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**Report of the Joint Committee on Social Protection**

**Report on the Position of Lone Parents in Ireland**

**June 2017**

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## Chairman's Foreword



The Joint Committee on Social Protection identified at an early stage that the position of lone parents in Ireland should receive particular attention when formulating its Work Programme. The Committee was concerned, of course, with lone parents accessing various support payments and schemes, mostly from the Department of Social Protection. There are many lone parent families who make their own arrangements, pursuing work and educational opportunities, but the Joint Committee has a concern for the position of those families requiring assistance.

For those families, being a lone parent carries its own particular difficulties. The fact of being the sole carer makes it difficult for the parent to avail of full-time and better paid employment, or to access educational opportunities that would facilitate future access to better paid employment. The State, therefore, must provide a range of measures – including, but not confined to, housing support, childcare access and educational prospects – to empower these families to break free from the danger of long-term deprivation.

The Committee has made a series of proposals to help alleviate the difficulties involved, and I urge all the stakeholders to consider this report carefully.

I would like to thank all who participated in proceedings before the Joint Committee, as well as those who made written submissions. Their various contributions, together with that of the Committee Secretariat, to the production of this report are gratefully acknowledged.

John Curran TD  
Chairman of the Joint Committee on Social Protection

June 2017

## Chapter 1 Demographics

### Key Facts

(1.1) Census 2016<sup>1</sup> found that:

- (1.2) 25.4% of all families with children were lone parent families
- (1.3) There were 218,817 family units with children (of any age) headed by a lone parent
- (1.4) This represented approximately one in four of families with children and one in five of all families (25.4% of all family units with children in Ireland and 18% of all family units)
- (1.5) 356,203 children lived in one parent families, representing more than one in five or 21.2% of all children in family units
- (1.6) 86.4% of lone parents were female and 13.6% were male (Approximately one in seven are male)
- (1.7) The average one parent family is has 1.63 children compared to an average of 1.95 for the population overall

### (1.8) Diversity

The lone parent population in Ireland is a very diverse group. It includes parents with a full range of educational levels. It is diverse in the age of the parents and children and in the size of families, with lone parent families containing upwards of one to seven or more children.<sup>2</sup> Lone parent families contain parents who co-habit with partners or with partners and their families (so-called 'blended families'). Lone parents may be single, separated, widowed or divorced. Many are co-parenting with ex-partners with varying levels of co-operation from the ex-partners.<sup>3</sup> In short, there is no stereotypical Irish lone parent or lone parent family.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/presspages/2017/census2016summaryresults-part1/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011reports/census2011profile5householdsandfamilies-livingarrangementsinireland/>

<sup>3</sup> [S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J05. 08-11-16 NUI, Barnardos - Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\Opening Statement - Barnardos.pdf](#)[S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection](#)

### **(1.9) Family Size**

Lone parent families tend to be smaller than two parent families with an average size of 1.63 children per family. This may be compared to two parent families who have an average of 1.95 children.

*Table 1.1 Average Number of Children by Family Type<sup>2</sup>*

Family type	Number of Family Units	Number of Children	Average No. of Children
Married couple with children	558,682	1,169,314	2.1
Co-habiting couple with children	60,829	104,665	1.7
Lone parent families	215,315	351,996	1.6

*Table 1.2 Average Number of Children in Lone Parent Families by Gender of Parent<sup>2</sup>*

Family type	Number of Family Units	Number of Children	Average No. of Children
Lone mother with children	186,284	308,109	1.7
Lone father with children	29,031	43,887	1.5

As can be seen from table 1.2 above, lone parent families headed by a mother tend to be larger than those headed by a father.

As may be noted by comparing table 1.1 and 1.2, lone parent families headed by mothers alone outnumber the co-habiting couple families by greater than a three to one ratio. This statistic may be surprising to some but serves to highlight that lone parents cannot be considered to be a marginal group in society.

### **(1.10) Education**

Although lone parents have a range of educational attainment, available data indicates that this cohort has, in general terms, a comparatively low level of education. The 2011 census shows that

40.8% of Irish lone parents have not completed second level education. By comparison, 65% of the general population have completed second level education (Census 2011).<sup>4</sup>

### **(1.11) Employment**

As can be seen from tables 1.3 and 1.4 below in Ireland unemployment has remained consistently higher for lone parents than for parents in couples. Although no clear direct comparisons can be drawn unemployment for lone parents has remained above 50% since 2009 (table 1.3) while households headed by couples with neither parent in employment have remained at approximately 10%. The percentage of couples with both parents working full-time has remained higher than the percentage of lone parents working full-time highlighting their greater opportunities to achieve higher earning levels.

Employment status of single parents in Ireland									
Employment status	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Not working	47.9	47.6	47.3	51.8	55.2	55.0	55.0	52.3	53.5
Working - part-time	27.5	27.6	30.6	28.2	25.8	26.4	26.4	25.4	23.9
Working - full-time	24.3	24.5	21.8	19.7	18.7	18.2	18.0	21.5	22.0
Working - no information on hours	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.6

*Table 1.3 Employment status of single parents in Ireland<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011reports/census2011profile5householdsandfamilies-livingarrangementsinireland/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm#child\\_outcomes](http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm#child_outcomes)



Employment patterns for couples with children in Ireland									
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Both partners full-time	28.7	29.2	27.9	24.9	24.8	24.9	26.4	28.7	32.0
One partner full-time, one partner part-time	26.5	27.9	28.1	24.3	22.3	21.7	21.1	21.4	22.1
One partner full-time, one partner not working	34.6	33.0	32.6	31.9	31.2	30.8	30.0	29.2	28.3
Both partners not working	5.1	5.2	6.0	9.9	11.9	12.4	12.3	10.8	8.6
Other	5.1	4.8	5.3	8.9	9.8	10.2	10.2	10.0	9.1
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014

*Table 1.4 Employment patterns for couples with children in Ireland<sup>5</sup>*

It can be seen from tables 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 that lone parents undertake a higher proportion of part-time work when compared to parents in couples. With lone parents having a proportion above 50% part-time work consistently since 2006. This is especially true when compared to fathers. This is obviously reflected in lower earnings for lone parent families. It is hardly surprising that lone parent families consistently face greater levels of deprivation, risk of poverty and consistent poverty. This is discussed in chapter 2.

Distribution of working hours for employed single parents in Ireland									
Usual weekly working hours	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1 to 29	52.9	52.8	58.2	58.4	57.6	58.8	58.8	53.4	51.5
30 to 39	31.3	33.0	29.2	28.1	29.7	26.7	27.2	29.5	30.6
40 to 44	10.6	9.2	8.5	9.3	9.0	8.9	9.4	11.5	13.3
45+	4.7	4.5	3.8	3.4	3.0	4.8	3.3	4.2	3.5
No information on hours	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.5	1.2

*Table 1.5 Distribution of working hours for employed single parents in Ireland<sup>5</sup>*

Distribution of working hours for employed mothers in couples with children in Ireland									
Usual weekly working hours	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1 to 29	46.7	47.0	47.7	46.2	44.4	43.7	40.6	39.6	38.3
30 to 39	40.7	39.8	38.9	40.9	41.3	39.9	41.4	41.1	41.7
40 to 44	8.7	9.3	9.6	9.1	10.4	11.7	12.8	13.7	15.3
45+	3.4	3.5	3.3	2.9	3.1	3.9	4.1	4.2	3.8
No information on hours	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.0

*Table 1.6 Distribution of working hours for employed mothers in couples with children in Ireland<sup>5</sup>*

Distribution of working hours for employed fathers in couples with children in Ireland									
Usual weekly working hours	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1 to 29	4.1	4.2	4.7	7.4	8.4	9.3	9.9	9.7	9.1
30 to 39	37.5	36.0	35.6	37.5	37.1	35.5	34.4	33.4	33.0
40 to 44	25.9	26.5	27.7	27.9	28.1	29.6	30.7	31.3	32.6
45+	31.4	32.3	31.1	25.9	25.1	24.5	23.9	24.5	24.4
No information on hours	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9

*Table 1.7 Distribution of working hours for employed fathers in couples with children in Ireland<sup>5</sup>*

### **(1.12) Tendencies**

The number of families headed by a lone parent has increased from 189,240 (Census 2006) to 215,315 in 2011 (Census 2011), and to 218,817 in 2016 (Census 2016)<sup>1</sup> However, there is no clearly discernible trend in the proportion of lone-parent families compared to the general population. From recent census data, it appears likely that lone-parent families will continue to be a major group in Irish society.<sup>1</sup> Given that they are such a significant group in Irish society, it is important to ensure that interventions taken by the state are as well informed and as beneficial as possible for one-parent families.

## Chapter 2 Economic Outcomes for Lone Parent Families

### Key Facts

- (2.1) One parent families have the highest consistent poverty of 26.2% rate of any group in Irish society (SILC 2015)<sup>6</sup>
- (2.2) Lone parents suffer higher rates of deprivation at 57.9% compared to 25.5% in the general population (SILC 2015)<sup>7</sup>
- (2.3) Children in one-parent families are three times as likely (26.2%) to live in 'consistent poverty' than families with two adults with one to three children (7.7%) (SILC 2015)<sup>8</sup>
- (2.4) The consistent poverty threshold for a lone parent with one child is €278 per week or €14,456 per annum<sup>9</sup>
- (2.5) Since 2012 consistent poverty amongst lone parent families has risen from 17.4% to 26.2% in 2015 (SILC 2013-2015)<sup>10</sup>

### (2.6) Child poverty

Principal economic status of lone parents (Census 2011)<sup>11</sup>

- 42% were at work
- 22% were looking after home and family
- 14% were unemployed having lost or given up their previous job
- 12% were retired
- 5% were unable to work due to illness or disability
- 3% were students
- 2% were classified as 'other' or did not state their status

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<sup>6</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO). 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2015 (summary)', page 6. Available at

[http://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20170214120604\\_Survey\\_on\\_Income\\_and\\_Living\\_Conditions\\_2015\\_summary.pdf](http://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20170214120604_Survey_on_Income_and_Living_Conditions_2015_summary.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO). 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2015 (summary)', page 6

<sup>8</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO). 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2015 (full), table 2, page 15. Available at

[http://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20170214120604\\_Survey\\_on\\_Income\\_and\\_Living\\_Conditions\\_2015\\_full.pdf](http://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20170214120604_Survey_on_Income_and_Living_Conditions_2015_full.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Niall Egan, Department of Social Protection (DSP), Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee On Social Protection and Education, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016

<sup>10</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO). 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2013-2015 (summaries). Available at <http://www.cso.ie/en/silc/releasesandpublications/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011reports/census2011profile5householdsandfamilies-livingarrangementsinireland/>

(2.7) The 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions' (SILC) data for 2015<sup>7</sup> revealed that for households with one adult and children under 18 years of age,

- the 'at risk of poverty rate' was 32.6%
- the deprivation rate was 57.9%
- the consistent poverty rate was 26.2%

(2.8) The overall rates for Ireland were:

- The 'at risk of poverty' rate was 16.9%
- The deprivation rate was 25.5%
- The consistent poverty rate was 8.7%

#### Consistent Poverty Rate %

Year	One Parent Families*	State Average	Difference
2004	31.1	7	24.1
2005	27.2	7	20.2
2006	32.5	6.9	25.6
2007	20.1	5.1	15.0
2008	17.8	4.2	13.6
2009	17	5.5	11.5
2010	9.3	6.3	3.0
2011	16.4	6.9	9.5
2012	17.4	7.7	9.7
2013	23	8.2	14.8
2014	22.1	8.8	13.3
2015	26.2	8.7	17.5

*\*Households with one adult and one or more children under eighteen years of age*

*Table 2.1 Consistent poverty rate of one adult households versus average consistent poverty rate for the state 2004-2015<sup>12</sup>*

<sup>12</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO). 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2004-2015'. Available at <http://www.cso.ie/en/silc/releasesandpublications/>

### Consistent Poverty Rate Trend for One Adult Families

Year	Consistent Poverty Rate	Trend
2004	31.1%	
2005	27.2%	-3.9%
2006	32.5%	5.3%
2007	20.1%	-12.4%
2008	17.8%	-2.3%
2009	17.0%	-0.8%
2010	9.3%	-7.7%
2011	16.4%	7.1%
2012	17.4%	1.0%
2013	23.0%	5.6%
2014	22.1%	-0.9%
2015	26.2%	4.1%

*Table 2.2 Trend in consistent poverty rate of one adult households versus 2005-2015<sup>13</sup>*

(2.9) As can be seen from table 2.1 the consistent poverty rate for individuals in one adult households has remained significantly higher than among the general population.

According to Census 2016, the number of children in lone-parent families is 302,868.<sup>1</sup>

(2.10) Preliminary data from Census 2016 suggests the population of children in lone-parent families should see an increase in line with the general population.<sup>1</sup> More detailed data from Census 2016 related to lone-parent families is due to be published by the CSO on the 27 July 2016. According to SILC 2015, 26.2% of children of lone-parent families live in consistent poverty.<sup>8</sup> That is, 79,000 children in lone-parent families live in consistent poverty. SILC 2015 estimates that approximately 175,000 children 'suffer deprivation' and 109,638 are 'at risk of poverty'.<sup>8</sup> Although these are estimates are based on extrapolation of available figures, they are unlikely to be a significant exaggeration of the reality. It is doubtful that many will find these levels acceptable.

<sup>13</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO). 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2004-2015'. Available at <http://www.cso.ie/en/silc/releasesandpublications/>

## **(2.11) Poverty and Risk of Poverty and Deprivation**

Notwithstanding longitudinal research in Ireland and other countries which indicates that it is poverty and not family structure that is the key determinant in predicting outcomes for children, lone-parent families are at much greater risk of poverty than other groups. According to SILC 2015<sup>8</sup> 26.2% of lone-parent families live in 'consistent poverty'. This is an increase from the figure of 22.1% quoted in SILC 2014.<sup>14</sup> This means that, currently, the consistent poverty rate of lone-parent families is approximately three times that of the general population. Further, for the period 2014-2015, the consistent poverty rate for lone parents increased by 4.1% while the consistent poverty rate for the general population decreased by 0.1%.<sup>8&14</sup> This suggests that living standards for lone-parent families continued to decline in a context of increased financial well-being among the general population.

However, despite this high level of consistent poverty, it should be noted that the rate was 32.5% in 2006 (SILC 2006).<sup>15</sup> This was approximately four times the rate in the general population. Rates of deprivation are also strikingly higher in lone-parent households. 60% (approximately) of lone-parent households experience deprivation compared to 29% of the general population. Further, drawing on information captured in Census 2011, 'The Distribution of Wealth in Ireland' notes that 'while single parents make up 4.5% of the household respondents [to Census 2011], they only have 1% of the total share of net wealth'.<sup>16</sup>

Further, recent changes to childcare policy threaten to increase poverty rates among lone parents. Budget 2017 introduced the 'Affordable Childcare Scheme'. This entails the abolition of the CETS (Childcare Education Training Scheme) and CEC schemes. These measures will affect lone parents who are trying to access training while on CE schemes. These schemes guaranteed the maximum amount a parent would pay for childcare if they were doing an ETB/VTOS course or working on a CE scheme. In its present form, the childcare subsidy is only available for crèches. However, many lone parents use informal childcare to facilitate low-hour contracts and unsociable working hours. As such, they are effectively excluded from getting childcare support.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditions2014/>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/eusilc/2006/eusilc\\_2006.pdf](http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/eusilc/2006/eusilc_2006.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Cormac Staunton, 'The Distribution of Wealth in Ireland, December 2015, page 20

## **(2.12) Causes/Links to Poverty**

While Irish and international research exists which suggests that the mother's educational level is the most important factor in determining the wellbeing of a child as opposed to family type, there is also strong evidence that poverty is the main factor in creating poor outcomes for children.<sup>17</sup>

Evidence also suggests that lone parent families are far more likely to be at risk of poverty, to be in poverty or experiencing deprivation.<sup>13</sup> Further, it is probable that a mother's educational level is strongly linked to family economic well-being in any type of family.<sup>17</sup>

## **(2.13) Cost and Availability of Childcare**

Childcare costs in Ireland are among the highest in the OECD (reference). Lone parents, as the sole carers of their children, are more strongly affected by these costs.<sup>18</sup> They simply have no one else to bear the responsibility of caring for their children. One Family stated in their submission to the Committee

*"Affordable and accessible childcare and afterschool care are essential in-work supports which must be provided to enable lone parents to engage in the labour market. Families headed by a lone parent who participate in the paid workforce, or are engaged in educational or job training programmes, require care of their children."*<sup>19</sup>

The effect of the availability or lack thereof of affordable childcare will be discussed in chapter 3.

## **(2.14) Teenagers**

Research by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice which was funded by the Department of Social Protection has shown that the cost of raising a teenager is higher than the cost of raising younger children.<sup>20</sup>

However, existing policy does not reflect this disparity. There is no different rate of QCI between young children and teenagers. The Vincentian partnership 'minimum essential living standards' calculator reports that a teenager costs over €48 per week more than a young child.<sup>20</sup> This is not reflected by a differential rate. The Society of St Vincent De Paul has also remarked that, of the

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.esri.ie/publications/cherishing-all-the-children-equally-children-in-ireland-100-years-on-from-the-easter-rising/> Pages 75-77

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF\\_3\\_4\\_Childcare\\_support\\_May2014.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF_3_4_Childcare_support_May2014.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> S:\Committees\32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\Opening statement from One Family on issues facing lone parents 12 January 2017.pdf

<sup>20</sup> <http://misc.ie/home>



families they encounter, parents with teenagers are often those most in need of the charity's assistance. Moreover, children's allowance is forfeited when a child turns eighteen years of age.<sup>21</sup> This policy fails to take into account the fact that many children may have a year left in secondary school when they turn eighteen. For the purposes of child benefit, eighteen year olds do not qualify as children. However, eighteen year old children also do not qualify as 'adult dependents'. This is an unfair burden for parents of children in sixth year.

### **(2.15) Effects on Well-Being**

Children in lone-parent families are more likely to suffer from long-term illness and disability than children in two-adult households. These outcomes are strongly linked to poverty.<sup>17</sup>

### **(2.16) Housing**

The challenges faced by lone parents are exacerbated by the increased cost of housing. The problem is particularly pronounced in the private rental market. Rents increased by an average of 13.5% in 2016 (DAFT 2017).<sup>22</sup> As discussed above, lone parents do not have the same financial capacity or resilience as other family types. Moreover, a lack of education and the prohibitive costs of childcare restrict the ability of lone parent to increase their incomes. As a result of these and other factors, lone parents may be disproportionately vulnerable to increases in the cost of housing.<sup>71</sup> Available figures for homelessness show that 65% of homeless families are lone-parent families while lone-parent families make up only 26% of all families.<sup>23</sup> Further research in this area might focus on explaining this disparity thereby facilitating more effective intervention.

### **(2.17) Educational Levels**

Lone parents have lower levels of education when compared to the general population (Census 2011).<sup>2</sup> Research has shown that better educated parents have better educated children and that those children have better outcomes in economic terms as well as a better level of mental and physical health.<sup>17</sup> For lone-parent families headed by a mother, research shows that the mother's level of education is more important than family structure in determining the well-being of children.<sup>17</sup> Education for lone parents may present a huge opportunity to improve outcomes for all members of lone parent families.

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<sup>21</sup> [http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/273\\_Child-Benefit.aspx](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/273_Child-Benefit.aspx)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.daft.ie/report/ronan-lyons-2016q4-rental>

<sup>23</sup> <S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\Opening statement from Focus Ireland on issues facing lone parents 12 January 2017.pdf>

## **(2.18) Maintenance**

In Ireland, a comparatively low level of maintenance is paid to lone parents by their former partners. Recently, a 28% drop in maintenance payments to lone parents has been observed.<sup>24</sup> This can be correlated with a practice recently adopted by the Department of Social Protection. In July 2013, the Department began writing to the liable relative informing them they no longer have an obligation to pay maintenance once the child in question has reached seven years of age (Louise Bayliss 2 P9). Further, lone parents are required to pursue maintenance as a condition of payments received from the Department of Social Protection.<sup>17</sup> This is a cause for concern and will be discussed at greater length below.

The introduction of the OFP scheme on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1997 compelled a larger cohort of lone parents to seek maintenance than had previously been the case. The Department writes,

the introduction of the OFP scheme extended the requirement for lone parents to make efforts to obtain maintenance from their former spouses to unmarried cases. Prior to that, this provision only applied to separated spouses. Thus, the OFP scheme sought to relieve hardship for lone parents who had not secured adequate, or any, maintenance from their spouse or the other parent of the child. Also, where possible, the cost of any support.<sup>25</sup>

(2.19) Restoring and increasing the levels of maintenance would help to raise some families out of poverty while also having the benefit of helping to maintain the familial link between children and second parents. Moreover, current policy requires that maintenance payment be calculated as a source of income when considering applications for rent supplement and other social welfare payments. The effects of this policy on the financial well-being of lone parent families warrant closer scrutiny. This is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

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<sup>24</sup> <S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J05. 08-11-16 NUI, Barnardos - Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\Opening Statement - SPARK.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Office of Government Procurement. ‘Supplementary Request for Tenders (SRFT) under The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Framework Agreements for the Provision of All Governments (Aog) Business and Management Consultancy and Advisory Services and Other Related Services – RFT 98991 – PAS007F’, page 8

## Chapter 3 Lone Parents and Employment

### Key Facts

#### (3.1) Employment and Activation

- (3.2) Only 42.5 per cent of lone parents were in employment, compared with 69.3 per cent for heads of two-parent families. (Census 2011, CSO)<sup>2</sup>
- (3.3) Of lone parents, 14.4 per cent were unemployed compared with 11.8 per cent of couples (Census 2011, CSO)<sup>2</sup>
- (3.4) Education: lone parents overall have lower levels of education compared to the rest of society<sup>2</sup>
- (3.5) Childcare, or lack of childcare supports, have often been cited as a barrier to labour activation, not just for lone parents but for all parents particularly women<sup>26</sup>
- (3.6) Research shows that finding employment is the best route out of poverty<sup>27</sup>

#### (3.7) Millar and Crosse Report

A recent report, Lone Parents and Activation; What Works and Why<sup>26</sup> published by the UNESCO-Child and Family Research Centre reviews international literature in an Irish context.<sup>26</sup> The funding for the report was provided by the Department of Social Protection under its social inclusion division's support for social policy research. The report considered labour market approaches to activation with the aim of creating good social and economic outcomes for lone parent families. The report carried out an extensive literature review and an empirical study by interviewing organisations providing activation supports to lone parents, their stakeholders and representatives from organisations representing lone parents.

(3.8) One of the key concerns raised by those interviewed in relation to the changes in the One Parent Family (OPF) payment policy was about OPF recipients who were in part-employment prior to the change. These individuals had experienced a reduction in income as a result of the changes. This

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<sup>26</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, 'Lone Parents and Activation, What Works and Why: A Review of the International Evidence in the Irish Context, page 67  
[https://aran.library.nuigalway.ie/bitstream/handle/10379/6044/Millar\\_and\\_Crosse\\_Activation\\_Report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://aran.library.nuigalway.ie/bitstream/handle/10379/6044/Millar_and_Crosse_Activation_Report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>27</sup> Doing Better for Families OECD 2011, Page 14

change encouraged welfare dependency as lone parents found that taking up work could actually reduce income.<sup>26</sup>

The report points out that a lone parent's capacity for work cannot be equated to a parent in a two parent family. Lone parents devote more of their time to caring responsibilities, responsibilities which impinge on their availability for work. Millar and Crosse conclude that a package of supports for lone parents should include pre-employment supports, employment supports, financial support and childcare support.<sup>28</sup>

### **(3.9) Pre-employment Supports**

The 2011 census showed that 40.8% of all Irish lone parents have not completed second level education.<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly, there is an important association in receiving education and training and moving into and retaining employment. Higher educational attainment is a significant factor in reducing welfare dependency and providing adequate income levels for lone-parent families. Millar and Crosse point out that case worker support is important in both facilitating employment and supporting employment thereafter (Millar & Crosse 2016).<sup>29</sup>

### **(3.10) Employment Supports**

As lone parents are not a homogeneous group the level of support necessary will vary greatly. Certain 'work-ready' lone parents may require very little support while those more distant from the labour market may require intensive support. Ongoing contact and support from caseworkers will be required for many individuals.

### **(3.11) Financial Supports**

It is essential that income adequacy is maintained if lone parents are to successfully make the transition to employment and avoid poverty. Scenarios where lone parents move into employment and experience lowered incomes cannot provide an incentive to engage in nor maintain employment.

(3.12) In their presentation to the Committee, Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse remarked that 'in-work benefits require flexibility and responsiveness to the lived-labour market experiences of

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<sup>28</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee On Social Protection and Education, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, page 2

lone parents’.<sup>29</sup> They also cautioned against the propensity of activation measures to create ‘in-work poverty’.<sup>30</sup> After the reforms to the OFP, Family Income Supplement (FIS) was the second most popular scheme to which lone parents were moved after Jobseeker’s Transitional Payment. Of the 35, 913 individuals who were moved off the OFP in the period January 2015 to March 2017, 10,576 rely on FIS to supplement their income.<sup>29</sup>

### **(3.13) Childcare Supports**

The cost of childcare is commonly mentioned both anecdotally and in salient literature as being a significant disincentive to lone parent employment.<sup>31</sup> Studies have shown that financial subsidies have a positive effect on the use of childcare in lone parent families and contribute to sustainable employment.

*On average, low-wage sole parents are left with barely 20% of their gross earnings effectively available for the family to consume, and in several countries low-wage sole parents are not financially better off in paid work [Canada (Ontario), the Czech Republic, Ireland, Japan, Slovenia, and Switzerland (Zürich)]. The cost of childcare acts as a major barrier to work in Ireland and Canada (Ontario) where it more than doubles the effective tax rates faced by low-wage sole parents.*

(‘Doing Better for Families’ OECD 2011)<sup>32</sup>

Existing schemes fail to legislate for the exigencies of lone parenthood, neglecting to take into account the particular responsibilities of the sole carer. For instance, lone parents on ETB/ VTOS courses currently have to clock in to get their full social welfare.<sup>24</sup> There is no allowance for the fact that they may have to take time off in the event of a school closure or to care for a sick child. Moreover, if a parent is late for the course they may lose money. As a result, many lone parents view participation in these schemes less as an opportunity than a risk. If their caring responsibilities force them into taking a day off from their course, they may lose a day or more of their social welfare payments. This acts as a huge barrier to getting lone parents back into training. Further, the

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<sup>29</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee On Social Protection and Education, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, page 3

<sup>30</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee On Social Protection and Education, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, page 4

<sup>31</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, ‘Lone Parents and Activation, What Works and Why: A Review of the International Evidence in the Irish Context page 20

<sup>32</sup> *Doing Better For Families*, OECD 2011, Chapter 6, page 223

childcare that is provided is after school only whereas most courses start at 8.30. The current situation is such that the only way a lone parent on social welfare can guarantee their payment is to avoid engaging with training schemes by staying at home.

(3.14) Adequate childcare places need to be available for parents to access them. Flexibility in the provision of care and financial supports is also important. For example, older children may require childcare in order for their parents to work although the state may not see fourteen year old (or older) children as falling into a category that requires childcare.

### **(3.15) Provision of Activation Supports**

As stated by Ms. Simonetta Ryan of the Department of Social Protection, deciding on the correct strategy is a significant challenge:

“- this goes back many decades and there is nothing new here – concerns the question of how one can prevent single parents, who are largely women, from becoming locked in poverty for many years, from not progressing and from not getting an education. It is a matter of deciding on the best policy?”<sup>33</sup>

Further, any policy decision needs to be informed by a calculation of any and all resources needed to realise the proposed intervention. At the risk of being reductive, policy interventions tend to be identified as either ‘work first’ or ‘education first’. The question of which category of intervention is more appropriate to lone parents remains an open one. However, in their opening remarks to the Committee, Drs. Millar and Crosse suggested that an ‘education first’ approach is apposite;

given the characteristics of OPF recipients not working, an education- or training-first approach will be required in order to increase their capacity to attain and sustain paid employment. The 2011 census shows that 40.8% of all Irish lone parents have not completed second-level education...There is an important association between receiving training and moving into work and retaining employment. International evidence suggests that lone parents with low levels of education generally participate in low wage, low skill service industry jobs, typically on a part-time basis. Educational attainment is persistently identified as a significant factor in reducing welfare dependency and providing a suitable income for lone parents and their children.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Simonetta Ryan, Department of Social Protection (DSP), Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee On Social Protection and Education, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016

<sup>34</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, Presentation to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, page 2

(3.16) The research conducted by Millar and Crosse thus suggests that an ‘education first’ policy intervention has the greatest potential to return lone parents to the labour market. Importantly, they also argue that this kind of intervention can serve to ameliorate the historical correlation between lone parenthood and low quality employment. In his presentation to the Committee, Dr. John Sweeney drew a similar conclusion. Although, as Dr. Sweeney observed, ‘many types of labour market evidence and reasoning support a “work first” approach,’ given that the recent ‘recovery in employment leaves an increasingly disadvantaged hard core of LTU behind, it becomes more important than ever that literacy, numeracy and digital deficits are accurately diagnosed and effectively redressed’.<sup>35</sup> On balance, Dr. Sweeney advocated an ‘education-first’ policy intervention, recommending that Pathways to Work be more closely aligned ‘with broader national policies [which] will require us to tilt more to train-first [rather] than work first’.<sup>36</sup>

(3.17) In their presentation to the Committee, Barnardos characterised reforms to the OFP as a ‘work first’ intervention. They observed,

at a policy level, we know that there are concerns about the rise in jobless households in Ireland and a continuing mantra that a job is the route out of poverty’(sic).These OPFP reforms rolled out from 2011 to 2015 altering the eligibility for OPFP by lowering the age of the youngest child from 18 to 17 years. Pushing through these reforms [the Department] failed to recognise that lone parents are also full time carers...the biggest flaw to this reform was it not being accompanied with sufficient supports and quality affordable childcare (sic).<sup>37</sup>

(3.18) On this analysis, lone parents are not enabled to pursue the education which could lead to meaningful employment. Moreover, as a ‘work first’ policy intervention, the reforms to the OFP are of questionable value in the context of the research performed by Millar and Crosse.

Existing research calls into question not only the type of activation measures afforded to lone parents, it also questions the method of delivery. Mary Murphy argues that ‘restricting activation measures to those on the live register will have the unintended consequences of leaving many women in poverty and outside the scope of labour market programmes’.<sup>38</sup> This is because ‘activation into compulsory full-time paid employment without an accommodation and redistribution of care...traps women into a triple burden of paid employment, care and domestic work’.<sup>39</sup> In other

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<sup>35</sup> John Sweeney, Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017, page 6

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Barnardos, Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection: Lone Parents, page 2

<sup>38</sup> Mary Murphy, ‘Careless and Careful Activation’, page 14

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, page 13-14

words, a coercive policy of making registration on the live register a condition of access to activation schemes is unsupported by the available evidence.

The ability of lone parents to access activation schemes is complicated by rules pertaining to attendance. Thus, lone parents are over-represented on CE schemes which require only part-time availability.<sup>40</sup> As discussed above, ETB/VTOS courses do not permit participants to take days off. Mary Murphy observes that ‘part-time work is the dominant work pattern for lone parents’ and, reviewing the data captured through focus groups noted that ‘all else being equal, most [lone parents] would work if they could satisfy childcare requirements but many wanted to work on a part-time basis only’.<sup>41</sup> While the Jobseeker’s Transition payment waives the requirement to be available for full-time work for lone parents, the scheme does not acknowledge part-time availability.<sup>42</sup> That is, many labour activation schemes are unavailable on a part-time basis. Now defunct, JobBridge, required participants to be available for a minimum of 30 hours.<sup>43</sup> As a result, many lone parents are precluded from accessing such schemes. Similarly, the defunct Work Placement Programme required participants to be available for a minimum of 25 hours. JobsPlus requires participants to be available for 30 hours of work per week.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, lone parents of school-age children continue to have caring duties, particularly during school holidays.

### **(3.19) Case Worker Support**

Millar and Crosse, in their presentation to the Committee, pointed to the importance of adequate case worker support for lone parents. They observed that case worker support is ‘fundamental’ in ‘facilitating the progression of lone parents...both at the pre-employment stage and continually thereafter. Such support is...effective...(and is) a low cost policy option...linked to job retention’.<sup>45</sup>

In its presentation on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2017, the Department of Social Protection furnished the Committee with details regarding the level of case worker support it has provided to lone parents to

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<sup>40</sup> Mary Murphy, ‘Careless and Careful Activation’, page 65

<sup>41</sup> Mary Murphy, ‘Careless and Careful Activation’, page 33

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Jobseekers-Transitional-Payment.aspx>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/JobBridge-Interns.aspx>

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[http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/unemployment\\_and\\_redundancy/employment\\_support\\_schemes/fas\\_work\\_placement\\_programme.html](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/unemployment_and_redundancy/employment_support_schemes/fas_work_placement_programme.html)

<sup>45</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, Presentation to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, page 3



date.<sup>46</sup> Of the 14,500 lone parents whose youngest child is seven years or older currently availing of Jobseeker's Transitional Payment, 9000 have been 'selected for activation'. As of the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2017, 6000 were in the

activation phase which means that they...have been case managed, are scheduled for an engagement or are awaiting an appointment time. The remaining 3000 individuals have been fully case managed which means they have met with a case officer, have agreed a personal plan and are progressing with this plan which includes moving into education and training on foot of their engagement.<sup>47</sup>

However, Millar and Crosse also pointed to the importance of training case workers to address issues particular to lone parents, observing that 'caseworkers require specific training on the challenges faced by lone parents in their everyday lives'.<sup>48</sup>

### **(3.20) Education**

Dr. Sweeney's position that policy should adopt a 'train first' approach should be understood as a recommendation to deliver vocational training. That is, Dr. Sweeney suggested that market demands should inform curriculum development. He pointed in particular to the growing employer demand for 'soft skills' which, although they 'are growing in importance for gaining any job...are not acquired easily'.<sup>49</sup> In its presentation to the Committee on the topic of labour activation, the Department produced similar findings. The Department conducted a review of Pathways to Work in 2015 and, 'taking account of the feedback from the consultation process', suggested that it will realise policies which 'improve the alignment and delivery of education sector reforms with labour market requirements'.<sup>50</sup>

### **(3.21) Lone parents and quality of work**

In their presentation to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Millar and Crosse pointed to 'the tendency for lone parents coming off the OPF to work in low-skilled, low-income employment'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Appendix A [S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\2017.01.12 Opening Statement for JOC SR.doc](#)

<sup>47</sup> Department of Social Protection, Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, page 2

<sup>48</sup> Millar and Crosse, page 3

<sup>49</sup> John Sweeney, page 6

<sup>50</sup> Department of Social Protection, Presentation to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016, page 7

<sup>51</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection and Education, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, page 3

Similarly, One Family suggested a correlation between lone parenthood and ‘low quality’ work observing that ‘precarious work’ and ‘zero-hour contracts’ represented a ‘specific challenge for one-parent families’. <sup>52</sup> In a 2008 study, One Family explored the correlation between lone parenthood and low quality work:

only a small number of respondents are in management, professional (including associate professional) or skilled manual jobs (13.9 per cent)...The majority of OFP recipients are concentrated in sales occupations, caring occupations or clerical work (60.4 per cent), with a significant number in other services or unskilled manual work (20.4 per cent). Common responses in these categories were secretary, childcare assistant, shop assistant, home help or catering work. <sup>53</sup>

Millar and Crosse thus note that ‘in comparison to married parents, lone parents are a disadvantaged group in Irish society, with only 2.4% reported as professional workers and 27.3% skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled manual workers’. <sup>31</sup> Further, in 2015, more than 49% of the families in receipt of FIS were one parent families. <sup>54</sup> The tendency of lone parents to engage in precarious, low-paid employment is attributable to a number of factors. Millar and Crosse suggest that, in attempting to balance employment with their caring opportunities, lone parents have recourse to forms of work which involve ‘non-standard working hours’. <sup>55</sup> Further, they attribute lone parents’ participation in ‘low-skilled employment’ to the relatively ‘low levels of education’ among this population. <sup>31</sup>

### **(3.22) Previous Lack of Engagement**

The OECD report ‘Babies and Bosses 2003’ pointed out the Irish state has failed to engage with lone parents for many years. Lone parents were given a payment until their children were 18 or 22 years old and then left to their own devices. These payments were processed centrally and there was no local engagement between the Department and lone parents. <sup>56</sup>

(3.23) This meant that, lone parents, many of whom were unemployed with relatively low education levels, were also distant from supports that may have been offered by the Department. The Treoir

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<sup>52</sup> One Family, Presentation to Joint Committee on Social Protection: Supporting Lone Parents into Work or Education, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017

<sup>53</sup> One Family, Lone Parents and Employment: What are the real issues? A research report by One Family, November 2008, page 43

<sup>54</sup> Department of Social Protection, Annual SWS Statistical Report 2015, Section F Children, <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Annual-SWS-Statistical-Information-Report-2015.aspx>

<sup>55</sup> Michelle Millar and Rosemary Crosse, Lone Parents and Activation, What Works and Why: A Review of the International Evidence in the Irish Context, page 44

<sup>56</sup> Babies and Bosses Vol. 2 Ireland, Austria and Japan, OECD 2003, page 23

report, “Watch Them Grow”, indicated that approximately 30% of lone parents not in employment had never been in employment. It also identified several different cohorts of lone parents each of which required different levels of support and intervention.<sup>57</sup>

(3.24) In 2006, the Government produced the ‘discussion paper’, ‘Proposal for Supporting Lone Parents’. This report ‘aimed to tackle the relatively high risk of poverty and social exclusion’ faced by lone-parent families.<sup>58</sup> The report was divided into two sections, both conducted ‘under the auspices of the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, chaired by the Taoiseach’.<sup>59</sup> The first section constituted ‘a review of obstacles to employment for lone parents carried out by the Senior Official Group on Social Inclusion, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach’.<sup>60</sup> The second section was a ‘review of income support arrangements for lone parents carried out within... [the] Department of Social and Family Affairs’.<sup>61</sup> Both sections concluded with detailed recommendations and suggestions for reforming supports for lone parents.

### **(3.25) Current Level of Engagement**

The Department has stated that it wishes to increase its level of engagement with lone parents and has begun to step up interaction with lone parents<sup>62</sup>(this will be discussed further in chapter 6).

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<sup>57</sup> Watch Them Grow, Owen Corrigan, Treoir 2014, page 41

<sup>58</sup> ‘Government Discussion Paper: Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents’, page 5

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Department of Social Protection, Presentation to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016, page 2

## Chapter 4 Maintenance

### Key Facts

#### (4.1) Maintenance

- (4.2) Ireland has no state agency with responsibility for child maintenance payments
- (4.3) Parents are forced to seek payments through an adversarial and costly court system.
- (4.4) Maintenance, when obtained, is deducted at a rate of 100% from rent supplement and 50% from other social welfare payments<sup>24</sup>
- (4.5) Lone parents in receipt of OFP are required to seek maintenance from the second parent<sup>63</sup>
- (4.6) In Ireland, 35% of lone parents are in receipt of child maintenance payments<sup>64</sup>
- (4.7) In other jurisdictions such as Sweden, New Zealand and Canada, the state is involved in facilitating the transfer of maintenance to parents<sup>65,66,67&68</sup>
- (4.8) In Sweden, if the parent fails to or cannot pay maintenance, the state provides the payment and recoups the money from the liable parent subject to their ability to pay<sup>66</sup>

#### (4.9) Child Maintenance in Ireland

As a greater proportion of single parent families have low income, the effects of missing or late child maintenance payments on these families can be very damaging. In Ireland, the state takes on little responsibility in helping the lone parent family obtain these payments. Obtaining maintenance payment from an estranged spouse can be very difficult. At the very least, the relationship between former partners may have disintegrated. Any request for monetary support has the potential to exacerbate an already emotionally fraught situation. Further, as will be discussed below, a number of marriages and partnerships have broken down as a result of domestic violence. Clearly, this complicates any attempt a lone parent might make to seek maintenance. When faced with a lack of payment, a lone parent's only method of forcing payment is through the courts. Such action may prove costly and time consuming while the need for money may be immediate and desperate.

However, while the DSP puts pressure on lone parents (mainly women) to seek maintenance, there is no reciprocal measure for those obliged to pay it. Further, when maintenance is assessed an allowance of €95.23 is made if a person is paying for their own housing costs.<sup>63</sup> This is not reflective

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<sup>63</sup> <https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/One-Parent-Family-Payment.aspx>

<sup>64</sup> Niall Egan, Department of Social Protection, before Joint Committee on Social Protection, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016

of real housing costs and there is no differential if there is more than one child. For instance a mother with five children can be heavily penalised with no allowance made for her additional housing costs.

## **International Models**

### **(4.10) UK**

The Child Maintenance Service facilitates the agreement, transfer and calculation of child maintenance provided the parties have no satisfactory agreement in place. The agency facilitates transfer by collecting payments from the contributing parent. It can also sanction the individual for breaches of the maintenance agreement.<sup>65</sup>

### **(4.11) Sweden**

The parents are obliged to pay maintenance for their children. If a parent does not pay or cannot pay then the state will provide maintenance. This can then be recouped from the liable parent subject to their ability to pay.

*“Parents have to pay maintenance for their children. They have to pay as much as is reasonable in view of the child’s needs and the parents’ financial capacity. The obligation to provide maintenance ceases when the child attains the age of 18. However, if the child’s education is not then concluded, the maintenance obligation continues as long as the schooling continues, but at most until the child attains the age of 21. A maintenance allowance has to be paid by the parent who does not have custody of the child and is not living with the child. A parent who has custody of a child but is not living with the child also has to pay a maintenance allowance. The maintenance allowance is decided in an agreement or a court judgment. If the parent does not fulfil his or her obligation to pay maintenance, the child may be entitled to maintenance support. This support is paid by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. The parent who is liable to pay maintenance has to reimburse all or part of what the Swedish Social Insurance Agency has paid to the child.”*

*Parents and children– brief information about current legislation-Ministry of Justice Sweden 2010*<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-child-maintenance>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.government.se/contentassets/b43cb5785f0a4bdfb7ca8c8850dcb2dc/parents-and-children---brief-information-about-current-legislation>

#### **(4.12) Australia**

The parties may enter binding agreement or court order. Payment is calculated by government department based on income and level of custody. If each parent shares custody time equally, then there is no payment.<sup>67</sup>

#### **(4.13) New Zealand**

If the liable parent falls in arrears in their child support payments, the IRD will make the liable parent's employer deduct the arrears from their pay, up to the maximum of 40% of their pay. The rest is referred to as 'protected earnings'.<sup>68</sup>

#### **(4.14) Ireland**

Ireland has no state agency with responsibility for child maintenance payments. Maintenance can be paid by mutual agreement or by a court order. If an expected maintenance payment is not paid, is not paid on time or if a second parent is unwilling to submit to an agreed maintenance payment regime, then parents are forced to seek payments through an adversarial and costly court system.

(4.15) The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women made the following recommendation to the Irish state in relation to lone parent maintenance: <sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/child-support-and-separated-parents>

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/>

<sup>69</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ireland

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fIRL%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fIRL%2fCO%2f6-7&Lang=en)

“57. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) In line with the Committee’s general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, undertake research on the economic consequences of divorce on both spouses, with specific attention to the differences in spouses’ earning potential and human capital, which addresses gender-based economic disparities between spouses resulting from the existing sex segregation of the labour market, the gender wage gap, and women’s disproportionate share in unpaid work, particularly focusing on whether judges take these factors into account in their decisions; and

(b) Consider establishing a statutory maintenance authority and prescribing amounts for child maintenance in order to reduce the burden of women to litigate for child maintenance orders.”

(4.16) The introduction of the OFP scheme extended the requirement for lone parents to make efforts to obtain maintenance from their former spouses to unmarried cases.<sup>70</sup> Previously, this provision only applied to separated spouses. Although the OFP scheme sought to relieve hardship for lone parents who had not secured adequate, or any, maintenance from their spouse or the other parent of the child, there were unfavourable consequences for lone parents. The cost of any support given to lone parents from the spouse or the other parent of the child now became recoverable by the state.<sup>70</sup> Further, the requirement to contact the former partner brought unintended potential negative consequences.

(4.17) A lone parent may not have contact details for the second parent or there may be difficulties in their relationship. These may include abuse and there may have been an abusive relationship in the past. Despite assurance from the Department that they will not require a lone parent to seek maintenance where there has been an abusive relationship in the past,<sup>70</sup> an abusive relationship may exist without having been proved to exist and so the area is clearly problematic.

(4.18) Once a parent is in receipt of child maintenance they risk losing other payments. 100% of the amount received is deducted from rent supplement and 50% from other welfare payments.<sup>24</sup>

(4.19) As maintenance payments may be necessary to protect lone parent families from poverty, the Irish system does not appear to be well set up to achieve this aim.

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/One-Parent-Family-Payment.aspx>

## Chapter 5 Housing and Homelessness

### Key Facts

- (5.1) Homelessness disproportionately affects single parent families<sup>71</sup>
- (5.2) During the week 20-26 February 2017, 1239 families were in emergency homeless accommodation in Ireland. 66% of these were lone parent families (Department of Housing)<sup>72</sup>
- (5.3) Private rental costs have risen in Ireland with average costs in the private rental sector increasing by 13.5% in 2016 (DAFT Rental Price Report)<sup>22</sup>
- (5.4) Rent assistance payments failed to increase in line with rising rents. Steps to remedy this may have been too late to prevent some from becoming homeless
- (5.5) Of the 91,600 households on the social housing list in 2016, 27,851 were one parent families (30%). The proportion of those on the list in single parent households was unchanged from 2013 (30%).<sup>73</sup>

### (5.6) Lone Parents and Homelessness

Ireland is currently facing a homelessness problem that is widely acknowledged as being unequalled in the modern era. This crisis disproportionately affects lone-parent families. In November 2016, there were 1,205 families in emergency homeless family accommodation in Ireland. 65% of these were one parent families. To place this in context, 26% of families in the state with children are one parent families.<sup>71</sup>

### (5.7) Causes of the Crisis

Unlike in the past when the reasons for homelessness were often related to social problems, the current situation is mainly economic in nature. The recent economic crisis has stalled the house building sector, a situation which has resulted in a lack of supply and a consequent rise in prices.<sup>74</sup> A failure to provide social housing has exacerbated the situation. Private rental costs have risen in Ireland with average costs in the private rental sector increasing by 13.5% in 2016.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> [S:\Committees\32. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\Opening statement from Focus Ireland on issues facing lone parents 12 January 2017.pdf](#)

<sup>72</sup> The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. 'The Department of Planning, Housing, Community and Local Government Homelessness Report February 2017', page 4. Available at [http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/homeless\\_report\\_-\\_february\\_2017.pdf](http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/homeless_report_-_february_2017.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> Housing Agency, 'Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2016: Key Findings', page 14

<sup>74</sup> [http://rebuildingireland.ie/install/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Rebuilding-Ireland\\_Action-Plan.pdf](http://rebuildingireland.ie/install/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Rebuilding-Ireland_Action-Plan.pdf)



### **(5.8) Causes of Family Homelessness**

Drawing on its own research and administrative data and information provided by the Housing Agency and the Dublin Region Housing Executive, Focus Ireland concludes that the majority of families now in emergency homeless accommodation had their last home in the private rental sector. Rising rents and a failure to link Rent Supplement to market rent values are also cited as contributing factors.<sup>71</sup> Some factors that can be considered normal turnover are causing homelessness as families are unable to acquire a new home due to limited supply and high rental costs. An identifiable group has emerged of newly formed families who have become homeless due to being unable to establish an independent home.

(5.9) As indicated above, the Department of Housing estimated that, in 2016, 65% of the 1,205 families in emergency accommodation were lone-parent families.<sup>71</sup> However, this figure could be misleading. Túsla provides emergency accommodation to families who have become homeless as a result of domestic violence. The Department of Housing's reckoning does not take this cohort into account. As such, the number of lone-parent families in emergency accommodation could be higher than that estimated by the Department.

### **(5.10) Evictions**

Landlords may evict tenants to sell their property or to use the property for their own family. Many households find alternative accommodation during their notice period and never become homeless. As can be seen from the very high proportion of lone parent families in emergency homeless accommodation, it seems that they are less able to make these arrangements in order to avoid homelessness.

### **(5.11) Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is also a cause of homelessness in lone parent families. In a recent study carried out by Focus Ireland, 11 of 70 respondents (all lone parents) cited domestic violence as the main cause of their current homelessness. A further five reported that domestic violence had been a factor in reducing their housing stability in the past.<sup>71</sup> This data only relates to families housed in accommodation funded under section 10 of the Housing Act. Specialist services funded by Túsla are not included. If these data were combined we may see a far greater impact caused by domestic violence.

### **(5.12) Difficulties Faced by Lone Parent Families in Emergency Accommodation**

Apart from the obvious drawbacks including lack of privacy, overcrowding and lack of basic facilities such as a table to complete homework, lone parent families can face less obvious difficulties such as having to bring several children to different schools with different starting times from an inconvenient starting point. Moreover, being on time for school and on time for work can pose a huge problem for lone parents. Transport costs may strain already scant financial resources. Less obvious difficulties abound. For example, often children are not allowed in the kitchen in emergency accommodation. At the same time they may not be left unsupervised. These two reasonable rules present an impossible situation for the single individual. Frequent moves between different emergency accommodation present greater logistical difficulties for lone parents as they cannot leave their children while they transport their belongings to the new accommodation.

### **(5.13) Lone Parents Exiting Homelessness**

Current legislation stipulates that if someone is in receipt of HAP they must give up their existing place on the social housing list. For many families, and lone parents in particular, this requirement, along with the ongoing insecurity of tenure in the private rental market, can lead to a hard choice between the desire to leave emergency accommodation and the long term security which social housing might provide for their children e.g. in terms of school enrolment.

While individuals can request a place on the housing transfer list this is far less expedient than inclusion in social housing list. Until enhanced security of tenure and long term leases are widely available for tenants it is not accurate to claim HAP is fully meeting the social housing needs of families.

As lone parents have fewer financial resources, it would seem there could be a risk they could have greater difficulty escaping from homelessness. Focus Ireland stated that 77% of families it supported out of homelessness were lone parent families.<sup>71</sup> More research is needed in this area to clarify the situation.

## Chapter 6 Interventions Department of Social Protection

### Key Facts

- (6.1) 2003 OECD report bosses and babies suggests long term poverty may be reinforced by One Parent Family payment coupled with the lack of government engage with one parent families.<sup>75</sup>
- (6.2) The Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2012, which was enacted on 1 May, 2012, introduced changes to the structure of the One-Parent Family Payment (OFP).<sup>76</sup>
- (6.3) These changes were applied to both new and existing recipients and to the age of the youngest child at which payment ceases was reduced from 18 to 7.<sup>76</sup>
- (6.4) Anomalies in the scheme have been although the reforms were intended to encourage lone parents off social welfare and onto an in work payment, many parent who transferred to FIS will now be better off transferring back to JST.
- (6.5) The benefit of FIS has been eroded. Traditionally seen as a means of lifting families out of poverty, local authorities, in considering applications for rent supplement and SUSI grants among other payments, now calculate FIS as a source of income.<sup>77</sup>
- (6.6) 48, 827 people have moved from the OFP to other social welfare payments as a result of the reforms<sup>78</sup>

### (6.7) Changes to the One-Parent Family Payment and Associated Policy Changes

The most significant issue affecting lone parents since 2012 has been the changes to the administration of the OFP. These reforms were commenced in the Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2012, which was enacted on 1 May, 2012.

### (6.8) Context of the Reforms

In its supplementary request for tender, the Department of Social Protection observes that

The One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) scheme has provided income support to lone parents since its introduction in 1997. However, as this income support was passive in nature it involved limited engagement by the Department with recipients. The non-conditionality nature of the OFP payment,

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<sup>75</sup> Babies and Bosses Vol. 2 Ireland, Austria and Japan, OECD 2003, Page 24

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/12/section/4/enacted/en/html#sec4>

<sup>77</sup> [S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\Opening statement from Focus Ireland on issues facing lone parents 12 January 2017.pdf](#)

<sup>78</sup> SRFT, page 11

coupled with its very long duration, over time, may have engendered long-term social welfare dependency, and associated poverty for some lone parent families.

Despite significant levels of spending on lone parents (in excess of €1 billion per annum from 2008 and 2012) lone parents continued to be significantly more at risk of poverty, deprivation and in consistent poverty when compared to the population as a whole.

Analysis has shown that being at work reduces the at-risk-of-poverty rate for lone parents by three-quarters – compared to the at-risk-of-poverty rate for lone parents who do not work.<sup>79</sup>

### **(6.9) Department's Rationale for Reforms to the OFP**

In the same document, the Department offers the following rationale for reforming the One Parent Family Payment:

families in Ireland through an active labour market activation policy was addressed in detail in the OECD 2003 report, "Babies and Bosses: Reconciling Work and Family Life". The report argued that passive income support policy towards lone parents until their youngest child was aged 18 years (or 22 years if in full-time education), was a significant contributory factor to the low levels of employment, and high levels of poverty, among them.

The Department reached the same conclusion in its own report, "Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents", published in 2006, which highlighted Ireland's outlier status in terms of the maximum age threshold for the youngest child, as well as the need to bring the OFP scheme more in line with international standards – where there was a general movement away from long-term and non-conditional income support towards a more active engagement approach. These recommendations formed the basis for the decision to gradually lower the maximum age threshold for the youngest child on the OFP scheme to seven years from 2011 until 2015 and, also, to improve access to educational, training, and employment supports for lone parents through the Department's Intreo services.

The long term policy objective of the phased one-parent family payment scheme age change reforms that were introduced in the Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2012, was to reduce long-term social welfare dependency, and associated poverty, by ending the expectation that lone parents will remain outside of the workforce indefinitely.

Another key aspect of the policy reforms to achieve this and also long term in its nature was the aim of enhancing the opportunities for all OFP recipients by providing them with access to a tailored personal development plan. This process provides improved access for lone parents to education, training, employment programmes and information on other support services which is available

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<sup>79</sup> SRFT, page 9

through the Department's Intreo case officers. Prior to the reforms this level of support and engagement was only available exclusively to jobseekers on the Live Register.

In parallel to the implementation of these long term objectives, there were shorter term requirements to achieve savings across all social welfare expenditure over the same period on foot of the economic downturn. Separate to the age-related policy reforms, additional measures were introduced to the OFP scheme in order to meet these cost saving requirements.<sup>80</sup>

### **(6.10) Phased Implementation of the OFP Scheme Reforms**

The tender proceeds to outline how the reforms have been implemented over time:

From 3 May, 2012, the age of the youngest child for receipt of OFP was reduced on a phased basis, seven years of age from 2014 for new entrants and from 2015 for existing recipients. The reduction in the maximum age limit of the youngest child for receipt of the OFP was applied to new and existing customers on a phased basis and affected customers from 3 July 2013. The changes were fully implemented for all groups by 2 July 2015.<sup>81</sup>

(6.11) According to the tender, by March 2017, 48,827 customers had been affected by the amendments to date.<sup>82</sup>

### **(6.12) Schemes OFP Recipients Transitioned to as a Result of the Reforms**

Lone parents whose eligibility for the OFP scheme ends as a result of the age of the scheme changes can transition to any other social welfare income support. However, the majority of customers transition to the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST), Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) and the Family Income Supplement (FIS).<sup>83</sup>

### **(6.13) Stakeholder Reaction to the Amendments**

Stakeholders groups expressed concern about the effect of changes to the OFP scheme. These mainly focussed on anomalies due to the changes in the operation of the OFP scheme which caused incomes to drop for those in work where the changes were intended as an activation measure and the reduction in income of vulnerable people.

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<sup>80</sup> SRFT, page 9-10

<sup>81</sup> SRFT, page 10

<sup>82</sup> SRFT, page 11

<sup>83</sup> SRFT, page 10

(6.14) One family stated in their Presentation to the Joint Committee on 12 January 2017:

*“Budget 2012 saw severe cuts and reforms impacting on lone parents who are on social welfare or in low paid insecure jobs. Negative impacts have included the creation of unnecessary stress for parents, loss of jobs and reduced income for many already vulnerable families as well as higher rates of poverty amongst children living in one-parent families. Lone parents already in work and in receipt of Family Income Supplement (FIS) saw an immediate 40% reduction in their payments as a direct result of the reform... Whilst the intent of the reforms was to ensure parents progression into employment and whilst the income for some parents has risen, this has not been broadly successful in our view. There was no cross-departmental working or planning to ensure that the reforms could be successful and that supporting factors such as family-friendly jobs, childcare and education were in place beforehand. Combining reforms with social welfare cuts just hit poor families even harder and whilst some of the changes have been ameliorated and reversed most have not.”<sup>52</sup>*

(6.15) Barnardos presentation to the Joint Committee on 8 November 2016 stated:

*“These OPFP reforms rolled out from 2011 to 2015 altering the eligibility for OPFP by lowering the age of the youngest child from 18 to 7 years. Pushing through these reforms, failed to recognise that lone parents are also full time carers to their children and this work / family responsibilities are harder on them than on coupled or married families. In our view, the biggest flaw to this reform was it not being accompanied with sufficient supports and quality affordable childcare to enable and support lone parents to take up training or employment. Also a major unintended consequence to the reform has been many lone parents in employment ending up being financially worse off resulting in many leaving their jobs and increasing their welfare dependency. More recent policy developments and announcements have ameliorated this to some small extent. For instance, Budget 2017 saw the partial restoration of the income disregard applicable to lone parents from €90 to €110. This one measure will help keep some lone parents in employment.”<sup>84</sup>*

(6.16) Single Parents Acting for the Rights of Kids (SPARK) argued against what they saw as anomalies in Budget 2017:

*“We welcome the partial restoration of the income disregard for One Parent Family Allowance and JST, the partial restoration of the Christmas Bonus and the increase in the basic social rate.*

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<sup>84</sup> [S:\Committees\32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J05. 08-11-16 NUI, Barnardos - Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\Opening Statement - Barnardos.pdf](#)

*However, there has been no corresponding increase for FIS recipients. This means that although the reforms were intended to encourage lone parents off social welfare and onto an in work payment, many parent who transferred to FIS will now be better off transferring back to JST. For example, a lone parent earning €210 with 1 child and receiving €75 maintenance will be over €50 per week better off if they come off FIS and return to JST. The purpose of the policy was to encourage lone parents into employment and training yet the parents who have been most impacted are lone parents who were already working 19 + hours and those in education and training, must be seen as proof that it is a failed policy and needs urgent reform to ensure our children are given the same opportunities as other children.”<sup>85</sup>*

#### **(6.16) Monitoring and Evaluation**

As it is a relatively short time since the implementation of the changes to the OFP scheme it is difficult to evaluate the effects of the changes. As such, excluding that supplied by the Department, there is a paucity of high-quality, quantitative information regarding the effects, both intended and unintended, of the changes made in 2012. Some of the information that has been published by NGOs and civil associations is anecdotal in nature. For instance, in 2015, One Family solicited the input of various parents in receipt of OFP.<sup>86</sup> The experiences recounted to One Family represent a more or less comprehensive indictment of the 2012 reforms.

(6.17) One issue which may inhibit evaluation of the changes is that once a parent has exited the OFP scheme they may no longer be visible as lone parents within statistics of the Department of Social Protection (DSP).

(6.18) More than 3,000 lone parents became new Family Income Supplement (FIS) recipients by the end of 2015, meaning that they had entered or increased employment. However since the 2012 amendments to the OFP approximately 43,500 parents have exited the scheme as a result of the changes (DSP).<sup>85</sup> The small proportion of the total accounted for here may be the beginning of a trend whereby lone-parents are transitioning into employment having left the scheme or, it may be a reflection of improved economic circumstances in general. Whatever the reason it seems obvious that further evidence needs to be gathered before the outcome of the changes can be seen.

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<sup>85</sup> [S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J05. 08-11-16 NUI Barnardos - Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\Opening Statement - SPARK.pdf](#)

<sup>86</sup> <https://onefamily.ie/parents-experiences-with-department-of-social-protection-staff-around-reform-of-ofp/>

## **Chapter 7: Challenges and Solutions: Recommendations**

Following the Committee's discussions, we believe that the main challenges facing lone parents are (in no specific order) child poverty, housing costs, childcare costs and availability, obtaining child maintenance payments, job activation, education and changes to the One Parent Family Payment (OFP). It is important that policy developed in this area demonstrate cognisance of the Irish state's very poor historical record in relation to the treatment of lone parents and their children and recognise that the current disadvantage experienced by lone parents has been exacerbated by the unjust and unfair measures taken by the state in the past.

The Committee makes the following recommendations.

### **Reducing Poverty Through Removal of Payment Anomalies**

(7.1) Income Disregard (ID) should be fully restored for those on OFP and those on Jobseekers Transitional Payment (JST).

(7.2) Lone parents on Job Seekers Transition Payment (JST) who are working need access to full income disregard, and they should, if they meet the qualifying criteria, be able to receive JST and FIS simultaneously.

(7.3) Lone parents should be able to remain on Job Seekers Transitional (JST) until their youngest child is 18 (rather than the current cut off of 14).

(7.4) The Qualified Child Increase for one-parent families most at risk of poverty should be brought in line with Child Benefit (i.e. increased to €32.30 per week, from €29.80)

(7.5) The Qualified Child Increase should be increased for teenagers in accordance with the increased costs associated with older children.

(7.6) Reduce the qualifying hours for Family Income Supplement to 15 for those with children aged 18 or under.



## **Education**

(7.7) Rent allowance and eligibility for SUSI grants should be decoupled from FIS.

(7.8) The ability to stay in education should not be linked to housing tenure. Those in receipt of Rent Supplement should be allowed to engage in full time education without suffering any loss of entitlements. This would remove a number of structural barriers which currently prevent these parents from accessing education.

(7.9) Make Back To Education Allowance (BTEA) and the SUSI maintenance grant payable together to lone parents who are undertaking an educational or training course for the duration of the course.

(7.10) Remove requirement for lone parents to be unemployed and in receipt of Social Welfare for 6 months before accessing educational grants etc. This would make the transition from employment back to education much easier.

## **Employment, Training and 'Activation' Supports**

(7.11) Removal of conditionality that participants be on the live register in order to receive Department of Social Protection (DSP) training and 'activation' supports.

(7.12) Voluntary access to Intreo schemes should be supported for those on One Parent Family Payment (OPF) or other payments e.g. Jobseeker's Transitional (JST). Those on OPF should be able to access caseworker support without having to join the live register.

## **Actively Develop and Target Schemes at Lone Parents**

(7.13) Intreo should actively develop and pilot more part time, quality, training, education and employment schemes and initiatives. These should be available on a voluntary basis for those on One Parent Family Payment (OPF) and Job Seeker Transitional (JST) payment.

(7.14) Provide activation schemes and mechanisms for lone parents that make provision for the demands of their caring role (i.e. part-time schemes with dispensation for emergency caring duties) while maintaining allowances.

(7.15) Provide specialist bridging programmes such as Career Futures and New Steps for lone parents, which support progression, job-readiness and incorporate 'wrap-around' parenting and family support services.

(7.16) Increase the allowance for the Community Employment scheme by an additional €50 per week (currently €22.50). As a part-time activation scheme, it is favourable to lone parents, and can serve as an effective bridging programme to support those distant from the labour market, in transitioning back into employment.

### **Specialised Training for Caseworkers**

(7.17) Caseworkers assigned to support lone parents on OFP or JST should be given training to ensure that they fully understand the challenges and needs of one parent families, and to enhance their ability to intervene as effectively and beneficially as possible.

### **Maintenance**

(7.18) No lone parent should ever have their Social Protection payment threatened or reduced due to non- receipt of maintenance from a third party e.g. a former spouse. The obligation to pursue the liable adult should be removed from the lone parent.

(7.19) A state body, similar to that in other countries, should be put in place to appropriately seek and pursue maintenance payments.

### **Monitoring and Targets**

(7.20) Introduce markers within the Department of Social Protection's systems to ensure, that those leaving OFP are still recognised as lone parents, even when they are in receipt of another payment, such as Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) or Family Income Supplement (FIS). This would allow proper monitoring through comparative data on outcomes and progression for lone parents on these schemes. Thus ensuring additional supports could be offered or accessed as required.

(7.21) The Department of Social Protection should set targets to monitor the situation of lone parents in relation to new areas including educational and poverty levels.

(7.22) Department of Social Protection and Department of Education to set targets to monitor the number of lone parents that are completing second and third level education.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Opening Statements to the Joint Committee

Appendix B: Summary of policy measures introduced during review period 2013-2017 (DSP)

Appendix C: Summary of responses from government departments and full responses from departments

Appendix D: Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee

Appendix E : Membership of the Joint Committee

## **Appendix A: Opening Statements to the Joint Committee**

### **Meeting 6 October 2016**

#### Department of Social Protection Opening Statement

<S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J03. 06-10-16 DSP Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\2016.10.05 - Opening statement for JOC on lone parents 6th Oct 2016 Simonetta Ryan.pdf>

### **Meeting 8 November 2016**

#### Barnardos Opening Statement

<S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J05. 08-11-16 NUI, Barnardos - Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\Opening Statement - Barnardos.pdfS:\Committees32\12. Social Protection>

#### UNESCO NUI Opening Statement

<S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J05. 08-11-16 NUI, Barnardos - Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\Opening Statement - UNESCO NUI.pdf>

#### Single Parents Acting for the Rights of Kids (SPARK) Opening Statement

<S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\01. 2016\J05. 08-11-16 NUI, Barnardos - Lone Parents\3. Opening Statements\Opening Statement - SPARK.pdf>

### **Meeting 12 January 2017**

#### Department of Social Protection Opening Statement

<S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\2017.01.12 Opening Statement for JOC SR.doc>

#### Focus Opening Statement

<S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\Opening statement from Focus Ireland on issues facing lone parents 12 January 2017.pdf>

#### One Family Opening Statement

<S:\Committees32\12. Social Protection\02. Meetings\A. Joint\02. 2017\J08 12.01.2017 One Family, Focus Ireland, National Women's Council\3. Opening Statements\Opening statement from One Family on issues facing lone parents 12 January 2017.pdf>

## Appendix B: Summary of policy measures introduced during review period 2013-2017 (DSP)

### Summary of policy measures introduced during reform review period 2013-2017

#### Budget 2012 Changes

##### Changes to the maximum age limit of the youngest child for receipt of the OFP

- The Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2012, which was enacted on 1 May, 2012, introduced changes to the structure of the OFP scheme and to the age of the youngest child at which the payment ceases. These changes were to be applied to both new and existing recipients over time and did not affect existing recipients until 2013.
- Payment of the OFP ceased when the youngest child of the recipient reaches the age specified in the year shown in the table below:

	Payment continues up to age			
	2012	4 <sup>th</sup> July 2013 onwards	3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2014 onwards	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2015 onwards
If OFP payment commenced before 27 April, 2011	18	17	16	7
If OFP payment commenced between 27 April, 2011, and 3 May, 2012	14	12	10	7
If OFP payment commenced after 3 May, 2012	12	10	7	

##### Reduction of the OFP earnings disregard

- From 1 January, 2012, the OFP scheme earnings disregard is reduced on a phased basis over five years, from €146.50 per week to €130 per week, to €110 per week in 2013, to €90 per week in 2014, to €75 per week in 2015, and to €60 per week in 2016, for new and existing recipients.

### **Community Employment (CE)**

- From January 2012, a number of social welfare payments, including the OFP, are no longer payable concurrently with CE. This applied to new applications and did not affect existing recipients at the time of its introduction.
- Also, from January 2012, for new and existing claimants, the payment of two increases for Qualified Child (IQCs) no longer applies to recipients who are on a CE scheme and in receipt of certain social welfare payments, including the OFP. The IQC for CE ceased and one IQC continued to be payable with the relevant social welfare payment.

### **Budget 2013 Changes to OFP**

- As per Budget 2012, the OFP scheme income disregard was reduced from €130 per week to €110 per week.

#### **Other related measures from Budget 2013 (Dept. Children and Youth Affairs)**

- €14 million per annum from 2013 was allocated from the Department of Social Protection to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to fund a joint initiative that provided 6,000 after-school childcare places for children in primary school. This was targeted at low-income families where parents are availing of an employment opportunity. The initiative commenced with a pilot scheme in early 2013.

### **Introduction of Jobseeker's Transitional Payment – June 2013**

- ***The Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST)*** was introduced in June 2013. This payment exempts these lone parents with a youngest child aged 7 to 13 years incl. from certain Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) scheme conditions, including the requirement to be **available for, and genuinely seeking, work** and the JA rule that you must be unemployed for 4 out of 7 days to receive payment.
- The important aspect of this payment is that it ensures that a lone parent with a youngest child aged under 14 years is not required to take up employment in order to receive income support from the Department. They can however, choose to move into employment including all types of part-time employment, and/or into education and still receive payment, subject to a means test. They also gain improved access to the Department's Intreo services.

- Access to JST was initially for previous OFP recipients but was extended to new lone parents in 2015. When JST was introduced it was based on the JA means test (i.e. an income disregard of €60 per week with the balance assessed at 60%).
- This was amended in 2016 to align the JST and more generous OFP means tests more closely. JST then had an income disregard of €90 with the balance assessed at 50%. Budget 2017 increased the JST income disregard to €110.

## Budget 2014 Changes

- As per Budget 2012, the OFP scheme income disregard was reduced from €110 per week to €90 per week.

### **Other related measures from Budget 2014 (Dept. Children and Youth Affairs)**

- Funding for the after-school childcare scheme was re-allocated. In 2014 the scheme provided up to 800 subsidised after school childcare places at a cost of €2 million. The balance of the €14 million which was originally allocated to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2013 was redistributed across two other areas. The first was a new strand of childcare support for customers of this Department who are participating in the Community Employment (CE) scheme. This new childcare support was provided via the existing Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) scheme that is administered by the DCYA. This would provide approximately 1,800 places in 2014 at a cost of €7.5 million. The second new area related to investment by the D/CYA in quality improvement initiatives, which include the upskilling of existing childcare workers. This cost €4.5 million in 2014.

## Budget 2015 Changes

- ***The OFP scheme income disregard was maintained at €90 per week*** in Budget 2015. The further reductions planned in 2015, 2016 and 2017 did not take place.
- ***The Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD)*** was introduced in January, 2015, and is available to a range of customers including lone parents who transition from OFP to the Family Income Supplement (FIS) payment or sustainable employment. The dividend allows these customers to retain the qualified child proportion of their former OFP payment, which equals €29.80 per week per child (up to a maximum of €119.20 per week for four children), for two years, with full entitlement (worth €1,550 per child) in the first year and 50% entitlement (worth €775 per child) in the second year.
- ***The rate of Child Benefit*** increased by €5 to €135 per month for each child from January 2015.

- ***OFP Entitlement for lone parents in receipt of a Half-rate Carer's Allowance (CA) Recipients or those in receipt of a Blind Pension*** was extended in 2015 beyond the age 7 threshold until their youngest child is aged 16 years. This exemption already existed for lone parents claiming the Domiciliary Care Allowance on behalf of a disabled child. This rule extended this support to lone parents caring for someone other than their own child.
- ***Extension of Jobseeker's Transitional Payment Eligibility to 'New' Lone Parents***  
New arrangements were introduced in 2015 that allowed 'new' lone parents with a youngest child aged between 7 and 13 years inclusive, and who required a jobseeker's payment, to apply for JST. This was previously only available to former OFP recipients.
- ***A 25% Christmas bonus*** was paid to recipients of a long-term social welfare payment – including to OFP and JST recipients.

#### **Other related measures from Budget 2015 (Dept. Children and Youth Affairs)**

- The ASCC budget was cut in 2015 to €1.32 million and would provide a maximum of 500 child care places. The Community Employment Childcare (CEC) programme retained its budget of €7.5 million to provide 2,000 child care places to CE participants.

### **Budget 2016 Changes**

- The Jobseeker's Transitional payment (JST) means test was aligned more closely with the OFP means test resulting in a more generous means test for JST customers. JST recipients gained access to an earnings disregard of €90 per week (previously €60) with the balance of any income assessed at 50% (previously 60%).
- The FIS threshold was increased by €5 per week for each of the first two children.
- Child benefit was increased by €5 to €140 for each child per month from January, 2016.
- A 75% Christmas bonus was paid to recipients of a long-term social welfare payment – including to OFP, JST and the Back to Work Family Dividend recipients.
- Fuel allowance was increased by €2.50 to €22.50 per week from January, 2016.



- The national minimum wage was increased from €8.65 to €9.15 per hour.

## Budget 2017 Changes

- A €5 increase in the rate of the One-Parent Family Payment, Jobseeker's Transitional Payment, Jobseeker's Allowance and the Back to Education Allowance with effect from March 2017
- A new €500 Cost of Education Allowance per annum for parents, including lone parents, in receipt of Back to Education Allowance
- Income disregard for parents getting the One-Parent Family Payment and the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment were increased **from €90 a week to €110 with effect from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017**
- A Christmas Bonus of 85% was paid in early December 2016
- The National Minimum Wage was increased to €9.25 an hour which may benefit some lone parents working outside the home.

### **Other related Measures from Budget 2017 (Dept Children and Youth Affairs)**

- The introduction of the Single Affordable Childcare Scheme as announced in Budget 2017 will significantly reduce the cost of childcare for lone parents and is a step change in state support for childcare in Ireland. This will offer subsidised childcare for parents subject to their net household income. The highest subsidy rates will be paid to parents whose net annual income is less than €22,700. Subsidies will reduce above this amount on a graduated basis until the net annual income threshold of €47,500. Above this point parents will receive the lowest level of subsidy which equates to a maximum of €80 per month per child.

## **Appendix C: Summary of Responses from Government Departments**

### **Department of Social Protection Responses**

On 6 April 2017, the Joint Committee on Social Protection wrote to the Department of Social Protection requesting that the Department confirm the number of lone parents in receipt of either Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) or rent supplement. The Department's response, dated 11 April 2017, indicated that 10,077 lone parents were in receipt of rent supplement as of the end of March 2017. Further, in its response, the Department of Social Protection informed the Committee that responsibility for HAP falls within the remit of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

On 12 April 2017, the Joint Committee on Social Protection wrote to the Department of Social Protection. The Committee requested information on the participation of lone parents in labour activation schemes, and the number of recipients of OFP on the Community Employment Scheme. A breakdown of the numbers, who migrated from the OFP to other schemes, including the Community Employment scheme, following the reforms to OFP in 2012, was also requested. The question of the training of INTREO case workers was also raised, and, in particular, their training in relation to issues particular to lone parents. An outline of the training provided to these workers was requested. In its response on the 26 May 2017, the Department observed that there are currently 761 lone parents on the CE scheme who had moved from the One-Parent Family Payment (OPF) or the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST). They provided a table which shows the breakdown of the numbers who migrated from the OFP to other schemes, including the Community Employment scheme (this table is included in the Department's response below). The Department provided an outline of the training provided to Intreo Case Officers. The Department has partnered with the National College of Ireland (NCI) to place its internal learning and development curriculum on the National Framework of Qualifications. A module of the training programme focuses on skills and knowledge development around engaging with and supporting clients, covering the full range of clients that Intreo officers encounter.

The Department's Staff Development Unit met with One Family in February 2017 with a view to gaining input that would be beneficial for integration in its internal training material.

### **Department of Education and Skills Response**

On 6 April 2017, the Joint Committee on Social Protection wrote to the Department of Education and skills requesting information on educational supports available to lone parents. In its response of 24 April 2017, the Department detailed both programmes designed specifically for lone parents as well as initiatives, which, although they are not tailored for lone parents, nonetheless provide support to this cohort. The Department identified DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) as its 'main policy initiative' which aims to mitigate 'educational disadvantage in the school sector'. To achieve this, DEIS promotes 'parental engagement and participation'. Lone parents who seek to engage in formal further education and training are supported by a number of measures. The Department observed that 'participants on full-time training programmes, Youthreach, VTOS and the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) are entitled to receive childcare funding under the Childcare Education and Training Support Programme (CETS). Further, 'lone parents participating on

education and training courses continue to receive their One Parent Family payment' from the Department of Social Protection. The Department also outlined the range of supports available to lone parents engaging in higher education, pointing to the SUSI administered student grant as the 'main source of financial aid' for 'eligible students including lone parents'. Significantly, the Department noted that 'the One Parent Family Payment is one of the social protection payments required for an eligible individual to qualify for the higher "special rate" of grant'. Finally, of the additional €8.5 million received in Budget 2017 to widen access to higher education, €1 million 'is being specifically allocated to support more lone parents to access higher education'.

#### Department of Children and Youth Affairs

On 6 April 2017, the Joint Committee on Social Protection wrote to the Department of Children and Youth affairs requesting information on childcare support provided by the Department and enquiring whether any childcare schemes are designed particularly for lone parents. In its response, the Department identified 'four targeted childcare funding programmes aimed at supporting disadvantaged and low income parents'. The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme 'provides funding to childcare services to enable them to provide quality childcare at reduced rates to disadvantaged and low-income working parents'. Parents are means tested in order to determine eligibility for the scheme. Under, the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme, 'childcare services are contracted to provide childcare places to qualifying Solas or Education and Training Boards (ETB) CETS approved Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), CETS approved Youthreach and Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) trainees or students for the duration of their courses'. The After-school Childcare Scheme 'supports previously unemployed parents in their first year of returning to work, parents increasing their level of work or parents taking part in an approved DSP employment programme'. Finally, the Community Employment Childcare (CEC) scheme 'support parents who are participating in Community Employment schemes' by providing a maximum of €80.00 per week. Further, as a result of changes introduced in Budget 2016 which rendered children eligible for free pre-school once they had turned three, the number of children benefiting from the Early Childhood Care and Education programme is expected to increase from 67,000 to 127,000 per annum.

#### Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government response

On 6 April 2017, the Joint Committee on Social Protection wrote to the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government requesting information on housing supports offered by the Department and enquiring whether the Department delivered any schemes designed to benefit lone parents in particular. In its response of the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, the Department indicated that although 'none of the supports' it offers 'are targeted specifically at lone parents', the Department 'oversees and funds a range of housing supports' of which lone parents might avail. The Department emphasised the importance of social housing support, noting that, as of 21 September 2016, 30% of households that qualified for social housing support were one parent families. The Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP) and the (Rental Accommodation Scheme) were also emphasised as key provisions in the Department's suite of supports. Both schemes aim to provide support to eligible households in securing accommodation in the private rental market. The Department also itemised a number of schemes designed to relieve the burden of mortgage payments for struggling

families, including the Local Authority Mortgage to Rent scheme, the Approved Housing Body Mortgage to Rent scheme, the Mortgage Allowance Scheme, Local Authority Mortgages and the Home Choice Loan.



## Appendix D: Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee

Dáil Éireann

Thursday 16 June 2016

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### Establishment of Select Committees: Motion

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Regina Doherty):   I move:

(1) That Select Committees as set out in column (1) of the Schedule hereto are hereby appointed pursuant to Standing Order 84A.

(2) Each Select Committee shall perform the functions set out in Standing Order 84A in respect of the Government Department or Departments listed in column (2) opposite each Committee (in anticipation of the coming into effect of the necessary Government Orders in relation to names of Departments and titles of Ministers and transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions).

(3) The number of members appointed to each Select Committee shall be seven.

(4) Each Select Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 85 (1), (2) and (3).

(5) Each Select Committee shall be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann to form a Joint Committee to carry out the functions set out in Standing Order 84A, other than at paragraph (3) thereof.

(6) Each Joint Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Orders 85 (other than paragraph (2A) thereof), 114 and 116.

(7) The Select Committee on Justice and Equality shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 115(1)(b).

(8) The Order of the Dáil of 10th March, 2016 in relation to the Standing Order 112 Select Committee is hereby rescinded and the Committee is accordingly dissolved.



### **SCHEDULE**

	(1)  Committee	(2)  Department(s)
1	Select Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Agriculture, Food and the Marine

2	Select Committee on Children and Youth Affairs	Children and Youth Affairs
3	Select Committee on Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources	Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources
4	Select Committee on Education and Skills	Education and Skills
		Finance
		Public Expenditure and Reform
5	Select Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach	Taoiseach
		Foreign Affairs and Trade
6	Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence	Defence
7	Select Committee on Health	Health
8	Select Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government	Housing, Planning and Local Government
9	Select Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
10	Select Committee on Justice and Equality	Justice and Equality
11	Select Committee on Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht	Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht
12	Select Committee on Social Protection	Social Protection
13	Select Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport	Transport, Tourism and Sport

Question put and agreed to.

### Standing Orders: Motion

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Regina Doherty):   I move:

1. Standing Order 81 is hereby amended by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph

(2):

‘(2A) The rules as to procedure in Select Committees shall apply, as appropriate, to procedure in sub-Committees of such Committees.’.

2. Standing Order 84 is hereby amended by the insertion of the following subparagraphs after paragraph (2)(b):

‘(c) it shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to Standing Order 186 and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993; and

(d) it shall refrain from inquiring into in public session or publishing confidential information regarding any matter if so requested, for stated reasons given in writing, by--

(i) a member of the Government or a Minister of State, or

(ii) the principal office-holder of a body under the aegis of a Department or which is partly or wholly funded by the State or established or appointed by a member of the Government or by the Oireachtas:

Provided that the Chairman may appeal any such request made to the Ceann Comhairle, whose decision shall be final.’.

3. The following additional Standing Order is hereby adopted:

‘84A. (1) The Dáil may appoint a Select Committee to consider and report to the Dáil on—

(a) such aspects of the expenditure, administration and policy of a Government Department or Departments and associated public bodies as the Committee may select, and

(b) European Union matters within the remit of the relevant Department or Departments.

(2) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order may be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann for the purposes of the functions set out in this Standing Order, other than at paragraph (3), and to report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), a Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments, such--

(a) Bills,

(b) proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 187,

(c) Estimates for Public Services, and

(d) other matters as shall be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil, and

(e) Annual Output Statements including performance, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public monies, and

(f) such Value for Money and Policy Reviews as the Select Committee may select.

(4) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), a Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order may consider the following matters in respect of the relevant Department or Departments and associated public bodies:

(a) matters of policy and governance for which the Minister is officially responsible,

(b) public affairs administered by the Department,

(c) policy issues arising from Value for Money and Policy Reviews conducted or commissioned by the Department,

(d) Government policy and governance in respect of bodies under the aegis of the Department,

(e) policy and governance issues concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by a member of the Government or the Oireachtas,

(f) the general scheme or draft heads of any Bill,

(g) any post-enactment report laid before either House or both Houses by a member of the Government or Minister of State on any Bill enacted by the Houses of the Oireachtas,

(h) statutory instruments, including those laid or laid in draft before either House or both Houses and those made under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009,

(i) strategy statements laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas pursuant to the Public Service Management Act 1997,

(j) annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law, and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of the Department or bodies referred to in subparagraphs (d) and (e) and the overall performance and operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of such bodies, and

(k) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil from time to time.

(5) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), a Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments--

(a) EU draft legislative acts standing referred to the Select Committee under Standing Order 114, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity,



(b) other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action,

(c) non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters, and

(d) matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers and the outcome of such meetings.

(6) The Chairman of a Joint Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order, who shall be a member of Dáil Éireann, shall also be the Chairman of the Select Committee.

(7) The following may attend meetings of a Select or Joint Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order, for the purposes of the functions set out in paragraph (5) and may take part in proceedings without having a right to vote or to move motions and amendments:

(a) Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland, including Northern Ireland,

(b) Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and

(c) at the invitation of the Committee, other Members of the European Parliament.’.

4. Standing Order 85 is hereby amended by--

(a) the insertion of ‘oral presentations and’ before ‘written submissions’ in paragraph (2);

(b) the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (2):

‘(2A) power to send for persons, papers and records;’;

(c) the deletion of all words after ‘new legislation;’ in paragraph (4);

(d) the insertion of the following paragraphs after paragraph (4):

‘(4A) power to examine any statutory instrument, including those laid or laid in draft before either House or both Houses and those made under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009, and to recommend, where it considers that such action is warranted, whether the instrument should be annulled or amended;

(4B) for the purposes of paragraph (4A), power to require any Government Department or instrument-making authority concerned to submit a Memorandum to the Select Committee explaining any statutory instrument under consideration or to attend a meeting of the Select Committee for the purpose of explaining any such statutory instrument: Provided that such Department or authority may decline to attend for stated reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil;’; and

(e) the insertion of the following paragraphs after paragraph (6):

'(6A) power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State shall attend before the Select Committee and provide, in private session if so requested by the member of the Government or Minister of State, oral briefings in advance of meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers to enable the Select Committee to make known its views: Provided that the Committee may also require such attendance following such meetings.

(6B) power to require that the Chairperson designate of a body or agency under the aegis of a Department shall, prior to his or her appointment, attend before the Select Committee to discuss his or her strategic priorities for the role.'

5. Standing Order 95 is hereby amended by the substitution of the following paragraph for paragraph (1):

'(1) The member of the Government in charge of the relevant Department shall be an *ex officio* member of a Select Committee appointed pursuant to Standing Order 84A for the purpose of consideration of the matters referred to in paragraphs (3)(a), (b) and (c) of that Standing Order, and shall be entitled to vote in Select Committee proceedings: Provided that such member of the Government may nominate another member of the Government or a Minister of State to act in his or her stead for that purpose.'

6. The following additional Standing Order is hereby adopted:

'97A. (1) Unless otherwise provided by these Standing Orders or by Order of the Dáil, the quorum of a Select Committee or of a sub-Committee thereof, shall be three.

(2) A member of Dáil Éireann attending pursuant to Standing Order 95(3) shall not be counted for the purposes of determining a quorum.

(3) A member of the Government or Minister of State attending pursuant to Standing Order 95(1) shall be counted for the purposes of determining a quorum.

(4) The quorum of a Joint Committee shall be the combined quorum of the two Select Committees of which it is comprised, minus one: Provided that for the purposes of determining a quorum, at least one of the members present shall be a member of Dáil Éireann and one a member of Seanad Éireann.'

7. Standing Order 114 is hereby amended by--

(a) the insertion of the following proviso to paragraph (3)(c):

'Provided that the Dáil may substitute, add to or otherwise vary, the reasoned opinion set out in the Committee's report by way of amendment to the motion tabled by the Chairman under this paragraph;'; and

(b) the substitution of the following for paragraph (3)(d):

'(4) Where the Dáil agrees a motion tabled pursuant to paragraph (3)(c) of this Standing Order,

either with or without amendment, the Ceann Comhairle shall cause a copy of--

(a) the Resolution agreed by the Dáil,

(b) the reasoned opinion agreed by the Dáil, and



(c) the report of the Committee referred to in paragraph (3)(c),

to be sent to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.’.

8. Standing Order 186 is hereby amended by the insertion of ‘Standing Order 85 2A) and’ before ‘Standing Order 88’ in paragraph (4)(a), and the deletion of ‘twelve’ and the substitution therefor of ‘thirteen’ in paragraph (9).”

Question put and agreed to.

### **Final Report of Committee of Selection: Motion**

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Regina Doherty):   I move:

That Dáil Éireann:

(a) approves the First Report of the Standing Committee of Selection in accordance with Standing Order 27F, copies of which were laid before Dáil Éireann on 15th June 2016, and appoints members to Select Committees accordingly; and

(b) pursuant to Standing Order 93(2), appoints the following members as Chairs of Committees:

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin - Chair of the Committee on Justice and Equality

Deputy John McGuinness - Chair of the Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach

Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin - Chair of the Committee on Education and Skills

Deputy Maria Bailey - Chair of the Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government

Deputy John Curran - Chair of the Committee on Social Protection

Deputy Brendan Smith - Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence

Deputy Peadar Tóibín - Chair of the Committee on Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht

Deputy Michael Harty - Chair of the Committee on Health

Deputy Pat Deering - Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Deputy Hildegard Naughton - Chair of the Committee on Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources

Deputy Brendan Griffin - Chair of the Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport

Deputy Mary Butler - Chair of the Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

Deputy Jim Daly - Chair of the Committee on Children and Youth Affairs.

Question put and agreed to.

## Appendix E: Members of the Joint Committee

Member	Party / Group
<b>Deputies:</b>	
<a href="#">Maria Bailey</a>	Fine Gael
<a href="#">John Brady</a>	Sinn Féin
<a href="#">Joe Carey</a>	Fine Gael
<a href="#">Joan Collins</a>	Independents 4 Change
<a href="#">John Curran</a>	Fianna Fáil
<a href="#">Gino Kenny</a>	Solidarity - People Before Profit
<a href="#">Willie O'Dea</a>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Senators:</b>	
<a href="#">Catherine Ardagh</a>	Fianna Fáil
<a href="#">Ray Butler</a>	Fine Gael
<a href="#">Alice Mary Higgins</a>	Independent
<a href="#">Kevin Humphreys</a>	Labour