



BUNREACT NA ÉIREANN  
CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND



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**An Comhchoiste um Leanaí, Comhionannas, Míchumas,  
Lánpháirtíocht agus Óige  
Márta 2023**

**Select Committee on Children, Equality, Disability,  
Integration and Youth  
Consideration of Revised Estimates Volume (REV) 2023**

**March 2023**

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## Introduction

The Select Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth held an engagement with the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to examine the spending allocations and associated performance metrics for the following Votes:

- **Vote 25:** Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- **Vote 40:** Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Standing Order 95(3) of Dáil Éireann states:

*“The principal purpose of Committee consideration of matters of policy, governance, expenditure, and administration under paragraph (1) shall be— (a) for the accountability of the relevant Minister or Minister of State, and (b) to assess the performance of the relevant Government Department or of a State body within the responsibility of the relevant Department, in delivering public services while achieving intended outcomes, including value for money.”*

Select Committees are tasked with consideration of the annual Revised Estimates for Public Services (or REV)<sup>1</sup> that fall within their remit. While Select Committees have no role in approving the Estimates, it is an ongoing opportunity for the Committee to examine Departmental expenditure, to make the budgetary process more transparent, and to engage in a meaningful way on relevant performance issues.

The Committee subsequently sent a message confirming completion of its consideration to the Clerk of Dáil Éireann on 8 February 2023 in accordance with Standing Order 101 of Dáil Éireann. Under Standing Order 100(2) of Dáil Éireann, this message is deemed to be the report of the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> The Revised Estimates (comprised of Ministerial Votes / Vote Groups) are included in the Revised Estimates Volume (or REV). REV2023 was published on 14 December 2022.

## Reporting on REV consideration

Furthermore, Standing Order 215A of Dáil Éireann states:

*Consideration of Estimates by Committees: Report of Committee on Estimate*

*215A. (1) Subject to Standing Order 215(2) and unless the Dáil shall otherwise order, Committees shall complete their consideration of Estimates referred to them pursuant to that Standing Order not later than 60 days after such Estimates have been so referred.*

***(2) Any report that a Committee proposes to make arising from its consideration of an Estimate shall be made within a further period of 14 days.***

Under SO215A(2), this report summarises issues arising from the Committee's consideration and will be laid before the Dáil and sent to the Minister for consideration. This report will also be provided to the Committee on Budgetary Oversight which will examine all Select Committee reports, collate the information to identify any common issues or concerns, as well as examples of best practice, and make recommendations for the improvement of the consideration process.

This report comprises two sections as follows:

1. The REV process
2. Allocations and performance metrics

## Committee commentary on consideration of REV2023

### The REV process

In a letter sent to the Minister from the Committee Cathaoirleach, a short, non-technical Departmental briefing was requested from the Department. This short technical briefing was delivered in advance of the process as agreed. In addition, a detailed briefing note was also provided.

The meeting held on 8 February 2023 to consider the REV went well. The Opening Statement by the Minister was followed by a Q&A session.

### Allocations and performance metrics

The following table shows the allocation changes, as compared to 2022:

Vote no. and name	Proposed 2023 net voted allocation	€ Change from 2022	% Change from 2022
<b>40: Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth</b>	<b>€3.24 billion</b>	<b>+€460m</b>	<b>+17%</b>
<b>A: Children and Family Support Programme</b>	€995.24m	+€45.62m	<b>+5%</b>
<b>B: Sectoral Programmes for Children and Young People</b>	€1.12bn	+€275.37m	<b>+36%</b>
<b>C: Policy and Legislation Programme</b>	€62.64m	+€25.32m	<b>+68%</b>
<b>D: An Equal and Inclusive Society</b>	€40.77m	+€6.89m	<b>+20%</b>
<b>E: A Fair and Efficient Support System for International Protection Seekers</b>	€1.05bn	+€86.14m	<b>+9%</b>
<b>Minus appropriations</b>	€31.4m	-€-3.25m	<b>-9%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€3.24 billion</b>		

In the main, the changes to the allocations were well explained via the briefing material that the Department provided and through engagement with the Minister during the meeting to consider the REV on 8 February 2023. Some issues did emerge, however, during the discussion.

The following are some examples of issues that were highlighted during the meeting:

### **National Childcare Scheme**

While the allocation for childcare is welcome, a targeted stream for disadvantaged households is not provided for. When asked about this, the Minister informed the Committee that this is something the Department will look to bring forward in budget 2024. The Committee have concerns that the ability of the fund to support those most in need may be compromised in the meantime.

### **Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)**

When queried about the AIM programme, which seeks to ensure that children with disabilities can access and fully participate in Early Childhood Care and Education, the Minister informed the Committee that broadening that scheme is something that the Department will look to bring forward in budget 2024. Given the importance of ECCE and early access to supports and interventions for children with additional needs generally, the Committee would welcome a broadening of the scheme and recommend that this is made a priority.

### **Redress and Birth Information**

A number of Deputies queried the allocation for the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme, reiterating a key recommendation in the Committee's pre-legislative scrutiny report on that scheme, namely that the six-month residency requirement for children must be removed and anyone who was resident in one of the institutions should be entitled to a payment regardless of time spent therein.

In relation to Birth Information, and people applying for their information being presented with significant delays, the overall decrease in funding being allocated to the Adoption Authority of Ireland was queried. There was a request for the funding to remain at 2022 levels overall, rather than have an overall decrease for 2023, and for that funding to be used to ensure that the delays stop.