



www.sinnfein.ie



A FAIR BUDGET

SINN FÉIN ALTERNATIVE BUDGET 2014

CÁINAINSNÉIS CHOTHROM

CÁINAINSNÉIS CHOMHROGHNACH SHINN FÉIN



Text "Join" to 51500
A fair budget

CONTENTS

Budget Introduction Réamhrá don Cháinainéis	5
Total consolidation 2014 Comhdhlúthú Iomlán 2014	9
List of measures Liosta Beart	10
Part 1 - A fair deficit adjustment Cuid 1 – Coigeartú cothrom ar an Easnamh	14
Part 2 – Creating jobs for recovery Cuid 2 – Poist a chruthú le haghaidh téarnaimh	26
Part 3 - Protecting the most vulnerable Cuid 3 - Na daoine is mó i mbaol a chosaint	30
Part 4 - Stronger together – an all-island economy Cuid 4 – Ní neart go cur le chéile – geilleagar uile-oileáin	33





Pearse Doherty TD

Sinn Féin Finance Spokesperson

BUDGET INTRODUCTION

For the last two years, Fine Gael and the Labour Party have continued the failed economic policies of Fianna Fáil. The wrong measures are being taken to reduce the budget deficit and the result has been a near collapse of the domestic economy, chronic unemployment, increased emigration and essential services being cut to dangerous levels. Government policy has driven down salaries for tens of thousands of workers and has forced many other workers into zero-hour contracts.

To make matters worse, Fine Gael and Labour, like the previous Fianna Fáil-led government, have targeted the same families over and over again to cut the deficit – working families on low to middle incomes and those reliant on the State to survive. They have refused to even discuss the option of a 1% wealth tax or the reduction of tax advantages for higher earners.

The Government had planned to make a €3.1 billion adjustment in Budget 2014. Sinn Féin has argued, along with Trade Unions, business groups and NGOs that this reduction should be less than €3.1 billion and Sinn Féin believes this adjustment should be €2.453 billion.

We urgently need a step change in Government policy, which combines the need to reduce the budget deficit with the need to bring the economy out of recession by rebuilding the domestic economy and getting people back to work.

And instead of targeting families who have nothing left to give, the Government needs to ask those who have been largely protected over the last seven years to contribute their fair share. [A better way is possible.](#)

“The Fine Gael / Labour approach is not working”

This approach is not working. Even the Government now admits that reaching the target of 3% deficit to GDP by 2015 will mean that unemployment will remain in excess of 10%, emigration will continue and public services will have been decimated.

Réamhrá don Cháinainéis

Le dhá bhliain anuas, lean Fine Gael agus Páirtí an Lucht Oibre beartais eacnamaíocha Fhianna Fáil, beartas ar theip orthu. Tá na bearta contráilte á gcur i bhfeidhm chun an t-easnamh sa cháinainéis a laghdú agus mar gheall air seo is beag nár theip ar an ngeilleagar intíre, tá fadhb ollmhór dífhostaíochta ann, tá an imirce ag dul in olcas agus tá ciorruithe á ndéanamh ar sheirbhísí riachtanacha chuig leibhéal chontúirteacha. Mar gheall ar bheartais an Rialtais, tá tuarastail laghdaithe do na deich mílte oibrithe agus tá conarthaí uaireanta nialais ag cuid mhór oibrithe eile freisin.

Leis an scéal a dhéanamh níos measa, dhírigh Fine Gael agus Páirtí an Lucht Oibre, dála Rialtas Fhianna Fáil rompu, dhírigh sé isteach ar na teaghlaigh chéanna arís agus arís eile chun an t-easnamh a chiorrú – teaghlaigh atá ag obair agus atá ar mheánioncam nó ar ioncam íseal agus iad siúd atá ag brath ar an Stát le maireachtáil. Dhiúltaigh siad rogha a bhaineann le 1% de cháin rachmais a phlé nó laghdú ar bhuntáistí cánach dóibh siúd a thuilleann níos mó.

Níl ag éirí leis an gcur chuige seo. Admhaíonn an Rialtas fiú go bhfanfaidh an ráta dífhostaíochta thar 10% má táthar chun an sprioc 3% den OTI a bhaint amach agus go leanfar den imirce agus go mbeidh léirscrios déanta ar na seirbhísí poiblí.

Bhí sé beartaithe ag an Rialtas coigeartú €3.1 billiún a dhéanamh i gCáinainéis 2014. D'áitigh Sinn Féin, in éineacht leis na Ceardchumann, le grúpaí gnó agus le ENR nár chóir gur go mbeadh ach €2.453 billiún sa choigeartú seo.

Ní mór dúinn láithreach polasaí an Rialtais a athrú, agus caithfidh an t-easnamh a laghdú chomh maith leis an ngeilleagar a thabhairt amach as an gcúlú eacnamaíoch tríd an ngeilleagar inmheánach a thógáil arís agus daoine a chur ar ais ag obair.

In áit a bheith ag díriú isteach ar theaghlaigh nach bhfuil a dhath fágtha acu, ní mór don Rialtas iarraidh orthu siúd atá faoi chosaint le seacht mbliana anuas a gcion féin a thabhairt go cothrom. *Is féidir bealach níos fearr a fháil.*

THE SINN FÉIN BUDGET:

- » Will reduce the tax burden on ordinary families
- » Will save 1.8 million homeowners an average of €278 per annum by abolishing the property tax
- » Will give 86,000 carers €325 extra in their respite grant
- » Will take 296,000 workers earning below the annual minimum wage out of the tax net
- » Extend free GP care to under 5s
- » Will ensure no more cuts to disability payments, no more cuts to Child Benefit and an extension of the fuel allowance
- » Will reduce the budget deficit by €2.453 billion and create thousands of jobs
- » Will ensure that every unemployed young person has access to a job or to training

Government policies are deepening the recession

- » 415,000 people are on the live register
- » 300,000 emigrated in the last four years, compared to 120,000 between 1980 and 1986
- » 49,000 people are on hospital waiting lists
- » 180,000 households are in mortgage distress
- » In the Government's first year in office, the total number of businesses in the state fell by 6,000
- » Almost 11,000 full-time jobs have been lost and replaced by 14,400 part-time jobs

CÁINAISNÉIS SHINN FÉIN:

- » Laghdófar an ualach cánach ar ghnáth theaghlaigh
- » Sábhálfar ar an mean €278 gach bliain do 1.8 úinéir tí tríd an gcáin mhaoine a chur ar ceal
- » Beidh €325 sa bhreis sa deontas cúraim sosa do 86,000 cúbáimóirí
- » Bainfear 296,000 oibríthe atá ag tuilleadh níos lú ná an t-íosphá bliantúil amach as an ngréasán cánach
- » Cóir Dhochtúra in aisce a leathnú chuig gach duine faoi 5
- » Cinnteofar nach mbeidh ciorruithe ar bith eile i bhfeidhm ar íocaíochtaí míchumais, agus nach mbeidh ciorruithe ar bith ar Shochar Linbh agus go mbeidh síneadh ar an liúntas breosla
- » Laghdófar an t-easnamh sa cháinaisnéis le €2.453 billiún agus cruthófar na mílte post
- » Cinnteofar go mbeidh rochtain ar phost nó ar oiliúint ag gach duine óg atá dífhostaithe

Mar gheall ar bheartais an Rialtais, tá an cúlú eacnamaíoch ag dul in olcas

- » Tá 415,000 duine ar an mbeochlár
- » Chuaigh 300,000 duine ar imirce le ceithre bliana anuas, i gcomparáid le 120,000 idir 1980 agus 1986
- » Tá 49,000 duine ar liostaí feithimh sna hospidéal
- » Tá deacrachtaí morgáiste ag 180,000 teaghlach
- » Sa chéad bhliain den rialtas, thit líon na ngnólachtaí sa stat le 6,000
- » Cailleadh beagnach 11,000 post lánaimseartha agus 14,400 post páirtaimseartha ina n-áiteanna

Total consolidation 2014

Comhdhlúthú Iomlán 2014

EXPENDITURE SAVINGS / COIGILITÍ CAITEACHAIS

Current / Reatha	€869.10 million
Capital / Caipitil	€0
Carry-forward / Tugtha ar aghaidh	€340 million
New spend / Caiteachais nua	(€164.43 million)
Net savings total / Coigiltis glan	€1,044.67 million

TAX MEASURES / BEARTA CÁNACH

New taxes / Cánacha Nua	€1,837.7 million
Carry-forward / Tugtha ar aghaidh	€583 million
Minus adjustments / Coigeartuithe lúide	(€607 million)
Deduction for partial year effect / Asbhaint ar son éifeacht páirtbhliana	(€405 million)
Net Tax total / Cáin Iomlán	€1,408.7 million

Total Adjustment / Coigeartú Iomlán

€2,453.37 million

Tax Back; New and protected spending

TAX BACK

- » Save 1.8 million homeowners an average of €278 each per annum by abolishing the property tax: **€500 million**
- » Take 296,000 people earning below €17,542 out of the Universal Social Charge: **€94 million**

(€594 million)

INCREASING RESPITE GRANT FOR CARERS

- » Increase the respite care grant by €325 to €1,700 per annum for 86,000 carers: **€28 million**

HEARING IMPLANTS FOR DEAF CHILDREN

- » Provide bilateral cochlear implants for 200 profoundly deaf children: **€12.58 million**

PROTECTING WELFARE AND BENEFIT PAYMENTS

- » No more Child Benefit cuts & maintain social welfare rates

TACKLING FUEL POVERTY

- » Extend the fuel season for Fuel Allowance by 3 weeks: **€23.85 million**.

REDUCING THE COST OF BACK TO SCHOOL

- » Reduce parents' school books bills by providing half of core subject books free to every child: **€15 million**

TACKLING CHILD HUNGER

- » Tackle child hunger by rolling out school meals to an additional 500 schools: **€11 million**

FREE GP CARE

- » Extend free GP care to under 5s: **€34 million**

ADDITIONAL FRONTLINE WORKERS

- » Ring-fence a budget to allow for the additional hiring of frontline essential staff, including hiring an additional 230 Special Needs Assistants: **€40 million**

(€164.43 million)

Tax Measures

INCOME TAX

- » Introduce new 3rd rate of tax of 48% on income earned in excess of €100,000: **Raises €365 million**

DISCRETIONARY TAXES

- » Re-introduce the Non-Principal Private Residence charge and charge it at €400: **Raises €151 million**
- » Increase DIRT by 3% to 36%: **Raises €46 million**
- » Increase once-off charge for establishing a discretionary trust by 1% (currently 6%) and the annual charge from 1% to 1.5%: **Raises €0.5 million**
- » Enact the taxation provisions of the Betting Bill and apply 3% to online bets and 15% gross profit tax for remote betting intermediaries and extend an additional 2% to the betting shop tax, bringing it to 3%: **Raises €114 million**

WEALTH TAXES

- » Increase CGT to 40%: **Raises €98 million**
- » Increase CAT to 40% and lower thresholds: **Raises €108 million**
- » Introduce 1% wealth tax on net wealth in excess of €1 million with exclusions as defined in our legislation (see wealth tax section)

PENSIONS

- » Reduce the earnings cap for pension contributions from €115,000 per annum to €70,000 per annum: **Raises €130 million**
- » Increase tax take from super pensions by raising imputed distributed percentage (ARFS): **Raises €25 million**

PRSI & USC

- » Introduce a new employers' rate of PRSI of 15.75% on the portion of salary paid in excess of €100,000 per annum: **Raises €119.1 million**

TAX RELIEFS & TAX EVASION

- » Standardise pension tax reliefs: **Raises €343 million**
- » Increase Revenue Commissioner activity to target tax evasion: **Raises €100 million**
- » Standardise investment in film relief (€33.6 million) and rented residential relief under Section 23 (€11.7 million): **Raises €45.3 million**
- » Reduce mortgage interest deductions against rent for landlords from 75% to 40%: **Raises €157 million**

EXCISE DUTY & VAT

- » Increase excise duty on packet of cigarettes by 20 cent: **Raises €35.8 million**

CARRY-OVER

- » Carry-over: **€583 million**

TAX ADJUSTMENT

- » Allow for net effects of salary reductions: **€(13 million)**
- » Tax back proposals: **€(594 million)**
- » Deduction for partial year effect: **€(405 million)**

Net total: €1,408.7 million

Savings Measures

HEALTH

- » Deliver further savings on branded medicines and alter prescribing practices: **Saves €258 million**
- » Introduction of generic substitution and reference pricing for the 20 most commonly used off-patent medications: **Saves €66 million**
- » Partial introduction of full cost of private care in public hospitals: **Saves €120 million**
- » Implementation of measures to improve system productivity, including strategic purchasing: **Saves €205.9 million**
- » Reduce consultants' pay by 15% on income between €150,000 and €200,000; and 30% on income of over €200,000 per annum: **Saves €9 million**

EDUCATION

- » Phased withdrawal of private school annual state subsidy: **Saves €36.3 million**

FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE

- » Sell Rome and Paris embassy buildings and rent lower cost buildings: **Saves €62 million**

PUBLIC PAY & PENSIONS

- » Reductions in public sector pay & pensions, including 15% reduction in public sector salaries between €100,000 & €150,000 and 30% on income over €150,000: **Saves €31.5 million**

OIREACHTAS PAY & ALLOWANCES

- » Oireachtas Pay & Allowances, including Taoiseach and Ministers reduced by 50% of everything over €75,000, and TDs and Senators reduced to €75,000 and €60,000: **Saves €3.7 million**

GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

- » Professional fees and general department spend: **Saves €76.7 million**

CARRY-FORWARD

- » Carry-forward: **€340 million**

NEW SPEND

- » Deduction for new spend: **(€164.43 million)**

Net total: €1,044.67 million



Cáin Ioncaim; Caiteachas nua agus cosanta

CÁIN AR AIS

- » €278 ar an meán gach bliain a shábháil do 1.8 úinéir tí tríd an gcáin mhaoine a chur ar ceal: **€500 milliún**
- » 296,000 duine a thuilleann níos lú ná €17.542 a bhaint den Mhuirear Sóisialta Uilíoch: **€94 milliún**

(€594 million)

AN DEONTAS CÚRAIM SOSA A ARDÚ DO CHÚRAMÓIRÍ

- » An deontas cúraim sosa a ardú ó €325 go €1,700 an bhliain do 86,000 cúramóir: **€28 milliún**

IONCHLANNÁIN ÉISTEACHTA DO PHÁISTÍ ATÁ BODHAR

- » Ionchlannáin chlochla déthaobhacha a chur ar fáil do 200 páiste atá bodhar: **€12.58 milliún**

ÍOCAÍOCHT LEASA AGUS SOCHAR A CHOSAINT

- » Deireadh le ciorruithe ar Shochar Linbh & agus rátaí leasa shóisialaigh a choinneáil

DUL I NGLEIC LE TEARCROCHTAIN FUINNIMH

- » An séasúr chun Liúntas Breosla a shíneadh le 3 seachtaine: **€23.85 milliún.**

AN COSTAS A BHAINNEANN LE DUL AR AIS AR SCOIL A LAGHDÚ

- » Billí tuismitheoirí do leabhair scoile a laghdú trí leathchuid de na leabhair chroí-ábhair a sholáthar saor in aisce do gach páiste: **€15 milliún**

DUL I NGLEIC LE HOCRAS PÁISTÍ

- » Dul i ngleic le h-ocras leanaí tré béilte scoile a chuir ar fáil do 500 scoil bhreise: **€11 milliún**

CÓIR DHOCHTÚRA IN AISCE

- » Cóir Dhochtúra in aisce a leathnú chuig gach duine faoi 5: **€34 milliún**

OIBRITHE BREISE TÚSLÍNE

- » Buiséad a imfhálú ionas go bhféadfaí foireann bhreise riachtanach túslíne a fhostú ag áireamh 230 Cúntóir Riachtanais Speisialta breise a earcú: **€40 milliún**

(€164.43 milliún)

Bearta Coigilite

SLÁINTE

- » Coigiltí ar leighis brandáilte a sheachadadh agus cleachtais um ordú oideas a leasú: **€258 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » Praghasáil ghinearálta malartaithe agus tagartha a thabhairt isteach don 20 leigheas cineálach is coitianta a úsáidtear: **€66 million sábháilte**
- » Cúram príobháideach costais iomláin a thabhairt isteach ina pháirt in ospidéal phoiblí: **€120 milliún sábháilte**
- » Bearta a thabhairt isteach a chuideoidh le táirgíúlacht an chorais, agus ceannach straitéiseach san áireamh: **€205.9 milliún sábháilte**
- » Tuarastal comhairleoirí a laghdú le 15% ar ioncam idir €150,000 agus €200,000; agus 30% ar ioncam thar €200,000 sa bhliain: **€9 milliún sábháilte**

OIDEACHAS

- » Fóirdheontas bliantúil an stáit do scoileanna príobháideacha a bhaint ar shiúl de réir a chéile: **€36.3 milliún sábháilte**

GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁIL

- » Foingintí ambasáidí na Róimhe agus Páras a dhíol agus foingintí ar chíos níos ísle a fháil: **€62 milliún sábháilte**

TUARASTAIL AGUS PINSIN PHOIBLÍ

- » Laghduithe sna tuarastail agus sna pinsin san earnáil phoiblí, lena n-áirítear laghdú de 15% i dtuarastail san earnáil phoiblí atá idir €100,000 agus €150,000 agus 30% ar ioncam thar €150,000: **€31.5 milliún sábháilte**

TUARASTAIL SAN OIREACHTAS AGUS LIÚNTAS

- » Tuarastail agus Liúntais san Oireachtas, lena n-áirítear an Taoiseach agus Airí, laghdaithe le 50% ar rud ar bith thar €75,000, agus TD agus Seanadóirí laghdaithe go €75,000 agus €60,000: **€3.7 milliún sábháilte**

CAITEACHAS GINEARÁLTA AN RIALTAIS

- » Táillí proifisiúnta agus caiteachas ginearálta na Roinne: **€76.7 milliún sábháilte**

TUGTHA AR AGHAIDH

- » Tugtha ar aghaidh: **€340 milliún**

CAITEACHAIS ÚR

- » Asbhaint do chaiteachais úr: **(€164.43 milliún)**

Total: €1.044.67 milliún

Bearta Cánach

CÁIN IONCAIM

- » 3ú ráta nua cánach de 48% a thabhairt isteach ar ioncam a tuilleadh thart €100,000: **€365 milliún tiomsaithe**

CÁNACHA LÁNROGHNACHA

- » An íocaíocht ar áit chónaithe phríobháideach neamhphríomhaí a thabhairt isteach agus €400 air: **€151 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » DIRT a ardú le 3% go 36%: **€46 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » Muirear aonuaire a mhéadú le 1% (6% faoi láthair) chun iontaobhas lánroghnach a bhunú agus an muirear bliantúil a athrú ó 1% go 1.5%: **€0.5 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » Na forálacha cánachais a chur i bhfeidhm maidir leis an mBille Gealltóireachta agus 3% a chur ar gheallta ar line agus 15% de cháin bhrabúis chomhláin d'idirghábhálithe cianda gealltóireachta agus 2% breise a chuir le cáin siopa geallghlacadóra, dhá thabhairt chuig: **€114 milliún tiomsaithe**

CÁNACHA MAOINE

- » CGT a ardú go 40%: **€98 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » CAT a ardú do 40% agus tairsí a laghdú: **€108 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » 1% den cháin mhaoine a thabhairt isteach ar shaibhreas glan thar £1 milliún ach le heisiaimh mar atá luaite sa reachtaíocht (féach nóta mínithe)

PINSIN

- » An teorainn atá ar ranníocaíochtaí pinsin a laghdú ó €115,000 sa bhliain go €70,000 sa bhliain: **€130 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » An ráta cánach a ardú ó ollphinsin trí ARFSanna a ardú: **€25 million tiomsaithe**

PRSI & USC

- » Ráta nua fostóirí PRSI de 15.75% a thabhairt isteach ar an gcuid den tuarastal a íoctar thar €100,000 sa bhliain: **€119.1 milliún tiomsaithe**

FAOISEAMH CÁNACH AGUS IMGHABHÁIL CÁNACH

- » Faoiseamh cánach pinsin a chaighdeánú: **€343 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » Gníomhaíocht an Choimisinéara Ioncaim a mhéadú chun díriú isteach ar Imghabháil Cánach: **€100 milliún tiomsaithe**
- » Infheistíocht i bhfaoiseamh scannánaíochta a chaighdeánú (€33.6 milliún) agus faoiseamh d'áiteanna cónaithe ar cíos de réir Mhír 23 (€11.7 milliún): **€45.3 milliún**
- » Asbhaintí ar úis mhorgáistí a laghdú de réir an ráta cíosa do thiarnaí talún ó 75% go 40%: **€157 milliún tiomsaithe**

DLEACHT MHÁIL AGUS CBL

- » An dleacht mháil ar bhosca toitíní a ardú le 20%: **€35.8 milliún tiomsaithe**

TABHAIRT ANONN

- » Tabhairt Anonn: **€583 milliún**

COIGEARTÚ CÁNACH

- » Na himpleachtaí glana le laghduithe tuarastail a thabhairt san áireamh: **€(13 million)**
- » Moltaí aisíocht cánach: **€(594 million)**
- » Asbhaint ar son éifeacht páirtbhliana **€(405 million)**

Iomlán Glan €1,408.7 milliún



Part 1

A FAIR DEFICIT ADJUSTMENT



New spending measures

Families have suffered enough under Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour's budgets. The decision by those three parties to make everyone from the very old to the disabled to young children carry the can for their incompetence has brought households and the domestic economy to their knees. Not only can low- and middle-income families take no more – they need something back. The following section sets out our commitment to put money back into the pockets of Irish people.



Axe the Property Tax

TAX BACK

Property tax back

The property tax is an unfair, regressive form of taxation. Abolishing it will save 1.8 million home-owners an average of €278 per annum. It will be a massive financial stimulus for low and middle-income families. This will cost €500 million.

Universal Social Charge exemption

296,000 working people earning as low as between €193 and €337 per week, pay USC on their gross wage (2% on first €10,036, 4% on next €5,980 and 7% on the rest). Exempting income earners below €17,542 from the Universal Social Charge will cost €94 million in the first year.

HEALTH

Respite for carers

77,000 carers were unfairly targeted with a savage cut of €325 or 19% per annum to their respite care grant in Budget 2013. We would increase the respite care grant by €325 to €1,700 per annum for the now qualifying 86,000 carers at a cost of €28 million.

Hearing implants for deaf children

In Ireland profoundly deaf children receive only one Cochlear Implant. This is equivalent to providing a child with glasses with only one lens. The 200 children in the State who currently have only one implant are in a race against time if bilateral implants are to work. Providing bilateral cochlear implants for deaf children will cost €12.58 million.

Introduction of free GP care for under 5s

There are approximately 350,000 children under five years of age in this state. Some of them are in receipt of free GP care due to their parents having a medical card. Sinn Féin would introduce free GP care for all children under five years of age, regardless of parental income, as a first step towards the implementation of universal healthcare free at the point of delivery at a cost of €34 million.



Health first

SOCIAL PROTECTION

No more Child Benefit cuts

The argument that Child Benefit is paid to some families who 'don't need it' is misguided. Child Benefit is a payment made to mothers on behalf of the child. It recognises all mothers and children as equal. Sinn Féin has always argued that we should tax the parent, not the child.

Maintain social welfare rates

Sinn Féin not only believes basic welfare payments like Jobseekers' Benefit should be protected, but that total income from welfare should be protected. That means no changing of applicable thresholds, time-frames, contribution periods or ancillary payments.

Tackling fuel poverty

Ireland's fuel poverty is amongst the highest in Europe and there are disproportionately more deaths in Ireland because of fuel poverty. 41% of adults at some point during 2012 were forced to sacrifice spending on other household items to pay energy bills. Extending the fuel season for Fuel Allowance by 3 weeks will cost €23.85 million.



Protect Child Benefits



Education first

EDUCATION

Reducing back to school costs

A Barnardo's survey in July 2013 found that the average cost of school books for a ten-year-old in fourth class is €120 and for a 13-year-old in first year is €275. We are advocating the state provision of school books, provided to students and returned at year (exam) end, to be passed on to the next batch of students. The Government estimates the annual school book market amounts to €60 million. The state already provides €15 million in grants. Beginning next September we would double this spend and begin providing core books for the main subjects to every child in the state. This should have the effect of cutting in half parents' book bills in September 2014.

Tackling child hunger

A report launched by the Minister for Health in April 2012 showed that 21% of children are going to school without breakfast or to bed without a proper meal. It is our ultimate vision to roll out school meals to every school. We would roll out the school meals programme to an additional 500 schools at a cost of €11 million in 2014.



Protect SNAs

ADDITIONAL FRONTLINE WORKERS

Over the last number of years the Government has cut essential public sector workers such as Special Needs Assistants from their posts. In this document we call for additional SNAs. We also call for more Revenue staff to tackle tax evasion and for the provision of publicly funded personal insolvency practitioners. The State also needs additional home helps and resource hours in teaching. Sinn Féin would ringfence €40 million to ensure frontline posts could be rehired or filled where necessity demands it.

Taxation Measures Explained

Tax can only be fair when it takes into account the ability of people to pay it. Foisting a property tax on people who paid thousands in stamp duty and cannot afford to pay their mortgages is not fair. Making people who earn as little as €11,000 per annum pay a Universal Social Charge is not fair. Asking people who earn €35,000 per annum to pay the same tax rate as someone who earns €135,000 per annum is not fair. Sinn Féin's budget proposals would ensure that families earning under €100k would be better off. The following proposals ask those who can afford it to contribute more to bring about Ireland's economic recovery.

INCOME TAX

New income band and rate

Sinn Féin would increase the tax paid on income over €100,000 by 7 cent in each euro. The effective rate of income tax for high earners in this state is low. Information from the Department of Finance reveals that an income earner of €100,000 pays an effective income tax rate of 20.7%. This measure raises €365 million.

DISCRETIONARY TAXES

Non-Principal Private Residence tax

Sinn Féin has committed to abolish the property tax on the main family home. We would re-introduce the second-property charge, and would increase it from €200 to €400 per annum. This would raise €151 million.

Deposit Interest Retention Tax

An EBS consumer sentiment report this year found that savings in Ireland had increased, even though the numbers of savers had decreased by 2%. This indicates that those with money are saving more, while those who can't afford to save are either cutting their savings or withdrawing them. We would increase DIRT from 33% to 36%, raising €46 million.

Wealth Trusts

Discretionary trust tax consists of an initial levy and an annual levy. There is an exemption for trusts created exclusively for incapacitated persons. Discretionary trust tax applies to the entire value of the fund. We would increase the once-off charge for establishing a discretionary trust by 1% (currently 6%) and the annual charge from 1% to 1.5%, raising €0.5 million.

Betting Tax

Implement the Government legislation for online betting tax and apply it at 3% with a 15% tax on the gross profits of remote operators and extend an additional 2% to the betting shop tax. This measure raises €114 million.

WEALTH TAXES

Capital Gains Tax

Restore Capital Gains Tax (CGT) to 40% (from 33% at present). The tax applies to profit gains. The increase would raise €98 million.

Capital Acquisitions Tax

Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) is a tax on gifts and inheritance. We would raise the rate of CAT from 33% to 40% and reduce the family and 'other' thresholds. No threshold applies to married couples, as CAT is not applied to spouses. There are a number of other exemptions, including exemptions for compensation, or for children inheriting houses if it is their main residence. Our measures would bring in €108 million.

The new thresholds would be:

Relationship	Current threshold	Under Sinn Féin
Child/parent	€225,000	€187,000
Lineal ancestor (relative other than child)	€30,150	€25,000
Any other person	€15,075	€12,500

PENSIONS

Ceiling cap and standardising the rate

The current 'earnings cap' recognises €115,000 per annum (whatever your salary is) as the maximum salary against which percentages are calculated for pension tax reliefs. We would reduce the earnings cap for pension contributions to €70,000 per annum and standardise the relief at which tax back can be claimed from 41% to 20%. The ceiling cap raises €130 million and the standardisation raises €343 million.

Super Pensions

Special pension vehicles called ARFs (Approved Retirement Funds) allow people to hold their excess pension lump sum in managed vehicles, without drawing down the full pension and having it taxed at PAYE rates. Recent budgets have seen imputed distribution percentages of 5% on ARFs and PRSAs under €2 million and 6% over €2 million, introduced. This means at least 5% or 6% of the value of the ARF / PRSA has to be drawn down per year by the individual and taxed at PAYE rates. We would increase the imputed distribution rate by 1%, to 6% and 7%, respectively, raising €25 million.

PRSI & USC

Employers' PRSI

Irish employers' PRSI contributions are starkly low and we have a huge deficit in the Social Insurance Fund. However, now is not the time to transfer additional costs on to employers in any blanket move. We would introduce a new employers' rate of PRSI of 15.75% on the portion of salary paid in excess of €100,000 per annum, raising €119.1 million.

TAX RELIEFS & TAX EVASION

Tax evasion

Minister for Finance Michael Noonan revealed in October 2012 that the Revenue, as part of its Comprehensive Review of Expenditure, identified how tax take could be increased through hiring 125 qualified revenue staff (at a cost of €6.5 million allowed for in our fund for additional hiring), to bring in an additional €100 million per annum by targeting tax evasion and black market activity.

Film & Section 23 rented residential tax reliefs

A 2012 ESRI report into the use of tax reliefs revealed that the top 20% of earners were availing of 80% of all the reliefs. Our measure would see film and rented residential under Section 23 tax reliefs continue to be paid but paid at 20%, raising €45.3 million.

Reduce landlord tax relief

Currently, landlords who have mortgages against their properties can write off their mortgage interest payments against the tax bill levied on the rental income from those properties. We would reduce mortgage interest deduction allowable against rental income from 75% to 40%, raising €157 million.

EXCISE DUTY

Cigarettes

At least 5,200 people die prematurely in the state as a result of smoking every year. Irish cigarette prices are now amongst the highest in Europe, but that's not because of Government taxation measures. It's because of the huge profit margin manufacturers put on cigarettes sold in Ireland. We support the calls of the Irish Heart Foundation and Irish Cancer Society to increase the taxation take from cigarettes and simultaneously introduce measures to reduce the tobacco industry's profits from cigarettes. This would include introducing a price cap on the pre-tax price of tobacco. We are funding the Revenue Commissioners to increase activity to clamp down on black market activity. A 20 cent increase in excise duty on a packet of cigarettes will raise €35.8 million.

TAX CARRY-OVER

The Government has allowed for a €583 million tax carry-over for 2014.

SALARY TAX ADJUSTMENT

This measure deducts the amount that would be lost for the Revenue following our pay reduction savings and would cost €13 million.

Savings Measures Explained

This Government has ripped the guts out of public services and it has no intention of stopping. They will ask schools to increase their class sizes and nurses to work more hours for less, but they won't cut special Dáil allowances or tackle the vested interests in health. The following proposals set out innovative ways of saving money in public spending and eliminating waste.

HEALTH

Patented drugs savings

The state drugs bill was €1.53 billion in 2012 after the delivery of a very small percentage saving by Minister James Reilly. Implementing the recommendation of the ESRI Report 'Pharmaceuticals Delivery in Ireland. Getting a Bigger Bang for the Buck' can deliver a further €258 million.

Generic drugs savings

The immediate introduction of generic substitution and reference pricing for the 20 most commonly used off-patent medications saves a further €66 million.

Private care in public hospitals

Since last year's budget, Minister Reilly has introduced the Health (Amendment) Bill 2013 which increased charges for private care in public facilities on a phased basis. This is expected to bring in €30 million next year. The state still subsidises the cost of private care in public hospitals by €280 million per annum. Sinn Féin would recoup a further €90 million next year, bringing the total saving to €120 million – which Minister Reilly himself has previously committed to doing.

Increases in systems productivity

Diagnostic Related Grouping (DRG)-based hospital payment has been widely adopted internationally with the explicit objective of improving efficiency and reducing costs. This has been shown in many other countries, including Sweden, Portugal and Norway. The World Health Organisation reports that the potential to use the DRG system for strategic purchasing has not been realised in Ireland. It recom-

mends that stepped up implementation of the system is necessary, and that savings in the region of €205.9 million (5% of overall hospital spend) can be realised.

Consultants

The Government announced cuts to new-entry consultants last year, bringing their public pay to €120,000. By any standard, and compared to similar economies, our consultants were overpaid even at the height of the boom. We would reduce further their income by 15% between €150,000 - €200,000 and by 30% over €200,000, raising €9 million.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Overpayments Amnesty

Last year, Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh published a bill that provides for this amnesty. We believe this measure has the potential to yield a control saving of €55 million. However, as the Department of Social Protection has refused to cost this measure, we do not include it in our deficit reduction adjustment. An amnesty would see those in receipt of overpayments inform the Department of Social Protection and have their benefits corrected without penalties.

EDUCATION

Private schools

The annual state subsidy to be paid to private schools from September 2013 is intended to be €109 million per annum. Sinn Féin proposes a withdrawal of the private school subsidy over 3 years, saving €36.3 million in the first year.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE

Sale of embassies

The Government has an extensive and valuable portfolio of foreign Embassy buildings. A targeted approach of disposal could raise a significant amount of money. We propose the sale of the Embassy building and Ambassador's residence in Rome (€18.4 million Government's own evaluation). The Government should also sell its Embassy building and Ambassador's residence in Paris (€45 million), the most expensive it owns. The department can rent buildings in these cities for a maximum of €700,000 per annum per building. This measure is a once off saving, generating €62 million. (Note – Sinn Féin believes the Government should act with urgency on its overseas development aid commitments and make no further cuts).

PUBLIC SECTOR PAY & PENSIONS

Pay at the top of our civil and public service still remains high compared to European standards, despite the State being in a Troika programme and still struggling to make ends meet. All the while, nurses, guards, fire brigade members, teachers and other frontline public workers are forced to take cut after cut. It is Sinn Féin's objective to pursue in Government a full review of all public sector pay and to bring high pay as a multiple of administrative grades in line with other European countries. Deputy Mary Lou McDonald's Pay and Pensions Bill in 2012 set out the scales on which our pension reductions would apply. Sinn Féin would protect pensions under €60,000, however those in excess of €60,000 annual pensions would incur an additional levy. Our scaled increase in the Public Sector Pension Reduction band rates would be on annual public sector pensions in excess of €60,000, as they have been revised post the Haddington Road Agreement.

- » Reduce by 15% public sector salary income between €100,000 and €150,000 and reduce by 30% public sector salary income in excess of €150,000: **Saves €12 million**
- » Increase public sector pension reduction for high earners: **Saves €14 million**
- » Reduce Education and Training Board CEOs' salaries by 10%: **Saves €190,000**
- » Reduce by 15% City and County managers' pay: **Saves €650,000**
- » Withdraw current Secretary General TLAC (special severance pension payment): **Saves €1.48 million**
- » Reduce by 10% CEO pay of non-commercial semi-state boards: **Saves €1.16 million**
- » Reduce by 10% Commercial Semi State Company Chief Executive pay: **Saves €528,000**
- » Reduce all state agency board fees by 25%: **Saves €1.5 million**

OIREACHTAS PAY & ALLOWANCES

Government and the body politic cannot propose another round of expenditure reductions for 2014 without first looking to their own pay and allowances. Fat remains, therefore reductions can still be made.

With our proposed reductions, the following salaries would be payable to Cabinet members: Taoiseach €124,000; Tanaiste €117,000; Ministers €110,000; Ministers of State €92,000. TDs would be reduced to €75,000 and Senators to €60,000.

- » Withdraw Oireachtas Officeholders' allowances
- » Reduce Party Leaders' Allowance by 10%
- » Withdraw Committee Chair allowances
- » Withdraw Houses of the Oireachtas Commission allowances
- » Withdraw Super Junior Ministers' Allowance
- » Withdraw Oireachtas members' mobile phone allowance

These proposals combined would reduce Oireachtas expenditure by €3.7 million annually.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

Professional fees

A 15% reduction in all Government-related professional fees, including legal, consultancy, IT-related, advisory, advertising and accountancy saves €63.3 million.

Education & Training

Despite providing funding to all third-level institutions, departments continue to pay the market rate for these courses. Sinn Féin supports the ongoing upskilling and education of public sector workers, however we believe the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform could secure a 15% reduction on third level education and additional training expenditure, saving €1.4 million.

Travel expenses

Departments' spending on travel and subsistence has in some instances been substantially reduced since 2008, however it is clear further reductions can be found by greater use of technology, improved business processes and, where appropriate, by rationalising inspections. A 15% reduction in departmental travel expenses saves €12 million.

Carry forward

This amounts to €340 million in 2014.



Wealth tax – asking the wealthiest to make a solidarity contribution

Sinn Féin's proposal is to introduce a 1% tax on all assets over €1 million net of all liabilities, including mortgages and other debts. The tax would not be levied on 20% of the family home, the capital sum in pension funds, business assets or agricultural land. It would apply to the global assets of those domiciled or ordinarily resident in the state, and to domestic assets only for those who are resident in the state for tax purposes. Our proposal is modeled on both the French and Norwegian wealth taxes. The Department of Finance says it is unable to cost this proposal.

There are different types of wealth taxes in operation across the world and they are applied at different rates.

The Minister for Finance stated in the Dáil that the French wealth tax levied at 1% in Ireland could bring in between €400 million and €500 million. The French wealth tax has since been strengthened.

In 2012, economists for Unite and the Community Platform proposed a 1% wealth tax on income over €1 million, estimating it would raise €1 billion. Economists for ICTU said 1% over €2 million would raise €500 million. Sinn Féin estimated our wealth tax - 1% on net wealth over €1 million - would raise up to 0.5% of GDP in a full tax year (€800 million).

Current Trade Union estimates for a weaker wealth tax, levied at 0.4%, range from €150 million to €250 million.

Until we attain the new data being compiled by the CSO in 2014, a definitive figure cannot be placed on the wealth tax for 2014. After two years in Government, the Labour Party has still not considered the proposal or had it costed, despite the call for and support for the measure from ICTU and its sister parties in Europe.

We would ring-fence the money raised from the wealth tax for job creation.

» **A 1% tax on net wealth over €1 million, excluding working farmland, business assets, 20% of the family home and pension pots**

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND CORPORATION TAX

In October 2012, Deputy Pearse Doherty sought the establishment of a Finance sub-committee to investigate Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) using legal tax measures to avoid paying their full tax quotients, not just in Ireland, but internationally, using Ireland's tax system. Sinn Féin supports the 12.5% corporation tax rate. The jobs that MNCs have created in this state are of crucial importance. But there are loopholes in our tax system that are facilitating tax avoidance and they have nothing to do with job creation. The two issues should not be muddled.

The statements made by the head of Apple to the U.S. Senate Committee and the investigation into Google by a Westminster committee reveal widespread abuse of Irish tax loopholes and effective tax rates of as low as 2.5%. This confirms the research undertaken by Professor Jim Stewart of Trinity College and Dr. Sheila Killian of Limerick University, contradicting the Government's repeated falsehood that MNCs pay effective rates of 11.9%. The Department of Finance has subsequently denied, at the Sub Committee on Global Taxation, that they do accept the figure of 11.9% as fact.

- » The Revenue and Government to collate information on the profits and tax paid by Multi-National Corporations and make publicly available the actual effective rates of tax paid by MNCs, verses self-employed individuals and SMEs.

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Practically everyone in the state is aware that successive Irish Governments sold out the people of Ireland when 'negotiating' the licensing, tax treatment and royalties for Irish natural resources.

Under the 1992 and 2007 Licencing Terms, a 25% tax is applied to the net profits of oil and gas found in Ireland's sovereign jurisdiction. However, oil and gas companies can write off 100% of costs against tax, including costs incurred up to 25 years before field production begins and including the cost of any unsuccessful wells the company has drilled anywhere in Irish waters in that 25-year period.

A report carried out in 2007 by the U.S. Government Accountability Office studied the licencing terms of 142 fiscal systems. The report found that Ireland has the second lowest government take of all the countries studied. In the United States there is a minimum government take of 42% and in Norway the government take is 75%.

Ireland's licencing terms do not afford the state with fuel security. When the government awards a licence to an oil and gas company, ownership and control of Irish oil and gas is transferred to that company. Under the current licencing terms, the government cannot guarantee that the oil and gas will be sold to the Irish market, that the oil and gas will be landed in Ireland, or that the company uses Irish workers. We also have no control over how those resources are extracted and landed – as has been highlighted with the Corrib situation. In Government, Sinn Féin would:

- » Conduct a full review of licencing and revenue terms
- » Implement the recommendation of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Communications, Natural Resources and Agriculture for a staggered taxation system to be introduced for all new licences; 40% for small oil and gas finds; 60% for medium oil and gas finds; 80% for large oil and gas finds
- » Ring-fence a proportion of profits from Irish oil and gas to develop renewable energy projects

Part 2

CREATING JOBS FOR RECOVERY



GUARANTEEING EVERY YOUNG PERSON A JOB OR TRAINING PLACE

There are 64,700 under-25s officially unemployed and many more disengaged from employment services in this State. Despite the scale of the problem, the Government has been slow to respond to the youth unemployment crisis.

In the summer of this year, Sinn Féin Senator Kathryn Reilly produced a report for the European Affairs Committee which highlighted the need for a quality and fully funded guarantee of employment, training, education or apprenticeship within four months of a young person becoming unemployed.

The National Youth Council has highlighted the Swedish model as the preferred option for Ireland. This would cost €6,600 per person, or approximately €400 million, which would be provided by a combination of Exchequer funding and matched funding from the EU (the EU had promised a level of matched funding for youth guarantee funds). The Government is running a pilot youth guarantee project in Ballymun, the expected cost of which is €302,279, of which €250,000 is being sought from the EU. We want a state-wide guarantee to be designed and rolled out immediately, rather than wait for a six-month pilot to be completed and evaluated. This is a crisis and it needs an intervention now.

We commit to ring-fencing the money raised from the wealth tax to ensure every young person in the State can avail of a job or a training place.

- » Ring-fence wealth tax income for jobs for young people

JOB CREATION AT THE HEART OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY

There can be no recovery without jobs. There are 415,000 people on the live register and 300,000 people have emigrated in the last four years. Families have been torn apart and rural communities in particular have been decimated by the numbers of young people who've gone abroad in search of work. Many parishes find it difficult to field a GAA team and there isn't a mother or father who isn't worried that they might be rearing 'their children like cattle for export', in the famous word of Eamon de Valera. Sinn Féin proposed a comprehensive set of measures to save and create new jobs in our October 2012 document 'Create Jobs, Create Growth'. This included a stimulus but also a comprehensive set of proposals to remove the obstacles faced by businesses to keeping jobs, and proposals to develop indigenous enterprises, entrepreneurs and co-operatives.

The proposals below, which amount to a stimulus of approximately €10 billion to be spent over three years, would help to create in the region of 100,000 jobs, based on Government estimates of between 8,000 and 10,000 jobs created for each €1 billion invested. In addition, we would make no further cuts to capital expenditure.

- » Use the discretionary fund in the National Pension Reserve Fund (€6.4 billion) and no more cuts in the capital expenditure budget to invest in a roll-out of essential infrastructure such as the A5 road completion, school and primary care centre build, completion of regeneration projects, the comprehensive roll-out of broadband and an upgrading of the water system (rather than the introduction of water meters).
- » Seek European Investment Bank matched funding (to the NPRF money) for the reestablishment of the sugar beet industry in the South East, the development of Knock Airport, the regeneration of the Cork Docklands, and the deepening of the harbour berths at Rosslare
- » Establish, with the pension industry, investment in a Green Bank that will fund the roll-out of energy retrofitting and generate stable returns higher than Government bonds for the pension industry
- » Work with InterTrade Ireland and Enterprise Ireland to ensure Government procurement is open to SMEs

(The details of the above proposals can be found in 'Create Jobs, Create Growth – Sinn Féin's Jobs Plan 2012')

ASSISTING SMEs

Small and Medium Enterprises in Ireland employ over 78% of the workforce. The Government has focused on large multinationals in successive budgets. But it is Irish SMEs that have the potential to help our economy recover, if they are supported.

In the Government's first year in office, the total number of enterprises in the state fell by 6,000 (3%). The vast majority of these are in the Small to Medium Sized Enterprise Sector (SME's). The increase in exports and surpluses has not resulted in substantial increased employment. Exports over the past year surpassed the previous high points of 2001/2002 and yet unemployment remains three times the level of those years. We have experienced export growth but not substantial jobs growth

- » Maintain the 9% VAT rate for the tourism sector for 2014
- » Amend Section 149 of the Consumer Credit Act 1995 to put a freeze on all increases in bank charges for two years
- » Instruct banks to allow flexibility in overdraft facilities for SMEs and sole traders and remove the threat of moving overdrafts to term loans if a direct debit payment is missed
- » Raise the qualifying amount for companies to use cash accounting to €2.5 million. VAT will still be paid, but deferred
- » Maintain current sick leave payment arrangements
- » Reform the National Training Fund to make it more available to SMEs for upskilling their employees
- » Examine assigning additional resources to the Competition Authority to allow for the full and timely investigation of abuse of market position and other anti-competitive practices which undermine business and consider merging the Authority with the National Consumer Agency to make the savings necessary for these resources
- » Examine the situation where publicans are losing their trading licence at year end for not achieving a full tax clearance certificate, and consider allowing them a carry-over of a small amount (below €10,000) into the first six months of the following year so they can trade out of any difficulties
- » Legislate to deal with the legacy of Upward Only Rents

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Agriculture is a key sector of the Irish economy. It is the main indigenous sector based wholly on domestic resources, with 80,700 people directly employed in farming, fishing and forestry. This figure is enhanced by those indirectly employed in related sectors. Agriculture contributed €24 billion to the national income in 2011 and accounted for almost 10% of Irish exports. There are a number of budget-related agriculture measures that we are supporting this year.

- » Maintain 90% agricultural relief on all qualifying transfers of farms
- » Maintain the pay and file date for self-assessment, unless the timeframe for direct payments changes
- » No additional water charges for farmers already involved in group water schemes (Sinn Féin would not introduce across-the-board water charges)
- » No reduction in compensation amounts for the Disease Eradication Compensation Schemes
- » No cuts to funding when 'reforming' the rural transport scheme
- » Continue to exclude working family farms in the assessment of third level maintenance grants

COMMERCIAL SEMI-STATES AND THEIR ECONOMIC ROLE

The Government has committed itself to raising at least €2 billion from the sale of state assets. The privatisation agenda is Fine Gael and Labour's. The Memorandum of Understanding does not explicitly call for privatisation of assets or mention any amount to be raised. This agenda is firmly underway with the imminent sale of Bord Gáis Energy (BGE) and the ESB's 50% share in two power generation plants in Britain and Spain. Government intends to raise up to €1 billion from the sale of BGE and €400 million in special dividends by the end of 2014 from the sale of the two ESB power plants, and an additional dividend of €65 million. However, the ESB's dividends to the State from these sales will only be paid after the company first pays down some of its own debt.

Sinn Féin opposes the sale of vital state assets. Ireland is a small economy. State involvement with strategic assets such as public transport, aviation, ports, forestry, water supply, broadcasting, postal services, energy supply, and telecommunications is central to the future security and prosperity of the economy and society, as well as to the environmental protection of the island.

Sinn Féin does not support Fine Gael and Labour's asset disposal programme, however if the Government is wedded to this policy, monies raised should be reinvested into job creation and retention measures.

Commercial semi-state companies can play a vital role in delivering employment activation measures and training. In 2012 commercial semi states paid over €111 million in dividends to the state. Strategic use of commercial semi-state companies and the dividends they pay out each year can better assist the state in rebuilding the economy, helping business and consumers and creating employment.

- » Replace NewEra with a Semi-State Strategy Group to include CEOs from each of the commercial Semi-State companies, with responsibility for delivering a strategic job creation and training project, working directly with the Ministers for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Social Protection, and Education & Skills, and reporting directly to the Taoiseach and the Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- » All annual dividends paid to the State by commercial Semi-State companies must be reinvested into employment activation and training measures as identified by the Semi-State Strategy Group and approved by the Taoiseach, reporting to the Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- » Monies raised from the Government's asset disposal programme should not be squandered on bad debt; instead this revenue must be invested into job creation and retention schemes as set out in Sinn Féin's jobs strategy policy document, 'Investing in Ireland's Future. Create Jobs – Create Growth'
- » A cost-cutting drive must be pursued by the agencies with a view to capping the prices of utility bills for one year

PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE



EQUALITY BUDGETING – PEOPLE MATTER, NOT PERCENTAGES

A study carried out by TASC in 2012 revealed that the most at-risk group of poverty in Ireland, lone parents, lost the highest percentage of income in Budget 2011. Despite the Government's rhetoric, the hard facts show that budget adjustments have been made in an unequal way. Sinn Féin pledged our support for the civic society equality budgeting campaign in November 2012. The Equality Budgeting Campaign is a broad-based coalition of trade unions, NGOs and concerned individuals that are seeking the introduction of Equality Budgeting.

Creating the conditions for establishing an equal society means recognising that many diverse groups and sections of Irish society need enhanced protection from the State.

In 2013, Sinn Féin produced a Bill to amend existing legislation that aimed to provide for equality proofing of Government policy and budgets, and public bodies, through impact assessments.

On the day this Bill was put to vote in the house, 29 Labour TDs voted against it. The Government overall voted against it and the Bill was lost, but Sinn Féin has committed to introducing it in Government.

- » Implement Sinn Féin legislation to provide for Equality Proofing of all future budgets

A private insolvency service has already been put in place, but a public, free to use service needs to be established to ensure everyone can access the process.

- » Implement Sinn Féin's FAIR solution on mortgage distress
- » Provide an additional 100 publicly funded Personal Insolvency Practitioners, which will then operate the free to use Public Insolvency service, in conjunction with MABS, to bring about Sinn Féin's FAIR solution to the mortgage arrears crisis. This will cost €5 million. €2.5 million of this will come from our ring-fenced sum of money for frontline workers, with another €2.5 million being provided by the banks. The PIPs would be spread geographically, ensuring state-wide coverage.
- » Amend the Personal Insolvency Act to remove the banks' veto.
- » Legislate to give the Central Bank Governor the power to cap interest rates in state-owned banks and ensure they pass on interest rate reductions from the ECB – Sinn Féin has produced this legislation
- » Amend the Land and Conveyancing Act to allow judges to use their discretion to prevent banks moving to repossess when a borrower is making a clear effort to repay.

Part 4

STRONGER TOGETHER – AN ALL-ISLAND ECONOMY



Sinn Féin recognises that the economies of both the north and south of Ireland are fractured and in need of substantial reform. With vision, determination and the application of our combined energies and abilities we can construct a sustainable economy and a more equitable society across Ireland for the benefit of all its people. Realising that vision requires the full and active participation of the Irish Government.

There are no advantages for an island nation of 6.4 million people on the edge of Europe having two separate tax regimes, two currencies and legal systems, two public service systems and two separate competing economies. Harmonising structures across the island is central to creating a fully integrated and healthy economy. The border impedes and distorts economic activity. Many successful businesses and employers cite the border as a key disincentive to extending operations throughout the island.

At present, due to the lack of fiscal powers, the northern Executive is incapable of developing an indigenous fiscal regime that would bring about the required economic change. The northern Executive is unable to raise taxes. Taxation and fiscal policy powers are central to the health and growth of any economy.

Joint public investment and progressive taxation could play a central role in securing a just, fair and healthy economy for the island as a whole. The starting point must be for maximum fiscal powers to be transferred to the North.

Both administrations on the island struggle to find efficiencies in public services yet along the border we have inefficient and ineffective back to back provision. On a national level we have disconnected policies, programmes and centres of excellence. It has been illustrated that where joint enterprise is applied, such as in health, it makes economic sense.

The new jointly funded cancer centre in Derry and the proposals to have all-island paediatric heart surgery located in Dublin demonstrates that progressive thinking can deliver public services on an all-Ireland basis efficiently and effectively.

An all-island approach would also allow for the promotion of a single 'Brand Ireland', free from confusion and wasteful duplication of bodies promoting Irish produce and products. Competition for FDI pitting north against south is counter-productive. Integration of the IDA and INI to attract investment to the island makes sense considering most foreign investors treat the island as a single labour market and draw employees from across the Island. InterTradelreland is an example of how all-Ireland working can remove barriers to trade. The body has successfully assisted businesses to trade and grow across the island, even in the recession, overcoming the border impediments and getting companies ready for overseas exporting.

In some areas, co-operation is already happening successfully. Co-operation within third-level research and development is high due to joint working of EU programmes such as the 7th Framework and the new approach being adopted by Science Foundation Ireland.

A fresh approach to the island economy can bring real success.

Sinn Féin therefore calls for:

- » A full and detailed examination of the best use of resources and the most appropriate models of accountability for delivery across the island
- » Departments in both jurisdictions to identify shared projects from planning stage to completion with emphasis on identifying the benefits of shared understanding and ownership, including scope, delivery, targets and expected outcomes
- » The Irish Government and the Assembly to produce a timescale for developing integrated public services across the island



Contact Sinn Féin

44 Parnell Square
Dublin 1

Phone: +353 1 8726100

admin@sinnfein.ie
www.sinnfein.ie