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Age Action Budget 2020 Priorities

Towards a Fairer Society for An Ageing Population

Age Action Budget 2020 Priorities	Budget 2020 Response	Date of Effect
Creating a Fairer Pension System		
1. Increase the weekly State Pension by €9 per week to build towards achieving the Government's commitment in the National Pensions Framework of a State Pension set at 35% of average weekly earnings [Cost: €297.2 million]	No increase in the State Pension or other primary payments	N/A
2. De-politicise the setting of the State Pension – and take into account commitments in the 'Roadmap for Pension Reform 2018-2013' - by introducing a triple lock which guarantees that the basic State Pension rises each year by a minimum of 2.5%, the rate of inflation or average earnings growth – whichever is the largest.	No Budget 2020 commitment. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection confirmed that work is ongoing to benchmark the State Pension to average earnings.	N/A

	Addressing the Cost of Ageing	
3. Increase the income threshold for all means tested benefits in line with increases to the State Pension and secondary benefits.	No Budget 2020 commitment.	N/A
4. Increase the cost of the Living Alone Allowance by €5 per week [Cost: €55 million]	€5 increase per week for pensioners living alone from €9 to €14	January 2020
5. Increase the Fuel Allowance rate by €2.35 and reintroduce a 32 week payment period [Cost: €62 million]	An extra €2 in Fuel Allowance payment per week to €24.50 (28 weeks)	January 2020
6. Commission research on the Cost of Ageing to inform Ireland's policy development to meet the needs of an ageing population.	No Budget 2020 commitment. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is to commission a research project that will examine funeral poverty in Ireland and the wider economic impact of bereavement	N/A
	Payment of 100% Christmas Bonus for primary payments (no change)	December 2020
	Eligibility for the Household Benefits package to be broadened for people under 70 and will allow for another adult to reside in the household.	January 2020

Enabling Older People to Age in Place		
7. Increase the Home Supports budget by 25% to begin to meet unmet need in 2020, while the statutory Home Care scheme is being developed. [Cost: €110 million].	Investment of 1 million additional home care hours , which equates to 6% increase on 2019 levels to improve access and reduce delayed transfers of care from acute hospitals.	January 2020
	Increase in the number of hours that carers can work or study outside the home from 15 to 18.5 hours per week	January 2020
8. Remove the medical card prescription charge of €1.50 per item for over 70s medical card holders. [Cost €36 million] and reduce medication charges for over 70s GP Visit Card holders as per the review of medication charges under the Sláintecare eligibility and entitlement programme.	Medical card prescription charges for over 70s will be reduced by 50c to €1 per item, and by 50c to €1.50 per item for medical card holders under 70.	July 2020
9. Ensure full funding of key Sláintecare commitments: Year 1 targets for expanding entitlements and system capacity (removal of hospital charges, reductions in medication charges for all medical card holders and 50% reduction in Drug Payment Scheme thresholds for single headed households) [Cost €395.6 million].	Medical card income limits for over 70s will be increased from €500 to €550 for a single person, and from €900 to €1,050 per week for a couple. The monthly threshold of €124 for the Drug Payment Scheme will be reduced by €10 to €114. Additional investment of €25m in the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) Revised contractual arrangements with GPs will improve supports for key health professionals as part of the delivery of Sláintecare and provide for a structured approach to the	July 2020 September 2020 Not known Not known

	management of chronic disease, bringing the investment to date under the revised contract to €80m.	
10. In the context of reaching an allocation of €84.5m per year for Housing Adaption Grants, restore the Housing Aid for Older People budget to 2010 levels. Reverse the changes introduced to the Housing Aid Scheme in January 2014 to ensure better access to grants for disadvantaged older people	An estimated €2 million additional funding (bringing to a total of €59m) to deliver up to 12,000 grants to adapt the homes of older people and people with a disability	Not known
	An allocation of €13m to the Warmer Homes Scheme to provide free upgrades to lower income households to make their homes more energy efficient	