site Levy and new Part V arrangements. In addition, NAMA has confirmed that a delivery target of 20,000 residential units is achievable by the end of 2020 and estimates that 90% that target will be in the greater Dublin area, with approximately 75% of the units being starter homes.

## Homelessness

Building on the Homeless initiative last year, the 2015 cold weather action plan for rough sleepers commenced on 2 November providing:

- 200 additional beds on top of the 271 new beds provided in 2014
- 18 new units catering for families and a new 100 bed facility in city centre
- continuation of an all-night cafe (the Nite Café, Merchant's Quay) and transportation
- contingency measures to mobilise additional capacity at short notice

Other developments include:

- 5,400 households have been granted increases in rent supplement at the discretion of Welfare Officers as part of the National Tenancy Sustainment Framework
- awareness campaigns are in operation to increase public knowledge regarding tenants' and landlords' rights and responsibilities

- a Ministerial Direction requiring local authorities to prioritise homeless households has resulted in 756 allocations in the Dublin Region and 455 in regional authorities
- 1,050 void units were brought back into use in 2015 in the DCC area
- €70m has been allocated for the homeless budget for 2016, an increase of €17m on 2015
- the HAP pilot of a 20% uplift has been increased to 50% from 2 November to improve the competitiveness of homeless households in the private rented market
- 500 modular housing units announced with an initial 22 units for delivery in early January
- 739 households exited from homelessness into sustained accommodation by Q3 2015

## Rent Stability and Tenancy Protection

New measures were recently announced and provided for under the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2015 to support tenants in private rented accommodation including

- for a 4 year period, rent reviews to take place every 24 months
- landlords to give a minimum of 90 days notice of new rent
- new requirements for Notification of new rent increase
- graduated increases in the notification periods for tenancy terminations to be introduced
- measures to better protect tenants from false reasons for tenancy terminations
- statutory provision for a tenancy deposit protection scheme
- tax incentive to be introduced for landlords who take HAP/RS tenants
- a model for an affordable rental pilot project to be developed and launched in early 2016

Separately, a model for an affordable rental pilot project is being developed and will be launched in early 2016.

## Responsible and Sustainable Management of the Public Finances

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### Reducing Ireland's Debt and GDP Deficit

The forecasts in Budget 2016 predicted that Ireland's 2015 deficit will be 2.1% of GDP, well under the EU deficit target of 3% of GDP. This is likely to be exceeded further (closer to 1.5%) with strong tax performance and banking sector revenues in 2015 meaning that the Exchequer will be close to balance in 2015, for the first time in nearly a decade. Based upon a growing economy, rising employment levels, increased consumption & business activity, tax receipts have increased since 2011 by 33 per cent (€11.6 billion) to €46.5 billion in 2015.

Ireland has come a long way since 2011 in stabilising the economy and finances, prioritising job creation and restoring Ireland's international reputation. In the first instance, a number of steps were taken to reduce our debt including:

- changes negotiated in 2011 brought a saving of €10bn over the life time of the loans
- an extension of the maturities on Ireland's EFSF loans along with a promissory note deal have reduced funding requirements by €40bn
- in 2015, an early repayment of over €18bn in IMF loans brought savings of a further €1.5bn

Ireland made a clean exit from the EU/IMF bailout in December 2013 and international, political and market reaction has been very positive. Ireland successfully returned to the bond markets, in January 2014 at historically low rates. Deficit reduction targets have been exceeded each year reducing Ireland's current deficit from 11% in 2010 to close to 1.5% in 2015. Gross Government Debt is projected to fall to 93% of GDP in 2016 from a high of 120% in 2013.

Our credit rating has steadily improved and we are now rated at A grade by two of the main rating agencies, further cementing international confidence. Ireland continues to have the fastest growing economy in Europe in 2015.

Ireland continues to be competitive in attracting new foreign direct investment with over 1,000 multinational corporations choosing Ireland as their strategic European base including leading companies such as Google, Facebook, Oracle and

Pfizer. FDI companies currently directly employ over 187,000 people with plans by the IDA to increase this to 209,000 by 2019.

Jobs are central to economic and social recovery and remain a top priority. Since the launch of the Action Plan for Jobs and the Pathways to Work strategies in 2012, over 135,800 jobs have been added to the economy [Q3 2015] and Ireland's unemployment rate has fallen from a peak of 15.1% to 8.8% at the end of 2015.

### Disposal of Bank Assets

Another key step was to fix the broken banking sector to ensure a proper functioning banking system to support economic activity and lending to businesses. In 2011, the domestic Irish banking sector was restructured around three banks to establish a secure financial system for deposits and the flow of credit to consumers and businesses while Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide were merged into the IBRC and entered liquidation in 2013. The cost of recapitalising the covered banks was reduced from an initial estimate of €35bn to €16.5bn through a combination of avoiding asset fire-sales, burden-sharing with junior bondholders and securing private capital investment.

Aside from recapitalisation, banks were shrunk to a more sustainable size through a successful deleveraging programme agreed as part of the Troika Programme while the bank funding challenge has been resolved - the State Guarantee Scheme was withdrawn in March 2013 and Central Bank reliance is back to pre-crisis levels. In addition a new fitness and probity regime was put in place for key roles in banks in 2012 and new boards and management teams were put in place.

Profitability has recovered strongly at the three viable banks of AIB, BOI and PTSB in which the State continues to hold valuable investments. During 2013, the State disposed of its Contingent Capital and Preference Share investments in BOI yielding total proceeds of €3.1bn. In May 2015, PTSB successfully executed its capital raise which saw that bank return to the main Dublin and London stock exchanges. At the time of the capital raise, the bank redeemed the Contingent Capital held by the State which, in addition to the State's sale of part of its equity stake in the bank, generated proceeds of €0.54bn.

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AIB's recently announced capital restructuring paved the way for the first repayment of €1.64bn in December with further payments of income and capital from AIB expected in the near future, including €1.6bn due to be repaid to the taxpayer when the Contingent Capital Instrument matures in July 2016.

The total proceeds received to date from disposals, fees, and income, together with the most recent valuation of the remaining investments, now covers the €29.4bn originally invested in these three banks and the State will ultimately recover all of its investment over time.

In November 2015, Ireland ratified the intergovernmental agreement on the Single Resolution Fund which has been established to finance the restructuring of failing credit institutions. A transition period of eight years was negotiated for contributions from the banking sectors of the participating member states and it is estimated that the Irish banks will contribute €1.8bn over the eight years.

## **Accelerated Disposal Strategy by NAMA**

By end October 2015, NAMA had redeemed a further €5.5bn of Senior Debt bringing the total amount redeemed to date to €22.1bn, 73% of the €30.2 billion of debt originally issued to acquire bank loans. NAMA is on track to redeem its target of €24bn (80%) by end 2016 with all Senior Debt repaid in full by 2018, two years ahead of its original target. NAMA also aims to redeem its Subordinated Bonds of over €1.5bn in 2020

By the end of 2016, NAMA will have funded the delivery of over 2,300 residential units in the greater Dublin area. NAMA is also working with local authorities, developers and receivers to secure planning permission and remove obstacles to development for sites which can, on the basis that the units are commercially viable, deliver up to 20,000 housing units to 2020 with c.93% of these in the greater Dublin area, which is the area of greatest demand.

The residential programme will require total funding of €5.6 billion with peak funding expected to be €1.8 billion - the proceeds from the sale of completed projects will be recycled to fund new commercially viable projects.

NAMA's combined Strategic Development Zone and residential funding is estimated to generate some 30,000 jobs during peak funding in the construction industry and in ancillary activities.

## **EU – Jobs, Stability and Growth**

A clear focus on jobs, stability and growth is reflected strongly in the Strategic Agenda agreed by the European Council in June 2014, and reinforced in the Work Programme of the Juncker Commission, including through the threefold emphasis on investment, structural reforms and responsible public finances that will underpin European Semester 2016.

The regulation underpinning the new European Fund for Strategic Investments (ESFI) was agreed in June. The Department of Health's PPP project involving 14 primary care centres across Ireland was one of the first projects to be supported by EFSI. Work towards identifying other specific areas of potential Irish cooperation will continue over the period ahead, building from the new Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan 2016-2021.

The Digital Single Market Strategy presented in May identifies 16 specific initiatives to be delivered by end-2016. The Single Market Strategy presented in October identifies a further 22 specific initiatives to be delivered by 2018.

A balanced EU-US Free Trade Agreement is one of the top priorities of the Juncker Commission on foot of the mandate agreed under the Irish Presidency in June 2013, with the latest round of negotiations taking place last October. Ireland fully supports the Commission's continuing efforts as the EU's negotiator to conclude an ambitious and comprehensive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement with the US Administration.

## Rebuilding Trust in Politics and Public Institutions

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### Holding Referendums

Following the successful referendum in May on marriage equality, the passing of the new Marriage Act 2015 facilitated the first ever same-sex marriage on 17 November 2015. This represented the first change to a constitution effected by a referendum arising from the recommendation of citizen's constitutional convention. In advance of the referendum, the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 came into law addressing the changing nature of family life in Ireland.

A referendum was also held on the same day on reducing the age of candidacy of the President bringing to eight the total referendums put before the Irish people in the period since 2011.

### Freedom of Information

In October 2015, Freedom of Information was extended to a number of major public bodies under the new FOI Act 2014 - An Garda Síochána, Iarnród Éireann, Gas Networks Ireland, EirGrid plc and ESB Networks Ltd. Under the Act, FOI will extend to all future new public bodies automatically unless specifically excluded. Other major reforms include the removal of the restrictions put in place under the 2003 Act, the restructuring and simplification of the Act to make it more accessible to citizens, the introduction of principles which public bodies must have regard to in implementing the Act and the removal of the up-front application fee and significant reductions in appeal fees.

A Model Publication Scheme and related Guidance was published in October 2015 setting out information to be proactively published by all departments and public bodies including information about the body, its functions and services and related decision-making procedures; financial and procurement information. FOI bodies have until April 2016 to prepare and publish their Publication Schemes in conformity with the Model Scheme.

### Protected Disclosures Guidelines

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 came into operation on 15 July, 2014 as part of the Government's comprehensive approach to enhance the protection available to whistle blowers who

seek to raise concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace without fear of being punished for it. Guidance has been developed for public bodies providing advice and information on how a public body should design and operate its protected disclosures procedures.

### Enact Lobbying Bill

The Register of Lobbying became a legal requirement from 1 September under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015. The key objective of the Register is to make information available to the public on the identity of those who are communicating with Government and senior civil and public servants on public policy matters.

Lobbyists are obliged to register any lobbying activity that takes place from 1 September and submit a return of lobbying activity every four months. The first returns are due by 21 January, 2016.

### Public Sector Ethics

Drafting is at an advanced stage on the Public Sector Standards Bill to provide a reformed, consolidated and modernised statutory framework governing disclosure of interests and other ethical obligations for public officials.

Among the key reforms are:

- the introduction of a Public Sector Standards Commissioner to replace the Standards in Public Office Commission and oversee a reformed complaints and investigations process
- the adoption of a broad definition of public official with graduated disclosure requirements
- a significant expansion in the material and personal scope of disclosures
- the strengthening and the extension to all public officials of the requirement for ad-hoc disclosures in the case of any actual or perceived conflict of interest arising in the performance of a function
- the putting in place of a consistent, coherent and proportionate ethics framework for all public officials at national and local level which is calibrated to conflict of interest and corruption risks

# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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## **Introduce an Independent Garda Authority**

The new Policing Authority was established on 1 January 2016 and is an independent body to oversee the performance of An Garda Síochána in relation to policing services in Ireland. It will provide oversight of all aspects of the delivery of policing services by An Garda Síochána, including in relation to strategy, the efficient and effective deployment of resources, organisation, administration, personnel and finance.

Ms. Josephine Feehily was appointed Chairperson of the Authority following an open appointment process through PAS. Eight ordinary members of the Authority, the Chief Executive and the Head of Legal and Governance have also been recently appointed through similar processes.

A number of further reform measures have been advanced in the Justice system including

- the strengthening of the powers and functions of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission in relation to complaints, investigations and other procedures as provided for through the Garda Síochána (Amendment) Act 2015
- the first ever open competition to appoint the Garda Commissioner and two Deputy Commissioners
- an independent review into complaints alleging Garda misconduct or inadequacies in the investigation of such allegations
- a Commission of Investigation established to investigate recordings of telephone calls at Garda stations
- a Commission of Investigation established to investigate certain matters relative to the Cavan/Monaghan Division of the Garda Síochána

Over €67m in additional funding has been allocated for 2016 which will allow for the recruitment of 600 new Gardaí this year. This will bring the number of new Gardaí recruited to 1,150 since the reopening of the Garda College in September 2014. Over €34m has been invested in new Garda vehicles since 2012 with over 640 new vehicles coming on stream in 2015. The Capital Plan 2016-2021 provides for a further €46m of investment in vehicles as well as an additional €205m for information and communications technology.

## **Civil Service Reform**

A progress report on the implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan was published in July setting out the achievement of the 6 priority actions in the 'first 200 days'. These include the establishment of the first ever Civil Service Management Board, an Accountability Board with external membership, a new performance review process for Secretaries General, a revised Disciplinary Code, open recruitment and the first ever civil service wide employee engagement survey.

Work is well underway to progress delivery of the priorities for the next 200 days including

- implementing a Common Governance Standard
- enhancing PMDS for all staff, and
- a new programme of organisational capability reviews to commence early in 2016

## **Open Government Partnership Membership**

Ireland's Mid-term Self-Assessment Report, published in October, assessed the Government's performance 12 months after becoming a full member of the Open Government Partnership. It shows that substantial progress or completion has been achieved in relation to 22 of the 26 actions, including establishment of Ireland's Open Data Platform, fostering citizen participation, and new governance and legislative provisions.

## **Publish Open Data Plan**

Members of the Open Data Governance Board were appointed in October 2015 to provide strategic vision and leadership for Ireland's Open Data Initiative. The Board will develop the new Open Data Strategy taking account the submissions received through a consultation Foundation Document published in June.

The Open Data portal ([data.gov.ie](http://data.gov.ie)) was launched in June and contains over 1,230 datasets across 87 public bodies. A further 74 spatial datasets were added in October and many more datasets are in preparation for publication. A Data Audit tool was developed to assist public bodies in auditing and preparing datasets for publication.

A Technical Framework document was published in October setting out a planned and structured approach by public bodies to the publication of datasets as Open Data, with roll-out now underway across the public sector.



## Appointments to State Boards

In line with the Guidelines which came into force in November 2014, all appointments to State Boards are openly advertised on the State Boards website.

As of early November, 2015:

- 266 vacancies had been advertised for 69 State Boards
- 184 appointments had been made to 51 Boards
- of the almost 3,000 applications received for campaigns completed, 30% came from women, whilst 43% of the appointments are female

There are 4,480 people registered on [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie) to be notified of vacancies arising on State Boards.

## Judicial Appointments

A review has been carried out on the operation of the judicial appointments system to ensure it reflects current best practice, is open, transparent and accountable and that it promotes diversity. Arising from the consultations process, draft legislative provisions to reform and update judicial appointment procedures are being prepared and will be brought to Government in 2016.

## Seanad Reforms

In February 2014, the Government presented a package of proposals on Seanad reform for submission to the Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges.

Also in February 2014, the General Scheme of the Seanad Electoral (University Members) (Amendment) Bill was published for consultation. The purpose of the Bill is to give effect to the 1979 decision of the Irish people to extend the Seanad franchise to graduates from institutions of higher education in the State that do not currently form part of the Seanad university constituencies. Work is progressing on this legislation.

In December 2014, the Taoiseach established an independent Working Group on Seanad Reform. The Working Group published its report in April 2015. Statements on the Report were made in Seanad Éireann in May and July 2015. The Taoiseach has also met opposition party leaders to discuss the Report's contents and has given a commitment to have a debate on them in the Dáil.

## Establishing an Electoral Commission

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht is expected to present its findings in early 2016 on the consultation paper and associated public consultations regarding the establishment of an Electoral Commission. The report will inform the development of an Electoral Commission Bill during 2016.

## Improving Supports for Asylum Seekers

The Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers was published in June. The Report, with over 170 recommendations, was the first comprehensive examination in 15 years of the key elements that make up our protection system. An examination was undertaken on the key aspects of the report including an analysis of the legal, financial and practical implications of the recommendations. The resulting report identified 87 recommendations which can be implemented with little or no financial or legal implications while the remaining 86 could be implemented subject to resources or require further examination.

The International Protection Act 2015 signed into law in December provides for the introduction of a single simplified and speedier applications procedure for international protection. Work has commenced on implementing this new process together with the recommendations from the Task Force.

In 2015, some 1,350 persons who were awarded status, transitioned out of direct provision centres. A new Information Booklet on vital services to assist those granted status has been prepared for dissemination in all Direct Provision centres and will be equally useful to those arriving in Ireland under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. A pilot information programme in support of those transitioning out has also been devised and roll out has begun in various centres throughout the country.

Since September students in the protection system, who have spent five years in the Irish school system, can now access student supports.

Following the enactment of the Protection Bill, work will now proceed on the Immigration and Residence Bill.

# STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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This Bill will address matters including the visa regime, entry into the State, residence, and removal from the State while also dealing with specific challenges such as those of human trafficking and marriages of convenience.

## **Coordinate the 2016 Commemorative Events**

The *Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme*, launched in March 2015, is designed to reach into every community across the country with some 1,800 events to be held nationwide in addition to the formal State programme. The first of the State ceremonial events took place on 1 August with the commemoration of the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa. A Global and Diaspora Programme was also launched in June with over 3,000 events planned across our Embassy network.

Work is well underway on the seven flagship capital projects including the GPO, Kilmainham Gaol, Pearse's Cottage, the Military Archives, with a Steering Group established and monitoring progress across each project. Two further capital projects have been added; the State acquisition of the National Monument at 14-17 Moore Street and the refurbishment of the Atheneum in Enniscorthy.

In addition to the extensive education programme for primary, post-primary and third level education sectors, the National Flag Initiative was launched on 14 September, with the Defence Forces delivering the National Flag and the Proclamation to over 3,300 national schools across the country.

Other projects progressed include a grant process for Irish language projects; a number of significant projects funded through the Arts Council; a range of innovative exhibitions and projects; and children's consultation workshops.

In addition, in continuing the remembrance of World War 1, a commemorative programme will be co-ordinated dealing with the 1 July Battle of the Somme campaign.

## **Establish Hospital Groups Funded on a 'Money Follows the Patient' Basis**

The Hospital Groups have been established in line with the Government's programme for reform of the health service, initially on a non-statutory administrative basis, pending the establishment of Hospital Trusts with the focus now turning to the development of Hospital Group Strategic Plans.

During the summer, the Activity Based Funding Implementation Plan 2015-2017 was published which provides a road map and comprehensive list of thirty four actions to ensure this new method of funding becomes fully embedded in the acute hospital system over the coming years. Activity-Based Funding budgets for inpatient and day care services are being introduced for the 38 largest public hospitals. Developing ABF budgeting for other areas like outpatients will continue in 2016.

The ESRI reports underpinning the initial costing exercise for UHI were published in November and concluded that more research is needed in this area before definitive conclusions can be drawn about the best type of model to implement universal healthcare in Ireland.

## **Prioritise Access to Primary Care**

A suite of actions have been implemented to improve the operation of the medical card system and since mid 2014, the number of discretionary medical cards has increased from about 52,000 to nearly 98,000 at the beginning of December, more than at any other time before.

Since June, and based on a recommendation by the Clinical Advisory Group, all children under 18 years of age with a diagnosis of cancer are being awarded a medical card.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the IMO in respect of the development of a modernised contractual framework for the provision of GP services which will be focused strongly on strengthening the role of primary care.

Progress on the 2015 pilot initiatives to expand capacity to manage patients in primary care include:

- providing GPs direct access to ultrasound at 8 primary care sites in the South and West which is expected to deliver 13,000 ultrasounds in the initial 12 month period
- the provision of additional minor surgery services with 24 GP Surgeons in 20 practices across 11 counties performing a wide range of surgical procedures



## **School Autonomy and Accountability**

A public consultation on Advancing School Autonomy in the Irish School System was launched in December seeking views and suggestions on the issue of advancing the autonomy of state-funded primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. Increasing the autonomy of schools generally involves decentralising decision-making to schools and can enable schools to make their own decisions about aspects of their operation and work. It can also involve parents, patrons, communities, or a combination of all of these having a greater say in the operation and work of schools.

## **Reforming School Admissions**

The Education (Admission to School) Bill which is currently before the Houses of the Oireachtas provides an over-arching framework to ensure that how schools decide on who is enrolled and who is refused a place in schools is more structured, fair and transparent.

## **Protecting and Enhancing Peace in Northern Ireland**

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### **Full Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement**

In September, all-party talks were convened aimed at achieving the full implementation of the Stormont House Agreement and tackling the legacy and impact of continuing paramilitary activity. The talks concluded on 17 November with agreement on 'A Fresh Start: The Stormont House Agreement and Implementation Plan'. The agreement provides a credible roadmap for implementation of many aspects of the Stormont House Agreement as well as ending paramilitarism and tackling associated criminality. Efforts will continue to resolve the remaining outstanding issues related to the implementation of the provisions of the Stormont House Agreement dealing with the legacy of the past.

Under the Fresh Start Agreement, the Irish Government has committed a further €36m to the €71m provided under the Stormont House Agreement for the building of the A5 motorway to Derry. €2.5m has also been provided to support the North West Gateway Initiative.

The Irish Government has allocated €5m to the International Fund for Ireland, while €2.7m in grants under the Reconciliation Fund were awarded in 2015.

### **Continue to Develop the North-South Institutions**

At the NSMC Plenary meeting in December discussions focused on advancing North South cooperation generally and on matters identified in the *Fresh Start Agreement*.

Opportunities continue to be sought outside of the formal NSMC meetings to further North/South co-operation for mutual benefit including:

- the development of the new all-island Fab Foundation Ireland, a network of digital fabrication laboratories aimed at driving youth employment, and economic cooperation and innovation, especially in the border region
- the inclusion of Northern Ireland SMEs as part of the recent Global Irish Economic Forum regional event in Derry and the main event in Dublin

## STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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- the inclusion of NI Science Park at the Science Foundation Ireland Forum discussion

The Government remains committed to North-South economic co-operation and under the Fresh Start Agreement is committed to continue exploring the development of cross-border Greenways and Blueway cycling-walking-water leisure routes. The Government has also agreed with the Northern Ireland Executive to undertake a review to identify options for jointly developing future phases of the Ulster Canal restoration project and has reiterated the commitment to the concept of the Narrow Water Bridge.

### **Co-operation between Garda Síochána and the PSNI**

Cooperation is ongoing between An Garda Síochána and the PSNI across all areas of criminal activity including terrorist threats with regular engagement at senior level. The Joint Cross-Border Policing Strategy operated by both police services will be renewed in early 2016. The jointly hosted the Annual Cross Border Organised Crime Seminar in September is a demonstration of the close and ongoing co-operation between the two jurisdictions with over 100 delegates from all the relevant agencies attending from North and South.

In order to enhance the ongoing North-South interagency co-operation in combating cross-border organised crime, a joint task force led by the police and revenue services and involving the other relevant law enforcement agencies here and in Northern Ireland has been established.

## SECTION 2

# **PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

## ECONOMY and JOBS

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### Restoring the Economy

- Deficit reduction targets exceeded each year reducing Ireland's underlying deficit from 11% in 2010 to about 1.5% in 2015
- The Exchequer has moved from a deficit of €25 billion at the end of 2011 to a position of being broadly in balance at end 2015
- Changes secured in 2011 to the terms of the bailout loans yielding savings of €10bn
- Ireland successfully exited EU/IMF Programme in December 2013
- Ireland re-entered Bond markets in January 2014 at historically low levels
- The extension negotiated in 2013 on Ireland's EFSF loans and the promissory note deals have reduced Ireland's funding requirements by €40bn
- The early repayment in 2015 of over €18bn in IMF loans has brought further savings of €1.5bn over the lifetime of the loans
- Gross Government Debt is projected to fall to 93% of GDP in 2016 from a high of 120% in 2013
- At end 2015, NAMA had redeemed €22.1bn in Senior Debt, 73% of the original €30.2bn issued to acquire bank loans
- NAMA also aims to redeem its Subordinated Bonds of €1.6bn in March 2020. NAMA now expects to return a surplus of circa €2bn to the exchequer when it concludes its work
- Irish Fiscal Advisory Council established on a statutory basis to provide independent advice to Government
- Ireland had the fastest growing economy in Europe in 2014 and 2015 - GDP increased 7% year-on-year in the third quarter of 2015
- Domestic demand is growing strongly once again, with both consumer and business spending robust over the past two years
- Our credit rating has steadily improved and we are now rated at A grade by two main rating agencies

- *Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014 – 2020* published setting out the core components of the Government's strategy to achieve sustainable economic growth, strong public finances, and enduring job creation
- Reform of the Budgetary Process including the introduction of the Spring Economic Statement and National Economic Dialogue in 2015
- The overall investment commitment of €4.9bn under the Irish Strategic Investment Fund is directly and indirectly supporting over 12,000 jobs

### Fixing the Banks

- In 2011, the domestic banking sector was restructured around three banks, AIB, Bank of Ireland, and PTSB, and these banks were substantially reduced in size to establish a secure financial system for Ireland
- The overhaul of the banking system included a complete renewal of the bank boards, new rules on bank directors and a new probity regime put in place for key roles in banks and credit unions
- Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide were merged into the IBRC and liquidated in 2013
- Bank Guarantee Scheme ended in March 2013 marking a significant step in normalising the banking sector
- Bond holders contributed over €5bn to the cost of bank recapitalisation reducing the requirement from public monies by an equivalent amount
- In 2013, the State successfully exited from its €1bn contingent capital investment and sold its €1.8bn preference shares in Bank of Ireland at a profit. The State also sold Irish Life for €1.3bn
- Following approval of AIB's capital reorganisation the State has received €1.64bn from the successful completion of the transaction
- PTSB was listed on the main Irish and London Stock Exchanges in 2015 with the State receiving approximately €510m
- In Oct 2014, the bank stress tests showed AIB, Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank to be sufficiently capitalised and that PTSB's capital requirement would be fully addressed by its own Capital Plan

- A Resolution Fund to fund any future instability was established under law in 2012 funded by a levy on credit institutions
- In November 2014, the Government provided €250m under a new scheme to help restructure credit unions
- To date, the Credit Union Restructuring Board has provided assistance in 40 completed mergers involving 82 different credit unions
- External service delivery of public services being implemented e.g. JobPath, Local Property Tax call centre
- Funding allocated for the establishment of twelve SFI Research Centres
- NewERA established to manage the State shareholding in relation to a number of State bodies

### **Structural Reforms Implemented**

- An Action Plan for Jobs has been developed annually since 2012 with a focus on job creation and has delivered on more than 1,200 actions
- Creation of the new Intreo service providing tailored employment services and supports for jobseekers at 58 locations nationwide
- Ireland's bankruptcy regime overhauled reducing the duration from 12 years to 1 year
- New personal insolvency law and service helping to resolve unsustainable personal debt
- Targets for the six main banks delivering sustainable mortgage restructuring offers
- New law to make it easier for viable SMEs to restructure their debts
- Significant new measures to make it easier for businesses to access credit
- Fiscal Stability Treaty legislation setting out new budgetary and debt rules
- Reform of workplace relations structures and sectoral wage-setting mechanisms
- Accelerated public service pay and work reforms
- 174 State Bodies abolished or merged to date
- New Housing Assistance Payment introduced to reduce barriers to taking up employment
- Broadening the tax base through a new local property tax to fund local services
- Restructuring of education and training services under SOLAS
- Programme for the sale of state assets was progressed, with the sale of National Lottery, Bord Gáis Éireann Energy and ESB non-core assets
- Rollout of Activity Based Funding in Hospitals to transform how hospitals are funded
- Cost of medicines reduced through generic substitution and reference pricing
- Legislation to reform the legal profession including a new independent regulator
- Reform of the water sector to fund major programme investment in infrastructure
- Reform of planning laws to include a new independent Office of the Planning Regulator
- New Independent Policing Authority established on 1 January 2016 and the first open recruitment of Garda Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners took place in October 2015
- International Protection Act 2015 provides for the introduction of a single simplified and speedier applications procedure for international protection
- Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced the most radical reforms to the structure of local government in over 100 years

# PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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## Jobs, Growth and Investment

### Jobs and Growth

- 135,800 additional jobs have been created since the launch of the first Action Plan for Jobs exceeding the original target of 100,000 jobs by 2016
- The employment rate has increased from a low of 58% in 2012 to 63.8% by Q3, 2015. This reflects the 1.98m people in work, up by 150,000 from the lowest level in 2012
- Employment recovery, initially led by agriculture; accommodation and food services; and professional services, has now expanded into construction, manufacturing, distribution and transport
- Enterprise Ireland's client companies created 26,589 net new jobs from 2011 to 2015 while IDA client companies created a net increase of 34,098 new jobs in the same period
- Ireland continues to lead the world in attracting high-value foreign direct investment projects, according to IBM's 2015 Global Locations Trends report
- Ireland is aiming to enter the Top 5 for international competitiveness where it currently sits at 16th up from 24th and 8th for innovation
- New *National Entrepreneurship Policy* launched in October 2014 to create 93,000 new jobs in start-ups
- *Enterprise Policy 2015 - 2025* is Ireland's new National Enterprise Policy setting out our longer term ambition for enterprise growth and job creation over the coming decade
- A new strategy for the International Financial Services Industry in Ireland 2011-2016 to create 10,000 new jobs over the next 5 years
- *Construction Strategy 2014 - 2020* launched to stimulate jobs in the sector
- Report on the prevalence of zero hour contracts and low hour contracts published in November 2015

- New Low Pay Commission established and its recommendation to increase the national minimum wage by 50 cent to €9.15 per hour implemented in Budget 2016

### Investment

- Ireland is home to 9 of the top 10 global software companies; 9 of the top 10 global pharmaceutical companies; and 14 of the top 21 global financial services companies
- New €7bn Strategic Investment Fund setup to invest in jobs
- New €250m Regional Action Plans to bring job recovery to every region
- NAMA's combined Dublin Docklands Strategic Development Zone and Residential Funding Programme is estimated to generate some 30,000 jobs during peak funding in the construction industry and in ancillary activities
- Funding of €545m allocated for the establishment of twelve SFI Research Centres
- Established the Enterprise Ireland Seed and Venture Capital 2013-2018
- Capital Plan 2016 - 2021 launched setting out exchequer investment of €27bn in key areas of transport, education, health, justice and enterprise

### **Activation and Skills**

- The *Pathways to Work Strategies*, first launched in 2012, sets out actions to support those who are unemployed, in order to help them access the labour market and new job opportunities
- The strategies have contributed to reducing the unemployment rate from a high of 15.1% in 2012 to 8.8% at the end of 2015
- Youth unemployment has fallen from over 31% in 2012 to 19.2% in December 2015
- The Live Register has been reduced by 120,000 people from late 2011 to November 2015
- The rate of short term unemployed progressing to long term unemployment has fallen from 33% to 28%

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- 58 new Intreo offices countrywide as one-stop-shops for integrated employment and support services
- In 2015, to November, some 109,000 unemployed people attended group information and engagement sessions and 180,400 jobseekers attended initial one-to-one guidance interviews
- An Employment and Youth Activation Charter launched where employers who sign commit that at least 50% of candidates considered for interview will be taken from the Live Register
- New online guide [www.skillstowork.ie](http://www.skillstowork.ie) launched in May 2014 to make it easier for jobseekers and employers to know what Government skills initiatives are available to them
- The external service initiative, JobPath, is underway and along with existing employment activation services, will provide tailored support to the 150,000 long term unemployed
- Back to Work Family Dividend scheme launched in May 2015 to help families move from a weekly social welfare payment into employment. In November, there were 10,300 recipients of the Dividend and benefitting 17,200 children
- Changes introduced July 2014 to childcare programmes extending eligibility for the Afterschool Programme and for participants on Community Employment programmes
- Back to Education programme revised to expand eligibility and improve the application and selection processes
- An Apprenticeship Council has been established with 25 new apprenticeship proposals being advanced.
- Since 2011, over 56,700 new additional training and education places have been provided for jobseekers through various initiatives including the new Springboard and Momentum programmes
- 28,000 places for training, work or work experience have been allocated under the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. Youth-oriented variants of existing programmes have been introduced including *JobsPlus for Youth and First Steps*
- Since the new JobBridge internship scheme was introduced in July 2011 over 44,960 people have commenced an internship with 61% progressing into paid employment
- FAS abolished and a new national education and training service SOLAS established in October 2013 with a *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019* published
- Sixteen new Education and Training Boards established in July 2013 to replace thirty three Vocational Education Committees
- €1.53m funding to 33 measures to support the development of social enterprise and youth employment initiatives

### Supporting SMEs

- Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland launched its initial product programme in February 2015, providing €800m of low-cost, long-term funding for SMEs
- Other schemes introduced in recent years to facilitate access to credit for SMEs include: the Credit Guarantee Scheme; the Microfinance Loan Fund; the Development Capital Scheme; and the Seed and Venture Capital Scheme
- The Credit Review Office overturned 55% of bank declines with recommendations that over €35m in credit be made available to SMEs and farms helping to protect/create 2,410 jobs
- The banks met their targets for lending to SMEs and reported substantial increased year on year sanctioning activity
- Meet the Buyer events have been held annually since 2012 to promote SME participation in public procurement. Over 1,300 suppliers and buyers across the public sector attended in 2015
- 19,000 new start-up companies registered making 2015 a record year
- Overhaul of local enterprise support service to SMEs with the establishment of 31 Local Enterprise Offices
- A Supporting SMEs Online Tool was launched in May 2014 to help Irish start-ups and small businesses navigate the range of over 80 Government business supports

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- Launch in February 2015 of a one year campaign to raise awareness of a range of Government provided enterprise supports among business owners, and potential start-ups
- NAMA has approved rent abatements worth €24m annually to the SME retail sector and long-term rent reliefs worth over €40m to support SMEs in the retail sector
- The EU's Small Business Act Factsheet for 2015 shows that Ireland has one of the most SME friendly environments in the EU ranking first in two of ten categories and above average in six
- A new Commercial Leases Register makes publically available, for the first time, details of letting agreements and rent reviews in the commercial property market
- The Construction Contracts Act 2013 provides new payment protections for small sub-contractors
- An Integrated Licensing Applications system was launched in December 2015 as a single online portal for the application, renewal and payment of licences
- The cost of State red tape administrative burdens for business has been reduced by almost €317m annually
- Over 1,700 Trading Online Vouchers have been issued and another 1,000 have been assigned funding for 2016 to encourage small businesses to develop an online trading capacity
- Ireland ranked 13th out of 189 countries for ease of doing business in World Bank 2015 survey
- Since October 2013, seven Taking Care of Business events to assist business and start-ups have been held, attracting upwards of 2,000 business people
- New roadmap to enhance Data Protection in the Digital Economy launched in 2014
- The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 provides reforms to employees right to engage in collective bargaining and a new system of Sectoral Employment Orders
- The Workplace Relations Act resulted in the functions of five employment rights bodies merged into two bodies providing a single point of contact for complaints
- New Employment Permit Trusted Partner Scheme launched to ease the administrative burden on employers and provide for faster turnaround times
- Ireland is ranked in 8th place in the EU's 2015 Digital Economy and Society Index (up from 11th in 2014)

### Growing Exports

- Export Trade Council established to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination in the promotion and development of trade and exports
- New Embassies and Consulates opened in priority export markets
- Local Market Teams have been set up in each of the 27 priority markets identified under the Government Trade Strategy to 2015
- New Potential Exporters Division established in Enterprise Ireland to re-orientate and support Irish companies toward the international market
- 29 trade-focussed visits to 70 cities in 26 countries over the 2015 St Patrick's Day period as well as almost 400 events organised by Ireland's network of embassies as part of an extensive programme to promote Ireland's economic interests overseas
- 80 Ministerial led trade missions have taken place since 2011
- Significant trade missions to China, South Korea, Japan, India the USA and the Gulf

### Enhancing Regulation

- New website [www.businessregulation.ie](http://www.businessregulation.ie) launched in 2012 providing a single source of information for businesses on how to comply with regulatory requirements across over thirty Government bodies
- New *Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation* published in July 2013 to provide a clearer policy and strategic context for legislation and policy direction



- Strengthened economic relationship with China following historic visit by Vice President Xi Jinping and return trade mission led by the Taoiseach
- Irish exports have increased by 11%, from €175bn in 2011 to €194bn in 2014 while exports for the 9 months to September 2015 are 12% up on the same period for 2014
- 29% growth in agri-food exports from 2010 to 2014
- Ireland became the first EU country to secure beef market access to US and China
- In 2014, a total 927 EI client companies engaged in R&D projects with an annual spend of over €100k, and 140 clients engaged in R&D projects with a spend of over €1m per annum
- Launch of Knowledge transfer Ireland to help commercialise State funded research
- 81 commercially valuable technologies have been transferred to companies to the end of November 2015
- In 2014 a total 927 Enterprise Ireland client companies were engaged in R&D projects with an annual spend of over €100k, and 140 clients with a spend of over €1m per annum

### Supporting Innovation and Commercialisation

- Innovation 2020 published in December 2015 setting out a roadmap and vision for Ireland to become a Global Innovation Leader
- Ireland has set a target to secured funding of €1.25bn through Horizon 2020, the EU programme for research and development. To date €180m has been secured
- A central Technology Transfer Office established to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for entrepreneurs and industry looking to buy into useful research findings
- Significant investment of €545m provided to establish twelve new world-class Science Foundation Ireland Research Centres
- SFI's remit has been extended to enable it to fund applied research in addition to oriented basic research
- Over 3,000 SFI researchers currently funded across Ireland's higher education sector
- Over 2,500 research partnerships established in 68 countries contributing to Ireland's international reputation through their global connection
- There are now 15 industry-led Technology Centres established with up to 30 new spin-out companies created from higher education research in 2015
- Upscaling pilot Health Innovation Hub to the national level to drive collaboration between the health system and enterprise
- 872 collaborative projects are being supported between companies and Irish colleges to the end of November 2015
- 260 Technology Gateway projects approved to the end of November 2015, connecting Institutes of Technology to companies seeking novel technology solutions
- R&D tax measures developed to attract foreign companies such as the Knowledge Development Box subject to a reduced rate of corporation tax at 6.25%
- The research exemption in our patents legislation has been enhanced through the Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014, benefiting companies engaged in the pharmaceutical sector in Ireland

### Tourism

- The tourism sector supports 139,900 jobs in the accommodation and food sector alone, and overall employment in tourism is estimated to be in the region of 205,000
- Increase of 32.6% in overseas visitors to Ireland since 2011 and 2015 set to be a record year for Irish tourism with circa 8.5m visitors
- Tourism was responsible for overseas earnings from 2011 to end 2014 of €12.6bn with total tourism revenue for the economy for the same period €18.2bn

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- New tourism policy statement '*People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025*' published in 2014 targeting an increase of overseas tourism revenue to €5bn per year and an increase in employment in the sector by 50,000 to 250,000
- The €3 air travel tax reduced to zero leading the introduction of new routes and increased capacity on existing services
- Rate of VAT for the tourism sector reduced to 9% in 2011 and maintained in subsequent budgets
- More than 300 conference, business and sporting events worth over €220m to the Irish economy have been won and are to take place 2016 – 2019
- The Gathering 2013 saw some 5,000 'Gatherings' taking place all over Ireland with approximately half a million extra tourists visiting Ireland, estimated to have spent up to €170m
- New Community Tourism Initiative for the Diaspora launched in 2014 building on the legacy of The Gathering 2013
- New British Irish Visa Scheme launched in 2014 with China and India the first countries to benefit
- The Wild Atlantic Way launched in 2014 and attracting overseas visitors along the 2,500km route in the West of Ireland
- Ireland's Ancient East launched in 2015 as new umbrella destination brand for the South and East of the country
- Ireland has been host to a number of key international events including Giro d'Italia, Solheim Cup, the Volvo Ocean Race, the Tall Ships Race, and the Croke Park Classic and Emerald Isle Classic American Football games
- New unified tourism experience brand for Dublin launched in 2015, *Dublin – A breath of Fresh Air*
- Agri-food sector contributing €26bn in turnover accounts for around 170,000 jobs, almost 9% of total employment with 29% growth in agri-food exports from 2010 to 2014
- *Food Wise 2025*, launched in July 2015, sets out targets for the agri-food sector over the next decade including increasing the value of agri-food exports to €19bn and creating 23,000 new jobs
- The ending of milk quotas on the 31 March, an opportunity for major expansion in the sector, has already generated over €700m in investment by industry and even more at farm level
- Schemes under the Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 continue to be rolled out including: Green Low Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme, the Beef Data Genomics Programme, and the new Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme
- Number of measures introduced to support young farmers and encourage farm partnerships
- Origin Green launched in 2012 as the world's first nationwide sustainably produced food and drink scheme with almost 95% of Ireland's food and drink exports signed up
- FoodWorks, an entrepreneurship programme for high-potential start-up companies has delivered a pipeline of 60 start-up food companies versus a target of 21
- Forestry Programme 2014 – 2020 published in February 2015 involving a commitment of €482m of new investment in the forestry sector

### Marine

- €241m secured for Ireland under the Seafood Development Operational Programme 2015 – 2020 to assist seafood enterprises to sustainably grow their production and add value to our seafood exports
- Seafood sector is worth in the region of €850m annually to the economy with aims to increase this to €1bn by 2020
- New measures to promote safety include a *Safety at Sea Maritime Strategy 2015 – 2019* published in April 2015 and €800,000 made available in 2013 for the purchase of safety equipment

### **Agriculture and Marine**

#### Agriculture and Agri-food

- CAP reform package 2014 - 2020 secures guaranteed funding €1.5bn per year, amounting to over €11bn over the seven year period

- All of Ireland's Coast Guard helicopters have been replaced meaning Ireland now has one of the most modern and effective helicopter fleets in the world
- *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth* published in 2012 to maximise marine coordination and make the most of our ocean resources

## REFORM

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### Political and Constitutional Reform

- Government initiated most ambitious constitutional reform programme holding 8 referenda and establishing a citizens constitutional convention
- 8 referenda held:
  - abolition of the Seanad
  - establishing a court of appeal
  - children's rights
  - Oireachtas Inquiries
  - reducing judges pay
  - European fiscal compact
  - Presidential candidacy age
  - marriage equality
- The Constitutional Convention completed its mandate and issued nine reports
- The marriage equality referendum was the first ever recommendation from such a Convention to result in a Constitutional change
- The Working Group for Seanad Reform published their report on Seanad Reform in 2015
- The Oireachtas Banking Inquiry, established under the new system of Oireachtas inquiries, has completed its work with the final report expected to be published shortly
- The Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013 provides new protections for information communicated in confidence to Oireachtas members
- The number of constituencies and TDs have been reduced for next election
- All TD expenses now vouched and reduced by 20%
- In 2011 Ministerial salaries were immediately reduced and most Ministerial cars withdrawn
- Reduction in spending limits for Presidential and other elections
- New limits introduced for corporate donations with obligations to report on same

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- A new Oireachtas public petitions system is in operation where the public can submit their concerns about matters of public policy
- Use of Government jet has been restricted
- A new State board appointments system came into force in November 2014 with guidelines issued to Departments setting out the new appointments process
- Under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2014, those who engage in lobbying are obliged to register any activity from 1 September 2015
- Work underway to establish an Electoral Commission to subsume the functions of existing bodies and the Department of the Environment
- Over 8,700 obsolete laws have been repealed, the most extensive law revision ever undertaken
- The Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 aims to increase women's participation in politics will ensure a significant increase in female candidates for the next general election
- Since March 2011 this Government has successfully passed 253 Acts through the Oireachtas
- The Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2012 has added over 180 public bodies to Ombudsman's remit including third level institutions
- Top Level Appointments Committee reformed with an external Chair and a majority of external members
- Role of the Ceann Comhairle enhanced to improve quality of answers to PQs
- A system of Topical Issues Debates was introduced in 2011 providing TDs an opportunity to raise issues of concern to them directly with Ministers from the Department concerned
- The guillotine was used on 9 Bills in 2015 compared with 19 in 2010
- New procedures introduced to enhance the legislative role of elected members have resulted in 107 Private Members Bills being debated in the 31st Dáil compared with 16 debated in the 30th Dáil
- Pre-legislative stage introduced to ensure discussion and public consultation of legislation in advance of the publication of a Bill
- Taoiseach provides regular briefings in the Dáil regarding EU Council meetings and Ministers now appear before committees prior to meetings of the Council as required
- MEPs may attend Oireachtas Committees and they focus to a greater extent on EU matters

### Dáil Reform

- Number of Dáil sitting days has been significantly increased by reducing the length of Dáil breaks at Christmas, Easter, public holidays and the summer and introducing regular Friday sitting days and earlier start times
- The 31st Dáil sat for an average of almost 124 days a year compared to the 30th Dáil which sat an average of 93 days a year
- The time allocated to oral questions has been increased and standardised and questions are now taken only if the TD raising the question is in the Chamber
- Public Sector Reform
- New Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 published in January 2014 building on the original reform Plan to reduce costs and increase efficiency
- Public sector numbers have been reduced by over 25,400 from end 2010 to end 2014
- The Haddington Road Agreement provided for a reduction of €1bn in the cost of the public service and an extra 15 million work hours across all sectors
- The Lansdowne Road Agreement extends the terms of the Haddington Road Agreement to 2018, securing industrial peace and the productivity reforms already achieved
- Majority of measures completed to implement State Agency Rationalisation Programme resulting in 174 fewer State Bodies to date
- Pension reform has been delivered, the Single Pension Scheme was introduced for all new entrants to the public service with a long term savings target of 30% of pension costs

- The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2015 began the phased restoration of public service pay which had been cut during the financial crises
- Greater autonomy introduced in managing staffing levels
- Shared services continue to be rolled out with PeoplePoint providing HR and pension administration services for more than 30,000 employees across 35 public service bodies; and the Payroll Shared Services delivering services to 77,600 payees across 34 public service bodies
- New Office of Government Procurement established in 2014 to deliver €500m savings
- Publication in 2015 of a new ICT strategy for the Public Service including new eGovernment and Cloud Computing strategies
- Approximately 12,000 civil and public servants have moved under various mobility schemes up to end October 2015
- New open recruitment competitions held at most grades in 2015 including Principal Officer level
- First ever Civil Service wide Staff Survey completed with results due soon
- New Civil Service Awards recognising excellence and innovation held December 2015
- PMDS for all staff will migrate to a binary system in 2016
- 20 Open Policy Debates held in 2015 promoting open discussion on policy development
- New shared model for delivering learning and development agreed
- New revised Disciplinary Code developed
- Common governance standard published for implementation in all Departments by Q1 2016
- Programme of organisational capability reviews encompassing all Departments finalised and to commence in 2016
- Mobility policy for principal officers agreed along the lines of existing SPS mobility
- Three pathfinder projects selected to test new approaches for Whole of Government work - Public Services Card , Cyber Security & Suicide Prevention

### **Civil Service Renewal**

- New Civil Service Renewal Plan launched in October 2014 to strengthen capacity, capability, accountability and leadership throughout the Civil Service
- New Civil Service Management Board established and driving implementation
- A new Accountability Board established with external members to oversee Civil Service performance
- First ever system of performance reviews commenced for Secretaries General in January 2016 as well as an enhanced process for Assistant Secretaries
- Departments detailing assignment of responsibilities for all senior staff across Departments on [www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie](http://www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie)
- Open recruitment campaigns have been held across most grades in 2015 including new Graduate Development Programme for general AOs

### **Local Government Reform**

- The Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced the most radical local government reforms in 100 years
- The number of local authorities has been reduced from 114 to 31 and a number of other subsidiary local bodies dissolved and their functions transferred to the local authorities
- A new system of municipal districts has been introduced for each county with devolved local powers and removal of anomalies and weaknesses of previous structures
- The number of elected local representatives has been reduced by over 40%, from 1,627 to 949
- Local Authorities have a new enhanced role in economic development and job creation
- Three Regional Assemblies established in place of 10 previous regional structures to prepare new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- New Local Community Development Committees established to ensure a more coherent and integrated approach to local and community development
- The 6-year Local Economic and Community Plans in place in most Local Authority areas
- New public participation networks have been established giving the public a say in local policy making
- New Chief Executive post established to replace the roles of City and County Manager and a rebalancing of powers between elected councils and the chief executives, with a stronger governance role for elected councils
- New independent Oversight and Audit Commission established bringing an added dimension of independent scrutiny to local government performance
- Introduction of the Local Property Tax to provide a stable and sustainable funding base for local authorities, providing greater levels of connection between local revenue raising and associated expenditure
- Rollout of new shared services for local government including the payroll and pensions, Building Control Management, and Procurement
- The Freedom of Information Act 2014 has restored Freedom of Information to the pre-2003 position, abolishing the application fee and extending FOI to all public bodies
- New guidelines for appointments to State Boards came into force in November 2014 with all appointments now openly advertised on the State Boards website
- New Property Price Register established for residential and commercial properties purchased since 1 January 2010
- The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 provides for workers to raise concerns regarding potential wrongdoing in the workplace without fear of being punished for it

### **Transparency and Accountability**

- Ireland became a member of the Open Government Partnership in July 2014 and published its first National Action Plan
- A new National Risk Assessment process has been put in place and is reporting annually since 2014
- IrelandStat is providing greater performance information and increased accountability in the delivery of public services
- The Estimates now include performance indicators on programmes with expenditure not just assessed on how much is spent but on what is being delivered
- All Government Departments are now publishing details of Purchase Orders over €20,000

## FAIRNESS

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### Health

#### Improving Health Services

- Over 2.1m people, or 46% of the population, are covered by a medical or GP visit card
- The number of discretionary medical cards issued has increased by 87%, from approximately 52,000 in mid-2014 to nearly 98,000 at the beginning of December 2015
- The HSE Clinical Advisory Group is working on developing guidance on the operation of a more compassionate and trusted medical card scheme
- National Carers Strategy published in 2012 setting the strategic direction for future policies, services and supports for carers
- New 34 bed cystic fibrosis unit in St. Vincent's Hospital opened in August 2012; other specialist units have opened in Beaumont, Cork University and Limerick
- Scheme commenced in November 2013 to compensate women previously excluded from the Lourdes Hospital Redress Scheme with 46 awards totalling €2.9m made to date
- A catch up programme for HPV vaccination of all girls in secondary school was implemented
- Protection of Life during Pregnancy Act 2013 enacted and implementation guidelines published 2014
- Protection of Children's Health (Tobacco Smoke in Mechanically Propelled Vehicles) Bill passed providing for a ban on smoking in cars and plain packaging
- Breastcheck extended to women up to aged 69, screening commenced in 2015
- Pharmacy Needle Exchange Programme target of recruiting 130 pharmacies exceeded with 133 recruited in total
- The law was changed allowing life-saving rescue medicines, such as adrenaline and glucagon, to be administered by trained members of the public in emergency situations

- Magdalene Restorative Justice Scheme established in June 2013 for women who were admitted to and worked in the Magdalene Laundries with 804 applications and €23m paid out to date

#### Health Reform

- *Future Health* setting out a roadmap of major healthcare reforms published in 2012
- Seven new Hospital Groups have been established as a first step to independent Hospital Trusts
- Activity Based Funding has been rolled out in 38 public hospitals and an Implementation plan 2015 – 2017 was published in 2015
- *A White Paper on Universal Health Insurance* was published in 2014 with a report on the potential costs of the White Paper model published in November 2015
- GP care without fees rolled-out to children under 6s in July 2015 and as of December more than 219,000 children and over 93% of GMS GPs were signed up to the scheme
- Free GP care at point of access for all persons aged 70 and over commenced on 5th August 2015 and by late December over 50,500 people had registered for the service
- A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the IMO to develop a new contractual framework focused strongly on strengthening GP services in primary care
- A wider range of registered medical practitioners can now provide services under GMS scheme as a result of the Health (Provision of General Practitioner Services) Act 2012
- The Board of the HSE has been abolished and replaced by a Directorate which is more accountable to the Minister for Health
- The Vote of the HSE has been disestablished and funding of health services is now provided through the Vote of the Office of the Minister for Health



## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- The planning application for the new children's hospital at St James's hospital campus and the satellite centres at Tallaght and Blanchardstown was submitted in August 2015
- A National Women and Infants Health programme is being established to lead the management of maternity services and a National Maternity Strategy is close to finalisation
- Planning application being finalised for the redevelopment of the National Maternity Hospital on the St Vincent's Campus
- Single national ambulance control and command system in place
- A Permanent Emergency Aeromedical Service has been established
- *Healthy Ireland*, the national health and wellbeing initiative, launched in 2013 focused on keeping people healthier for longer through targeted preventative strategies including obesity, alcohol, tobacco and physical activity
- First *National Sexual Health Strategy* published in October 2015 addressing the rising incidence of sexually transmitted infections with a focus on improved sexual health education and services
- The first *National Physical Activity Plan* is to be published in January 2016
- Major package of patient safety reforms announced in November 2015 including the creation of a National Patient Safety Office and a patient advocacy service
- The Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015 has been published setting out measures to address alcohol misuse
- The Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013 provides for cheaper generic drugs and reference pricing
- A deal agreed with the pharmaceutical industry in 2012 reduced the cost of the State's bill on existing medicines by €400m over 3 years
- Permanent risk equalisation scheme in place to support community rating in the private health insurance keeping it affordable for older and less healthy people in society
- New measures introduced to stabilise the private health insurance market including special lower premiums for young adults and the introduction of Lifetime Community Rating
- VHI is to be kept in public ownership - the process of authorising the Vhi was completed by the Central Bank in 2015
- The Health Identifiers Act 2014 provides for a national system of unique identifiers to streamline information for patients and health service providers

### Mental Health

- €160m of additional funding has been provided for mental health services since 2011
- Approximately 1,150 additional posts filled/ offered with further recruitment progressing to strengthen Community Mental Health Teams and to enhance specialist community mental health services
- The General Adult and Child and Adolescent Teams have been reconfigured for an integrated recovery-focused model of care
- Progress has been made on reducing waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and new Standard Operating Procedures at local level
- Review of Mental Health Act 2001 completed in March 2015 leading to drafting of new legislation
- The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 provides a legislative framework for advance healthcare directives as part of the law relating to persons who require assistance in exercising their decision-making capacity
- New Suicide Prevention Strategy, *Connecting for Life 2015-2020*, launched in June 2015 and setting a target to reduce suicide and self-harm by 10% over the five year period
- Substantial increase in budget for the National Office for Suicide Prevention from €3.7 million in 2010 to the current level of €11.55 million with an extra €2.75 million provided this year for additional Suicide Prevention Resource Officers
- Suicide prevention training delivered to 52,000 people



- Planning obtained and work underway to replace the Central Mental Hospital with a new forensic facility in Portrane

## Disabilities

- Disability Forum established in 2012 under the National Disability Authority to improve engagement with stakeholders
- The Disability Services Programme provided residential services to around 9,000 people at more than 1,200 locations; day services to over 22,000 people; respite residential support of 190,000 overnights; and 3.9 million hours of personal assistant / home support hours to 2,300 adults
- €8m allocated in 2014/2015 to assist in implementing the Progressing Disability Services Programme for Children; providing for 200 additional therapy posts
- New *Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities* launched in October 2015 to ensure that people with disabilities, who are able to, and want to work are supported and enabled to do so
- New *Disability Inclusion Strategy Implementation Plan* will update the whole of government actions on disability in early 2016
- Each year increasing numbers of young people with disabilities leaving school and rehabilitative (lifeskills) training programmes are being provided with HSE-funded services and supports (1,400 in 2015)
- HIQA have carried over 1,370 inspections of residential settings for adults and children with disabilities since regulations commenced in 2014
- A multi-partner Service Reform Fund totalling €45m (2015 to 2017) was established to support the implementation of reforms in disability and mental health services
- In 2011 over 3,600 people with disabilities lived in congregated settings and this had fallen to under 2,800 people by the end of September 2015
- Progress on the implementation of the multi-annual programme *Transforming Lives* includes reform of adult day services, de-institutionalisation and enhancement of therapy services for the under 18s

## Education

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### Enhance Education Services

- Since 2012, over €1.35bn has been invested in school buildings with 189 new school buildings and large scale school extensions completed and over 1,050 smaller scale school accommodation projects undertaken
- An additional 2,200 teaching posts have been provided
- The number of resource teachers has been increased by 1,567 to 6,832 and the number of special needs assistants has been increased by 1,365 to 11,940
- A further additional 2,260 teaching posts including 600 new resource teachers have been provided for in Budget 2016
- Some 310 major school building projects are included in the new Schools Capital programme for 2016 -2021 which will provide 62,000 new additional school places
- Over €115m has been invested in continuous professional development, focusing on priority areas such as literacy and numeracy, primary language curriculum, project maths, junior cycle reform, special education, health and wellbeing, and DEIS supports
- A Centre for School Leadership was established in 2015 and will support the continuum of professional development for school leaders
- Initial teacher education structures are being consolidated in line with the Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland
- The Froebel NUIM merger is complete as is Phase 1 of the DCU incorporation project whereby current first year undergraduates at St Patrick's College and the Mater Dei Institute are registered as students of DCU
- *Droichead*, the pilot model of induction and probation for new teachers has over 330 schools registered and over 320 newly qualified teachers participating in the process for 2015/2016

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- New pilot underway in 47 schools for 2015/2016 to develop a new model for allocating additional teaching resources to schools for pupils with special educational needs
- Almost €200m has been provided to schools under the Summer Works Scheme and the Minor Works Grant to enable schools to undertake improvement works
- Major review of Gaeltacht education policy undertaken and new Gaeltacht education policy being drafted for finalisation in early 2016
- All primary and post-primary schools now required to engage in self-evaluation each year
- Consultation paper on advancing school autonomy in Ireland published in December 2015
- High speed broadband rolled-out to all 780 post-primary schools
- New Digital Strategy for Schools launched in 2015 to embed technology in teaching and learning

### Curriculum Reform

- New Junior and Leaving Certificate Mathematics syllabuses fully embedded in all post-primary schools along with bonus points for Leaving Certificate higher level mathematics
- Number of students taking Higher Level Mathematics has risen since bonus points were introduced in 2011, from 8,235 to 14,691 in 2015, a rise of 78%
- Smart Futures launched in 2014 to increase uptake of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects at second and third level
- 35% rise in the number of students taking Higher Level Irish, from 14,359 in 2011 to 19,460 in 2015
- Reform of the Junior Cycle commenced in September 2014 with a new specification in English and the availability of a number of short courses. The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 will guide developments in Junior Cycle provision in the coming years
- A new Primary Language curriculum, including both English and Irish, has been developed for junior infant to 2nd classes to be phased in from September 2016

### School Standards/Reforms

- Substantive improvement in national and international student assessment scores at primary level - Ireland ranks 4th out of 45 countries for reading (PIRLS), and significantly above the international average in Maths and Science (TIMSS)
- Range of external inspection approaches introduced, including unannounced inspections in primary and post-primary schools

- Teaching Council Act amended to underpin the central role of the Teaching Council in the vetting of teachers and to allow, on a statutory basis, the Teaching Council to implement fitness to teach provisions
- *Right to Read* programme launched to ensure best practice in literacy supports are shared and implemented throughout the nationwide library network

### Inclusive Schools

- Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector and the subsequent report has resulted in new policy approaches for decisions on patronage of new primary schools
- An open patronage determination process is run where new schools are to be established and is open to all patrons and prospective patrons to apply
- 42 new schools opened since 2011; 39 of which have a multi-denominational ethos
- Eight schools have opened under the patronage divesting programme to date
- The Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2015 will regulate schools admission policies when enacted
- Action Plan on Bullying launched in 2013 to help prevent and tackle bullying in primary and second level schools
- Improved performance in DEIS schools with the average retention rate now at 82.1%, up from 68.2%, reading and mathematics levels have increased significantly and the levels of pupil absence have fallen (overall pupil retention rate now at 90.6%)

## Third Level

- Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education has published its paper for consultation setting out options for the long term sustainable funding of higher education in Ireland
- Reforms for the transition between second level and higher education being advanced with the introduction of a new CAO points system that will better reward performance at higher levels, and work to reduce some of the unnecessary pressure on students
- Process underway to consolidate four groups of Institutes of Technology to progress towards attaining Technological University status
- All public third-level institutions now subject to scrutiny by Ombudsman
- New performance compacts agreed with universities setting out agreed targets including student profiles, access, research and teaching
- 1,000 new students commenced studies in 2014 at the new DIT Grangegorman campus. Completion of the next phase will accommodate a further 9,000 students

## Early Education

- New Learner Fund established with over 3,000 early years staff funded to meet new qualification requirements
- A Quality Support Service established to assist implementing *Síolta* and *Aistear*
- Additional Early Years Inspectors recruited to strengthen the existing inspection regime- pilot education-focused inspections in *Early Childhood Care and Education* centres commenced and will be mainstreamed in 2016
- An additional year of free pre-school is being introduced in September 2016
- Funding provided in Budget 2016 to enable children with disabilities fully participate in free pre-school in mainstream settings alongside their peers

- An additional 8,000 childcare places on the Community Childcare Subvention programme targeting low income families was also announced in Budget 2016

## International Education

- New *Education in Ireland* umbrella brand, launched in 2011 to market the Higher Education and English Language Sectors internationally, rolled out in a number of key markets including the USA, China and Russia
- International education and scholarship schemes launched in 2013 aimed at attracting top students from priority and emerging markets to study in Ireland
- Major reforms of the international education sector to protect the educational interests of genuine international students and to tackle abuse of the immigration regime - first tranche of inspections of English language schools applying for approval completed in December 2015
- 58% growth in the number of international students in Irish higher education institutions since 2010, with an 85% increase in the number of non-EU students
- Higher education system broadly on target to have international students account for 15% of total full-time student numbers over the medium term
- Ireland signed up to the US Government backed Generation Study Abroad initiative which aims to double the number of US students studying abroad by 2020
- Ministerial-led Education missions have taken place in the priority markets for international education including to Brazil, the Gulf, China and India

## Housing

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### Housing Provision

- Construction 2020 launched in 2014 to stimulate the construction sector and to triple housing output by 2020
- Further measures in 2015 to enhance housing supply at more affordable price including targeted rebate of development contributions and new national apartment guidelines reducing costs by €20,000 per unit
- Part V obligations have been amended to reduce a developers social housing requirement to 10% of their housing units, estimated at reducing overall construction costs by €10,000 per unit
- The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 provides for local authorities to apply levies to property owners in urban centres who leave their sites vacant and underutilised
- A new development contribution rebate scheme was approved which will apply in the Dublin and Cork local authority areas for housing developments of 50 or more units which meet certain eligibility criteria
- By end 2016, NAMA will have funded delivery of over 2,300 social housing units in the Greater Dublin area
- NAMA is also working with local authorities, developers and stakeholders to deliver an estimated 20,000 new housing units by 2020
- €10 million Site Resolution Fund established to address unfinished housing developments. The number of developments in need of support had reduced from nearly 3,000 in 2010 to 668

### Social Housing / Homelessness

- *Social Housing Strategy 2020* published aimed at delivering 35,000 new social housing units by 2020. The Capital Plan commits €2.9bn to support implementation of the Strategy
- Over 39,000 new social housing units were provided between 2011 and 2015 through new local authority and approved housing body builds, leasing, the Rental Accommodation Scheme and the return of voids to productive use
- €923m funding provided for 2016 to support the delivery of over 17,000 new homes through a range of social housing initiatives
- First families to be moved into 22 modular housing units in Ballymun as part of 500 new units being delivered to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families
- New incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme for the purchase of local authority houses commenced from January 2016 replacing the 1995 purchase scheme which closed in 2012
- New Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) introduced in 2014 as a new form of housing support for households who qualify for social housing support. The scheme is operational in 18 local authority areas. Just over 6,000 households have been supported since its introduction
- Pilot HAP scheme introduced for homeless families in the Dublin Region with the 20% uplift increased to 50% from 2 November 2015
- Dublin's four local authorities met 2015 targets to allocate 50% of all housing allocations to homeless families. All other local authorities met their 30% target
- New incentives for landlords to lease to tenants in receipt of social housing supports
- A Tenancy Sustainment Protocol, introduced in 2014 to ensure families and persons at immediate risk of losing their tenancy get rapid assistance, has helped 5,400 families remain in their homes
- Building on the 2014 Action Plan to Address Homelessness put in place in December 2014, the 2015 cold weather action plan for rough sleepers commenced on 2 November
- 271 additional emergency beds provided in 2014 with over 200 additional beds provided in winter 2015
- A Nite Cafe opened on Merchants Quay to provide food, rest area and showers for those not wishing to enter emergency accommodation
- Service put in place to transport homeless persons to emergency accommodation and provide them with the necessary health and care supports

- New units catering for families developed in 2015 including a new 80 room facility in city centre
- Contingency measures in place measures to mobilise additional capacity at short notice

### Regulation

- The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2015, provides for legislative underpinning of the housing supply measures of the Government's housing package *Stabilising Rents, Boosting Supply*
- The Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2015 provides for the reform of planning regime including establishment of the independent Office of the Planning Regulator putting the new National Planning Framework on a legislative footing
- The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2015 introduced new measures to support tenants in private rented accommodation including extending the rent review period to two years, extended notice periods, the creation of a deposit protection scheme and a range of other protections under the *Private Residential Tenancies Board*
- Resolution Framework agreed with Priory Hall residents in 2013 and a solution advanced in 2014
- Residential Property Price Register established in 2012 provides information on residential properties purchased in Ireland since January 2010
- The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 provides for the repossession of local authority houses from those engaged in anti-social behaviour

### Mortgage and Debt solutions

- Number of residential mortgages in arrears declined for nine consecutive quarters to September 2015 with figures showing a decline in long term mortgage arrears for the first time since 2012
- New Insolvency Service Ireland established in 2013. Some 2,957 applications received by end Q3 2015 - 1,692 protective certificates granted and 1,463 arrangements put in place with successful outcomes in 77% of proposals

- Bankruptcy term reduced from twelve years to three years and now to one year - some 785 bankruptcies since term reduced to three years at the end of 2013
- Courts given the power to review, and to approve Personal Insolvency Arrangement deals that have been rejected by banks
- Amount of debt which may be covered by a Debt Relief Notice increased from €20,000 to €35,000
- Powers and functions of the Insolvency Service of Ireland strengthened regarding supervision of Personal Insolvency Practitioners and Authorised Intermediaries, awareness-raising, information and communication with the public on personal insolvency and bankruptcy matters
- The role of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service is being enhanced in offering information, advice and assistance to borrowers in arrears
- Application fees for debt solutions suspended to encourage more applicants
- Mortgage interest relief increased in 2011 for first-time buyers who purchased in 2004-2008

## Social Welfare

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### Social Welfare

- Core weekly Social Welfare payments protected since 2011
- Increase in weekly welfare rates paid to pensioners aged 66 and over announced in Budget 2016: first increase since 2009
- Restoration of the Christmas bonus last paid in 2008: paid at 25% in 2014 rising to 75% in 2015
- Increases in the weekly fuel allowance announced in Budget 2016
- Increases in the living alone allowance paid to pensioners and people with disabilities came into effect in January 2015
- Amendments since 2012 to the entry threshold for the Universal Social Charge has seen 410,000 people completely exempted from the charge and from January 2016 a further 42,500 workers will be removed
- From January 2016, the carer's allowance is paid for 12 weeks after the death of the person being cared for, an increase of 6 weeks
- Home carer's tax credit increased from €810 to €1,000 for 2016 and the home carer's income threshold increased from €5,080 to €7,200
- Family income supplement threshold increased by €5 per week for each of the first two children
- Earnings disregard for Jobseeker's Transitional Payment increased from €60 to €90 per week for existing and new recipients from January 2016
- An increase of €2.50 in top-up payments for Community Employment, Rural Social Scheme, Gateway, Job Initiative, Tús and JobBridge participants from January 2016
- School Meals Programme supports 217,000 children and funding was increased by €2m in 2015 and a further €3m in 2016
- Tapered PRSI credit introduced in January 2016 to ensure that low income earners will see a significant improvement in net incomes
- Lower rate of PRSI halved to the end of 2013 on jobs paying up to €356 per week
- €100 Water Conservation Grant paid to 886,400 eligible houses by mid December, 2015
- Target set to lift 100,000 children out of consistent poverty by 2020 through the implementation of a whole-of-government approach to tackling child poverty
- Introduction in 2012 of a Public Services Card to facilitate easier access to Government services and to improve identification of individuals at points of service. Over 1.75m Public Service Cards issued to December 2015 with over 573,000 being used to access free travel
- The Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare, established in June 2011, has reported on child and family income supports; Disability Allowance and Domiciliary Care Allowance; and extending Social Insurance coverage for the self-employed
- Additional staff assigned to the Social Welfare Appeals Office to improve processing times with an average time now of 25.7 weeks for an oral hearing and 18.2 weeks for a summary decision, down from 52.5 weeks and 25.1 respectively in 2011
- A new Anti-Fraud Strategy published in 2014. 20 Gardaí assigned to tackle welfare fraud as well as new fraud prevention and detection powers granted to Social Welfare inspectors
- To date in excess of 1 million control reviews have been carried out yielding control savings of over €460m
- New €28m Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme launched in April 2015 to tackle poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion in local communities
- Gender Recognition Act 2015 provides for the formal legal recognition of the preferred gender of transgender persons
- Universal Retirement Savings Group established in January 2015 to consider measures involved in constructing an efficient and effective universal retirement savings system
- New pilot micro-credit scheme offering small loans to social welfare recipients to reduce dependence on money lenders



## Justice

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### Garda and Justice Reform

- Independent review conducted in 2014 on the performance, management and administration of the Department of Justice and Equality
- New Independent Policing Authority established on 1 January 2016 to oversee the performance of An Garda Síochána
- First ever open competition for recruitment of a Garda Commissioner was held in Sept 2014 and for Deputy Commissioners in February 2015
- Arising from the Garda Inspectorate Report on criminal investigation procedures, €205m has been provided in the Capital Plan for new Garda technology and information
- New mechanism has seen the completion of an Independent review into 320 complaints alleging Garda misconduct or inadequacies in the investigation of such allegations
- Commissions of Investigation have been established to investigate recordings of telephone calls at Garda stations and to investigate certain matters relative to the Cavan/Monaghan Division of the Garda Síochána
- The remit of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission extended and the Garda Commissioner brought within its scope for the first time

### Enhancing Policing

- September 2014 saw the first intake of new Garda recruits since 2009 with 550 new Garda recruited. A further 600 Gardaí are to be recruited in 2016
- Over €34m invested in new Garda vehicles since 2012 with 1,362 new vehicles provided
- 125 Gardaí freed up from immigration functions as civilians trained to take on immigration role at Dublin airports
- A Victims Service Office has been established in every Garda division
- Gardaí are now permitted to take bodily samples from crime suspects for a newly established DNA database

- New Road Traffic Bill 2015 published to provide for preliminary roadside drug testing and a statutory basis for mutual recognition of driver disqualifications between Ireland and the UK
- Garda Text Alert Scheme extended to over 500 community groups across the country
- Over 1,300 local groups supported through the Garda Community Alert programme
- Revised Guidelines issued for the operation of Joint Policing Committees issued and new Committees have been put in place in each City and County area
- Three new Garda Youth Diversion Projects established with a further seven being established in early 2016, bringing total number of projects across the country to 110

### Court and Law Reform

- New Court of Appeal established in 2014 with over 2,000 cases transferred to it
- Review of Strategic Review of Penal Policy published and a Penal Policy Implementation Oversight Group established
- Amendments made to prison rules provide a much clearer and more comprehensive basis for the current enhanced remission rate
- The Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014 provides for an overhaul system of community sanctions and attachment orders by the courts as an alternative to prison sentencing
- New provisions introduced to allow reporting of family law and childcare proceedings to help inform future policy making
- Initiatives introduced to improve efficiency in the courts and reduce time spent unnecessarily by Gardaí in courts
- Legal Services Regulation Act 2015 provides for the establishment of a new Legal Services Regulatory Authority, new complaints and disciplinary framework and greater transparency on the charging of legal fees

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- Significant progress in ending the practice of detaining children in adult prison facilities following €56m investment in Oberstown campus with final step of transferring 17 year old males serving sentences expected to complete early in 2016
- The recently enacted Prisons Bill 2015 provides for the closure of Saint Patrick's Institution
- All prisoners at Mountjoy prison now have in-cell sanitation
- The new Cork Prison is expected to open in February 2016
- General Scheme a new Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill approved which will introduce, for the first time, statutory rights for victims of crime
- General Scheme of a consolidated and reformed Domestic Violence Bill published in July 2015 to improve provisions for persons experiencing domestic violence

### Immigration

- Completion of the first comprehensive examination in 15 years of the key elements that make up our protection system
- Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers published in June 2015
- The International Protection Act 2015 provides for the introduction of a single simplified and speedier applications procedure for international protection and will reduce the length of time that persons spend in the Direct Provision system
- Since September a pilot programme has been in operation under which students in the protection system, who have spent five years in the Irish school system, can now access student supports
- New Integration Strategy significantly advanced following extensive consultation with stakeholders in 2015
- Over 115 citizenship ceremonies held since June 2011 with Irish citizenship granted to over 68,181 people since then

## PROGRESS

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### Children and Older People

#### *Children and Young People*

- New dedicated Child and Family Agency, Tusla, established putting in place a new regime of governance and accountability for child and family services and supporting over 20,000 children
- Children's Referendum, held in 2012, was approved to insert an explicit statement on children's rights into the Constitution for the first time
- *Better Outcomes: Brighter Futures*, launched in 2014, is the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people aged from birth to 24 years to ensure cross-sectoral engagement towards achieving the five National Outcomes for Children and Young People
- Children First Act 2015 has put elements of the Children First Guidelines on a statutory footing as recommended in the Ryan report and abolished the common law defence of reasonable chastisement
- Under New National Standards for the Protection and Welfare of Children, frontline services for children and families are now subject to independent inspection for the first time
- New Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill published in 2015 includes stronger sanctions aimed at protecting children from sexual exploitation; child abuse material and online grooming
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 makes it an offence to withhold information on serious offences committed against a child or a vulnerable adult
- The Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 has modernised and clarified the law for children living in diverse families
- Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011 made further provision in relation to the care and protection of children particularly in relation to children who were in need of special care



- The Area Based Childhood Programme which uses evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in disadvantaged areas has been rolled out across 13 sites
- Inter-departmental Working Group report published in July 2015 with proposals on how best to invest in childcare services over the coming years
- General Scheme of the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2015 published to provide for structured and regulated access to adoption information and tracing services to assist those seeking adoption information and for the safeguarding of all adoption records
- Arrangements are being put in place whereby Tusla and the HSE will ensure the co-ordination of their existing services on an in-reach basis into the family provision
- Ireland's first *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2015-2020*, launched in June 2015, the first such strategy in Europe
- New National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People are expected to be finalised shortly
- Review of Nursing Homes Support Scheme '*Fair Deal*' published in July 2015 and a Working Group established to oversee the implementation of its recommendations
- New Model of Care for Specialist Geriatric Services launched in 2012, aimed at significantly improving the way in which older people are cared for in hospital
- A HIQA report published in May 2014 showed significant improvements in the quality of care provided by designated residential centres since HIQA commenced its regulatory function
- *National Dementia Strategy* launched 2014 to plan future provision of care and supports for people with dementia
- Key elements of the Dementia initiative include the provision of additional dementia specific resources for GPs jointly supported by the HSE and Atlantic Philanthropies

### Older People

- Launch of New Positive Aging Strategy in 2013 to ensure older people are recognised, supported and enabled to live independent full lives
- A Healthy and Positive Aging Initiative established to run from 2014 to 2017 to monitor changes in older people's health and well-being linked to the objectives of the Positive Ageing Strategy
- On average, €315m is spent each year providing home care packages to over 13,000 people and providing approximately 10.3 million home help hours to 47,500 people
- Measures introduced in 2012 to improve the safety and quality of home support services for older people include staff training, infection control and supervision levels
- New homecare tax measure announced in 2014 which raises the tax relief available to employ a professional nurse or carer in the home from €50,000 to €75,000

- Older people's councils have been established in local authorities to give a collective voice to older people to influence local planning and other areas affecting their lives

### **Transport, Culture and Sport**

#### Transport

- €4.3bn has been spent since 2011 maintaining and improving the road network
- €304m invested in improving the bus network including introducing Real Time Passenger Information, replacement of Dublin Bus vehicles, and upgrading existing Quality Bus Corridors
- In January, the National Transport Authority commenced the tendering process in respect of the future operation of 10% of current Public Service Obligation routes. The award of contract will be announced in 2016
- New Luas Cross City Line project which will link the existing Green and Red Luas lines is on schedule for completion at end 2017. It will see an additional 10 million passenger journeys and provide an additional 13 new stops, 8 of which are in the city centre

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- A new Leap Card was launched in Dublin in 2011 and expanded to Cork and Galway in 2014 and to Limerick and Waterford in 2015
- Over 1.4m Leap Cards sold since its introduction with ten million journeys taken each month and delivering 20% savings to customers
- Reforms of the taxi sector came into force in January 2013 to support the provision, maintenance and accountability of quality taxi, hackney and limousine services and to promote accessibility for those with mobility impairments
- Under new legislation, the National Transport Authority will regulate clamping whenever it is used as a means of parking control
- €688.5m investment programme for Irish Rail over the period 2011 to 2015
- Dublin Bikes scheme further extended in Dublin and launched in Cork, Limerick and Galway in 2014. The scheme now has 55,000 registered users in Dublin with a further 11,740 registered users in the regional cities
- A number of Greenways funded under the National Cycle Network and Stimulus Fund were opened in 2015, including the 40km Mullingar to Athlone Greenway

### Culture

- €690 spent supporting the arts since 2011 and new €18m investment programme recently announced for arts and cultural centres nationwide
- Considerable expansion of genealogical material available online to the public with [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) redesigned and launched in 2013 as online genealogy portal
- €231m spent to preserve, protect and promote our heritage since 2011
- New turf cutting arrangements following review of Natural Heritage Areas
- The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015 – 2025 was published last May
- The *Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme* facilitated conservation works at 540 historic structures
- €210m spent supporting the Irish language since 2011, with an additional €68m allocated to An Foras Teanga over the same period
- Significant progress on implementing the 20 Year Irish Language Strategy including a review of the Official Languages Act 2003 published, along with Heads of a Bill to amend the Act
- New funding arrangements in place by Foras na Gaeilge to support the development of the Irish language
- 18 of the 26 Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas have begun the language planning process
- The Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme launched in March 2015
- The Decade of Centenaries website launched in 2012 to support the Decade of Commemorations programme 1912-1922
- A new national Cultural Policy, Culture 2025, is being drafted and will be published in early 2016

### Sport

- Sports capital grant reintroduced in 2014 and €134m has been allocated across 2,633 grants to date
- Participation in sport has increased from 44.8% in 2011 to 47.2% in 2013, equivalent to 1.7m adults participating in sport regularly
- Sport Ireland Bill 2015 enacted establishing Sport Ireland and dissolving the Irish Sports Council and the National Sports Campus Development Authority
- Work on the National Indoor Arena at the National Sports Campus commenced in February 2015 and is scheduled to be completed in November 2016
- The Governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland announced their joint full support for the IRFU's bid to host the Rugby World Cup 2023 with preparations underway

- Ireland has hosted a number of major sporting events including the Giro d'Italia, Solheim Cup, the Volvo Ocean Race, the Croke Park Classic and Emerald Isle American Football games, the European Team Championships in athletics, and the European and World Laser Sailing Championships

### **International and Northern Ireland**

#### International

- Over €3bn contributed in Official Development Assistance in the past five years, including an average of €85m in humanitarian assistance per year since 2011
- Ireland has provided €42m in humanitarian assistance since 2011 to the Syria crisis
- *One World, One Future: Ireland's Policy for International Development* launched in 2013, with the *Framework for Action* implementation plan following in 2014
- Central role played by Ireland in negotiating new global goals for Sustainable Development
- New Irish Aid Volunteering initiative launched October 2013
- Ireland's diplomatic network has been expanded and reaches 178 countries
- Publication of new Diaspora Policy recognising our unique and important relationship with our Diaspora
- Ireland's 2013 Presidency of the EU a success, with achievements including political agreement on EU proposals for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy
- Three Global Irish Economic Forums have taken place since 2011 bringing together leading Irish and Irish-connected figures from across the globe to play their part in building on Ireland's recovery
- High level visits by international leaders include President Obama and China's then Vice President Xi Jinping. Prime Ministers of over 20 countries have visited Ireland since 2011 including those of Canada, China, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, India and Japan

- President Higgins has undertaken State Visits to the United Kingdom, Croatia, China and Portugal since 2011

#### Northern Ireland / British Irish Relations

- Historic State visit by Queen Elizabeth II to Ireland in 2011 and reciprocal State visit by President Higgins to the United Kingdom in 2014
- Joint Statement by Taoiseach and UK Prime Minister in 2012 reinforcing British-Irish relations
- *Stormont House Agreement* reached in December 2014 covering a broad range of issues including finance and budgetary matters, and issues dealing with the legacy of the Past
- Agreement reached on *A Fresh Start: The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan* in November 2015 following successful conclusion of all-party talks aimed at achieving the full implementation of the Stormont House Agreement
- Attendance at nine British Irish Council Summits and ten North South Ministerial Council Plenaries
- Support provided through the Reconciliation Fund and the Anti-Sectarianism Fund with €13.9m provided to 735 community projects since 2011
- Commitment to provide €107m for the building of the A5 motorway to Derry

#### **Energy, Communications, NewERA and Climate Change**

- New Energy White Paper *Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030* published in December 2015
- National Postcodes launched
- Initial consultation on renewable electricity and renewable heat support schemes launched
- The Climate Action and Low carbon Development Bill has been enacted
- Creation of a €35m Energy Efficiency Fund

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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- 250,000 homes upgraded through the Better Energy schemes
- Successful digital TV switchover with €450m raised from spectrum auction
- Irish Water launched in 2014 to enable new, improved approaches to delivery of water infrastructure and services and to provide a new, fairer funding model for public water services to deliver sustained investment in water and wastewater infrastructure
- New national waste management policy *A Resource Opportunity* published
- Established new waste enforcement structures at regional and national level and introduced range of on the spot fines for offences under the Waste Management Acts
- Published Our Sustainable Future – a framework for advancing sustainable development and the green economy in Ireland
- Green Tenders – An Action Plan for Green Public Procurement and Green Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector published
- New one stop shop for planning information [www.myplan.ie](http://www.myplan.ie) launched
- Ratification of the Aarhus Convention
- €35m seed funding to support public and private energy efficiency building upgrades
- €100m loan deal for ESB to develop renewable wind energy projects
- Draft BioEnergy plan published to maximise commercial opportunities in the sector
- The commercial operations of Bord na Móna and Coillte are to be streamlined and refocused primarily in the bioenergy and wind energy sectors
- NewERA established on a statutory footing and sale of State assets led to dividend of €1.4bn for the State
- National Broadband Coverage Map published identifying the homes, businesses and schools where commercial providers will deliver high-speed broadband access by the end of 2016
- New Post Office Development Group set up to maximise future business potential
- New Social Welfare contract signed with An Post underpinning the future of the post office network
- New legislation to allow ESB to develop a fibre network through its electricity network
- New Office of the Planning Regulator to be established
- New statutory guidelines for planning authorities on local area planning
- Completion of Ireland's first seismic survey 2015 with the release of associated data expected in March 2016
- New tax provisions announced in 2014 relating to petroleum exploration and production are to be revised upwards to provide for an increased financial return to the State to encourage offshore exploration
- New regulation for household waste collection, car scrappage and tyre disposals due Q3 2016
- Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 providing for fixed penalties being introduced for certain producer responsibility offences
- Additional funding approved to help communities devastated by storm and flood damage

# APPENDIX

## Legislation enacted since March 2011

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Road Traffic Act 2011  
Finance (No. 2) Act 2011  
Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2011  
Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 2011  
Foreshore (Amendment) Act 2011  
Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Act 2011  
Biological Weapons Act 2011  
Electoral (Amendment) Act 2011  
Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2011  
Residential Institutions Redress (Amendment) Act 2011  
Defence (Amendment) Act 2011  
Finance (No. 3) Act 2011  
Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011  
Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011  
Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Act 2011  
Criminal Justice Act 2011  
Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011  
Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2011  
European Financial Stability Facility and Euro Area Loan Facility (Amendment) Act 2011  
Insurance (Amendment) Act 2011  
Central Bank and Credit Institutions (Resolution) (No. 2) Act 2011  
Road Traffic (No. 2) Act 2011  
Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011  
Access to Central Treasury Funds (Commission for Energy Regulation) Act 2011  
Road Transport Act 2011  
Irish Film Board (Amendment) Act 2011  
National Tourism Development Authority (Amendment) Act 2011  
Health Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011  
Criminal Law (Defence and the Dwelling) Act  
Local Government (Household Charge) Act 2011  
Social Welfare Act 2011  
Appropriation Act 2011  
Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Amendment) Act 2011  
Property Services (Regulation) Act 2011  
Nurses and Midwives Act 2011  
Patents (Amendment) Bill 2012  
Water Services (Amendment) Bill 2012  
Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2012  
Health (Provision of General Practitioner Services) Act 2012  
Bretton Woods Agreements (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2012  
Euro Area Loan Facility (Amendment) Act 2012  
Jurisdiction of Courts and Enforcement of Judgments (Amendment) Act 2012

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Clotting Factor Concentrates and Other Biological Products Act 2012  
Finance Act 2012  
Motor Vehicle (Duties and Licences) Act 2012  
Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012  
Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2012  
Protection of Employees (Temporary Agency Work) Act 2012  
Education (Amendment) Act 2012  
Electricity Regulation (Carbon Revenue Levy) (Amendment) Act 2012  
Road Safety Authority (Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness) Act 2012  
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2012  
Competition (Amendment) Act 2012  
Thirtieth Amendment of the Constitution (Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union) Act 2012  
Statute Law Revision Act 2012  
European Stability Mechanism Act 2012  
European Communities (Amendment) Act 2012  
Companies (Amendment) Act 2012  
Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act 2012  
Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012  
Veterinary Practice (Amendment) Act 2012  
Credit Guarantee Act 2012  
Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2012  
Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012  
Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2012  
European Arrest Warrant (Application to Third Countries and Amendment) and Extradition (Amendment) Act 2012  
Microenterprise Loan Fund Act 2012  
Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2012  
Criminal Justice (Search Warrants) Act 2012  
Gaeltacht Act 2012  
Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Act 2012  
Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012  
Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012  
Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2012  
Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012  
Credit Union and Co-operation with Overseas Regulators Act 2012  
Equal Status (Amendment) Act 2012  
Appropriation Act 2012  
Social Welfare Act 2012  
Personal Insolvency Act 2012  
Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2012  
Health and Social Care Professionals (Amendment) Act 2012  
National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012  
Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2012

Transport (Coras Iompair Eireann and Subsidiary Companies Borrowings) Act 2012  
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2012  
Civil Defence Act 2012  
Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012  
Europol Act 2012  
Euro Area Loan Facility (Amendment) Act 2013  
Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Act 2013  
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2013  
Finance (Local Property Tax) (Amendment) Act 2013  
Child Care (Amendment) Act 2013  
Water Services (Amendment) Act 2013  
Electoral (Amendment) (Dáil Constituencies) Act 2013  
Finance Act 2013  
Motor Vehicles (Duties and Licences) Act 2013  
Health (Alteration of Criteria for Eligibility) Act 2013  
Education and Training Boards Act 2013  
Defence Forces (Second World War Amnesty and Immunity) Act 2013  
National Lottery Act 2013  
Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013  
Animal, Health and Welfare Act 2013  
Non-Use of Motor Vehicles Act 2013  
Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2013  
Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2013  
Criminal Justice Act 2013  
Social Welfare and Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013  
European Union (Accession of the Republic of Croatia) (Access to the Labour Market) Act 2013  
Housing (Amendment) Act 2013  
Health Service Executive (Governance) Act 2013  
Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Act 2013  
Further Education and Training Act 2013  
Central Bank (Supervision and Enforcement) Act 2013  
Electoral, Local Government and Planning and Development Act 2013  
Prison Development (Confirmation of Resolutions) Act 2013  
Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 2013  
Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2013  
Health (Amendment) Act 2013  
Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013  
Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013  
Construction Contracts Act 2013  
Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013  
Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Act 2013  
Taxi Regulation Act 2013  
Thirty-Third Amendment of the Constitution (Court of Appeal) Act 2013

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Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2013  
Gas Regulation Act 2013  
Child and Family Agency Act 2013  
Finance (No. 2) Act 2013  
Health (Alteration of Criteria for Eligibility) (No. 2) Act 2013  
Appropriation Act 2013  
Adoption (Amendment) Act 2013  
Credit Reporting Act 2013  
Companies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013  
Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) (Amendment) Act 2013  
Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2013  
Social Welfare and Pensions (No. 2) Act 2013  
Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013  
Pyrite Resolution Act 2013  
Local Government Reform Act 2014  
European Parliament Elections (Amendment) Act 2014  
Road Traffic Act 2014  
County Enterprise Boards (Dissolution) Act 2014  
ESB (Electronic Communications Networks) Act 2014  
Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) (Amendment) Act 2014  
Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014  
Electoral (Amendment) Act 2014  
Central Bank Act 2014  
Johnstown Castle Agricultural College (Amendment) Act 2014  
Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014  
Public Health (Sunbeds) Act 2014  
Industrial Development (Forfas Dissolution) Act 2014  
Protected Disclosures Act 2014  
Health Identifiers Act 2014  
Social Welfare and Pensions Act  
Health Service Executive (Financial Matters) Act 2014  
Court of Appeal Act 2014  
Friendly Societies and Industrial and Provident Societies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014  
Radiological Protection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014  
Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014  
Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland Act 2014  
National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2014  
Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2014  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014  
Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014  
State Airports (Shannon Group) Act 2014  
Health (General Practitioner Service) Act 2014  
Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014



Freedom of Information Act 2014  
Forestry Act 2014  
European Stability Mechanism (Amendment) Act 2014  
Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014  
Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2014  
Appropriation Act 2014  
Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014  
Finance Act 2014  
Companies Act 2014  
Road Traffic (No. 2) Act 2014  
Protection of Children's Health (Tobacco Smoke in Mechanically Propelled Vehicles) Act 2014  
Social Welfare and Pensions (No. 2) Act 2014  
Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2014  
Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Act 2014  
Water Services Act 2014  
Central Bank (Amendment) Act 2015  
Irish Collective Asset-management Vehicles Act 2015  
Garda Siochana (Amendment) Act 2015  
Public Health (Standardised Packaging of Tobacco) Act 2015  
Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015  
Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Act 2015  
Betting (Amendment) Act 2015  
Redress for Women Resident in Certain Institutions Act 2015  
Children and Family Relationships Act 2015  
Valuation (Amendment) Act 2015  
Thirty-first Amendment of the Constitution (Children) Act 2012  
Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015  
Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015  
Vehicle Clamping Act 2015  
Roads Act 2015  
Sport Ireland Act 2015  
Workplace Relations Act 2015  
Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) (Amendment) Act 2015  
Customs Act 2015  
Health (General Practitioner Service) Act 2015  
Communication Regulation (Postal Services) (Amendment) Act 2015  
Consumer Protection (Regulation of Credit Servicing Firms) Act 2015  
National Minimum Wage (Low Pay Commission) Act 2015  
Statute Law Revision Act 2015  
Defence (Amendment) Act 2015  
Gender Recognition Act 2015  
Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2015  
Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015

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Civil Debt (Procedures) Act 2015  
Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015  
Children (Amendment) Act 2015  
Teaching Council (Amendment) Act 2015  
Personal Insolvency (Amendment) Act 2015  
Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015  
Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Act 2015  
Houses of the Oireachtas (Appointments to Certain Offices) Act 2015  
Marriage Act 2015  
Children First Act 2015  
Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015  
Choice of Court (Hague Convention) Act 2015  
Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2015  
Criminal Justice (Mutual Assistance) (Amendment) Act 2015  
Motor Vehicle (Duties and Licences) Act 2015  
Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2015  
Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015  
National Cultural Institutions (National Concert Hall) Act 2015  
Child Care (Amendment) Act 2015  
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015  
Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2015  
Appropriation Act 2015  
Garda Siochana (Policing Authority and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015  
Finance (Local Property Tax) (Amendment) 2015  
Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Act 2015  
Courts Act 2015  
Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2015  
Legal Services Regulation Act 2015  
Finance (Tax Appeals) Act 2015  
Criminal Justice (Burglary of Dwellings) Act 2015  
Dublin Docklands Development Authority (Dissolution) Act 2015  
Finance Act 2015  
Prisons Act 2015  
Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2015  
Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015  
Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2015  
Bankruptcy (Amendment) Act 2015  
Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2015  
International Protection Act 2015  
Harbours Act 2015





Department of the Taoiseach