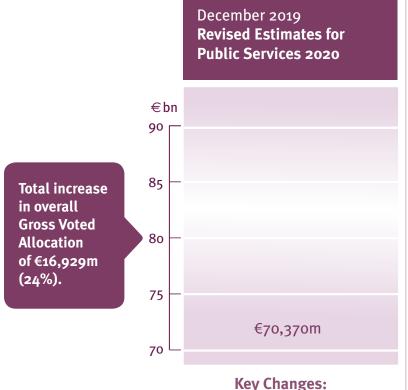
Gross Voted Spending on Public Services in 2020

An Oifig Buiséid Pharlaiminteach Parliamentary Budget Office



PBO publication 67 of 2020
Publication date: 8 December, 2020



These 'original' Revised Estimates were not approved by the Dáil and were effectively replaced by the 'New' Revised

Estimates which addressed the pandemic.

This was an increase of €2.7bn (4%) over the 2019 Estimate.



Key Changes:

+€6.8 bn: Social Protection

+€2 bn: Health +€0.8 bn: Housing +€0.5 bn: Business

These Estimates were approved by the Dáil between May and October 2020. 30 of the 44 Votes (€66.8bn of the €80.7bn total) were not scrutinised by Dáil Select Committees as would normally be the case. They were debated by the Dáil instead.

Key Changes:

+€3.5 bn: Social Protection

-€1.8 bn: Education* +€2.5 bn: Further & Higher Education*

+€0.6 bn: Culture* +€0.5 bn: Business +€0.2 bn: Children

* Transfers of functions a significant component of these changes

Key Changes:

+€o.5 bn: Health +€o.4 bn: Housing

lotes:

Rounding may affect totals. Capital Carryover

Gross Voted expenditure includes expenditure from the National Training Fund and from the Social Insurance Fund.

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Key messages

- Government originally intended to spend €70.4 billion on public services in 2020 but post-pandemic the allocation stands at €87.3 billion. Only €9.5 billion of this additional spending is clearly identified in COVID-19 sub-heads in the Estimates.
- The scale of the direct supports provided by the State means that the Irish fiscal response has been at the upper-end of the distribution of advanced economy response according to the Department of Finance's Taking Stock: The Fiscal Response to Covid-19, p.16). The Department lists €16.78 billion in direct spending (*Ibid*, Table 3), but does this by sector not by Vote. Its categorisation of direct spending is €0.1 billion lower than that presented to the Dáil as Voted spending.
- Most of this response has been routed through the Votes set out in the Estimates for Public Services for Departments to spend. A large proportion of this spending was not scrutinised in the normal manner by committees prior to Dáil consideration and approval.
- This infographic illustrates allocations specific to COVID-19 sub-heads; however, in some Votes additional funds were allocated to pre-existing subheads which may be used to fund COVID-related schemes and programmes. For example, approx. €1 billion was allocated to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. As this allocation was integrated with existing subheads it is not possible to isolate COVID from non-COVID spending in the Estimates. This makes analysis of the effectiveness of both 'core' and 'pandemic' spending more difficult.
- No performance indicators were supplied that related to COVID-19 spending in the Estimates.
- The importance of identifying COVID-19 spending and how it is being used is underlined by the Department of Finance's analysis which points out "the possibility of a permanently larger state" (source: *Ibid*, p.22).

Spending by Vote and Subhead identified in the Estimates 2020 as related to COVID-19					
		'New' Revised Estimates	Further Revised Estimates	Supplementary Estimates	
Vote (No. and name)	Subhead (No. and name)	€000S	€000S	€000S	€000S
2 - Taoiseach	A.7 - COVID-19 PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS	20,000			20,000
Sub-total					20,000
29 - Environment, Climate & Communications	A.6 - COVID-19 TRADING ONLINE VOUCHER SCHEME	30,300			30,300
Sub-total					30,300
37 - Social Protection	A.xx - PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENT	2,230,000			2,230,000
	A.yy - COVID-19 TEMPORARY WAGE SUBSIDY SCHEME	2,073,900	710,400		2,784,300
	A.zz - COVID-19 EMPLOYMENT WAGE SUBSIDY SCHEME (EWSS)		1,740,000		1,740,000
	SIF - COVID-19 Illness Benefit	74,000			74,000
Sub-total					6,828,300
38 - Health	J.2 - HSE COVID-19 ACTIONS	1,666,688		496,383	2,163,071
	L.2 - PRIMARY CARE REIMBURSEMENT SERVICES - COVID-19 ACTIONS	110,350		29,681	140,031
	M.4 - CAPITAL COVID-19 ACTIONS (INCLUDING ICT)	220,000			220,000
Sub-total					2,523,102
40 - Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth	A.6 - CHILD AND FAMILY AGENCY COVID RELATED SUPPORTS	8,000			8,000
Sub-total					8,000
42 - Rural & Community Development	B.X - DORMANT ACCOUNTS (COVID-19 SUPPORTS)	27,000		10,000	37,000
Sub-total					37,000
Total		6,460,238	2,450,400	536,064	9,446,702

Source: Estimates for Public Services 2020