

A background photograph showing Nicola Sturgeon on the left and David Cameron on the right, both in profile and looking towards the left. Sturgeon is wearing a dark jacket and a colorful patterned scarf. Cameron is wearing a dark suit and a patterned tie. The background is a blurred indoor setting with blue and white elements.

A Strong Economy for a Decent Society

Labour's Plan for Economic & Social Progress

Our Key Proposals

- Balance the budget and reduce our national debt to 75% of GDP by 2021
- Invest €3 in services for families and communities for every €1 reduction in tax
- This means that we will invest an additional €8.368bn in the services families and communities need and reduce tax by €2.866bn for low and middle income earners.

We will use our strong economy to continue to build a decent society. Specifically, we will:

- Deliver a job for everyone who wants one by 2018 through the creation of at least 150,000 jobs over the next three years
- Abolish USC the first €72,000 of income and target additional relief to the low paid through reductions in PRSI
- Increase the Minimum Wage and raise it to a Living Wage of €11.30 per hour
- Create 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship places over the next five years
- Increase the state pension to €260
- Make free GP available to all
- Reduce class sizes to the smallest levels in the history of the State
- Cap and reduce childcare costs, increase child benefit, and extend parental leave



Introduction

Labour believes that a strong and stable economy is the foundation upon which we build a decent society.

Over the past five years we have transformed our economy from one on the brink of collapse to the fastest growing in Europe. We have brought the public finances from a ruinous deficit of almost one-third of national income to a place of safety with a deficit close to balance and a national debt almost at the European average and reducing all the time.

Five years ago jobs were disappearing at a rate of 1,000 per week. Now in 2016, jobs are being created at a rate of over 1,100 each week, more than two million people are at work, and unemployment is 8.6% and continuing to fall.

Labour in government worked to reduce the cost of the bank bailout. Through negotiated interest rate reductions over €10 billion was saved in interest costs over the lifetime of the official EU bail-out loans. The refinancing of the Anglo Irish Bank promissory notes reduced Ireland's borrowing requirement by €20 billion over the next decade, while IMF loans were refinanced by issuing government bonds at much lower interest rates. The annual interest payments on our national debt have been reduced by over €4 billion in 2015.

In 2011, when Labour entered government, Ireland faced a ruinous cost of borrowing with bond yields jumping close to 15%. The current Irish 10-year bond yield is 0.86% compared to the cost of 10-year money for Greece of 9.56%. This has dramatically reduced the cost of servicing our national debt and freed up significant resources for greater investment in the services families and communities need. In January 2016, the latest exchequer returns recorded a healthy surplus of €1.2 billion.

A strong economy is not a final destination in itself. Over the next five years, Labour's mission is to sustain and spread the recovery and create

an economy and a society that works for working people. We will use our strong economy to continue to reduce tax on low and middle income households, and to invest in the services that families and communities need like health, education and childcare.

We will use our strong economy to improve living standards, enhance quality of life and create more jobs and better opportunities for our people who gave so much to get Ireland back on its feet.

We have the resources to create a decent society by managing our public finances responsibly, reducing our national debt, and protecting ourselves better against future economic shocks.

Our plan is built on three pillars:

- Improving living standards for working people
- Creating more jobs and better opportunities
- Investing in the services families and communities need

Our plan will maintain and further develop the strong economy in order to deliver a decent society.

**“OUR PLAN
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Macro Economic Forecasts

Our economic assumptions are underpinned by independent forecasts for the economy and the public finances which were produced by the Department of Finance for Budget 2016 and endorsed by the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council. These projections, outlined below forecast annual growth of 3.1 per cent over the next five years.

These are cautious forecasts, with significant potential to overachieve in the near term as reflected in upward revisions in recently published forecasts, including those produced by the Central Bank and the European Commission. However, we will adhere to the Department of Finance forecasts in our spending plan.

Labour is committed to tackling the national debt. EU fiscal rules require us to reduce our debt to GDP ratio by 1% a year over the lifetime of the next Government. However, we propose to achieve this at a faster rate of 3%, in order to get the debt ratio back to 75% or below by 2021.

If growth is stronger than expected, we will use the additional resources to increase investment in infrastructure to reinforce the growth potential of the economy. This is the most effective means of reducing the national debt and keeping the public finances in a safe place.

Budget 2016: GDP Growth (%) and Baseline Fiscal Projections to 2021

% change	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
GDP Growth	5.2	6.2	4.3	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9

Source: CSO for outturn data, Department of Finance (Budget 2016) for forecasts.

Labour will manage the public finances in a responsible and sustainable manner, underpinned by realistic assumptions for growth in the economy. We will use the fruits of that recovery to provide tax reductions for low and middle income families, and to invest in the services families and communities need.

Labour supported the ratification of the Fiscal Treaty in 2012. We believe that fiscal rules are a necessary part of currency Union. Labour will comply fully with the terms of the European fiscal rules. We are committed to maximising the flexibility in the European fiscal rules to increase the level of public investment in infrastructure and we will support reform, as proposed by our social democratic colleagues in Europe to increase this flexibility further.

The review of the Capital Investment Plan – Building on Recovery - will be brought forward to the end of 2016. The capital plan, which is already investing €42bn into our economy and sustaining over 45,000 jobs, is based on cautious macroeconomic assumptions. Therefore stronger economic growth may free up additional resources. This is already apparent in recent macroeconomic data. If economic growth exceeds expectations, we will use the additional fiscal space to increase capital spending, targeting identifiable bottlenecks in social and economic infrastructure.



Sustainable National Debt

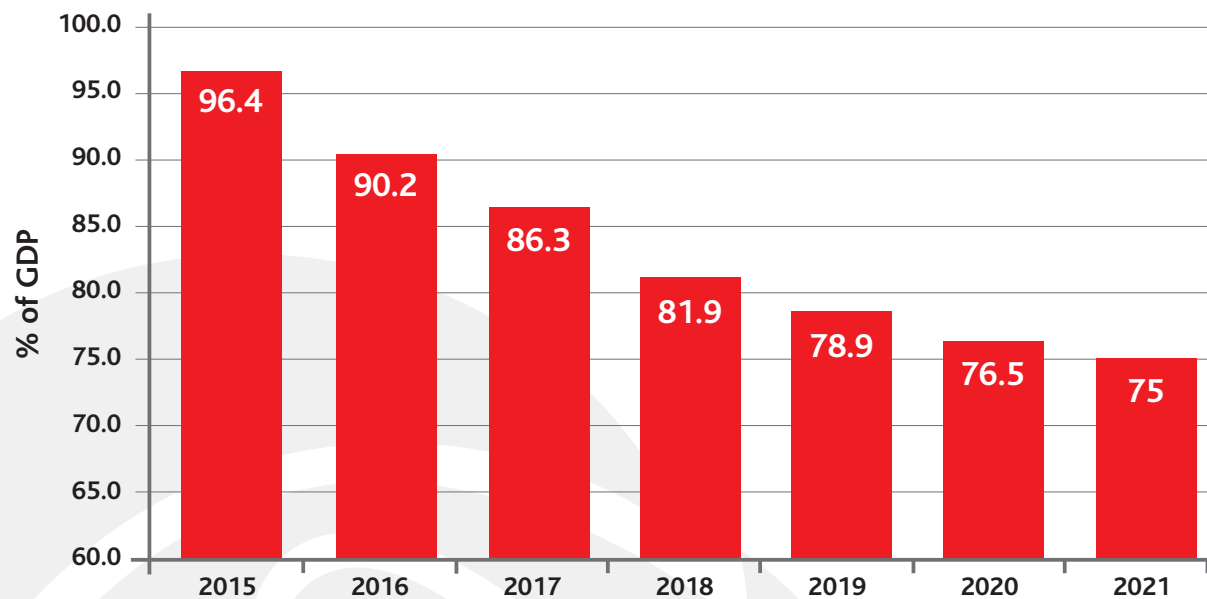
Over the next five years Labour will balance the budget and target a reduction in Ireland's national debt to 75% of national income in 2021. This is an interim target on the way to achieving a debt ratio below 60% of GDP.

The EU Fiscal Compact specifies that a Member State's budget is in balance when the headline deficit is below 3% of GDP and the deficit in structural terms does not exceed the country specific Medium-Term Objective (MTO). In Ireland's case, the Department of Finance now expects that the MTO will require a structural deficit of no more than 0.5% of GDP. Under our fiscal plan, the MTO will be achieved by 2018.

Compliance with the fiscal rules requires a reduction in the debt burden at an annual average rate of 1% of GDP between 2016 and 2021 with larger reductions in the early years. Under Labour's plan the debt burden will decline at an annual average rate of almost 3% of GDP over this period, reaching an interim target of 75% of GDP by 2021, with the ultimate target of 60% of GDP.

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Public Debt



Labour's Public Debt Plan: debt Projections, 2015-2021

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
% GDP							
Opening Debt, 1 January	107.5	96.4	90.2	86.3	81.9	78.9	76.5
Contributions to Change							
GDP Growth	-10.8	-5.6	-4.2	-3.9	-3.6	-3.3	-3.1
Budget Balance	1.5	0.7	0.3	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	0.1
Stock Flow Adjustment (as per Budget 2016)	-1.8	0.2	1.1	0.5	1.3	1.5	1.5
Indicative Asset Disposal and Cash Balance Rundown	0	-1.5	-1.1	-0.8	-0.6	-0.6	0.0
Closing Debt 31 December	96.4	90.2	86.3	81.9	78.9	76.5	75
Change in Public debt	-11.1	-6.2	-3.9	-4.4	-3.0	-2.4	-1.5
Required Change in Debt under EU Fiscal Rules	-2.4	-1.8	-1.5	-1.3	-1.1	-0.9	-0.8

Labour's economic plan

Our plan is built on three pillars:

- Improving living standards for working people
- Creating more jobs and better opportunities
- Investing in the services families and communities need

We have set out below the total amount of resources that will be available over the next five years for taxation and spending measures, while complying with the requirements of the EU fiscal rules.

The Department of Finance set out in Table A8 the 2016 Budget documentation, the estimated amount fiscal space for the period 2017 to 2021 according the EU fiscal rules.

Fiscal Space 2017-2021 € million

Gross Fiscal Space (2016 Budget day estimate)	11,070
Add: Discretionary revenue (tax indexation)	1,768
Adjusted Fiscal Space	12,838
Less:	
Expenditure required to maintain current service levels including demographic pressures, the Lansdowne Road Public sector Pay Agreement and increase capital expenditure under the Public Capital programme.	4,166
Net fiscal space (Budget day estimate)	8,672
Add: Impact of new MTO of -0.5% of GDP	1,463
Adjusted Fiscal space	10,135
Add:	
Revenue Raising Measures	1,099
Fiscal Space based on continued recovery	11,234

On Budget day, the Department estimated gross fiscal space for the period 2017-2021 (including the technical assumption of indexing the income tax system) at €11.070 billion. If the tax system is not indexed, this increases the available fiscal space by an additional €1.768 billion to €12.838 billion.

When allowance is made for expenditure necessary to maintain services at current levels while allowing for demographic pressures, for the cost of the Lansdowne Road pay agreement and for increased capital spending committed under the Public Capital Programme, the net amount of remaining fiscal space is €8.672 billion.

Since Budget day changes under the fiscal rules to the definition for Ireland of a balanced budget have increased the available space by €1.463

billion. The revision to Ireland's MTO increases the net fiscal space to €10.135 billion.

Labour will further boost the available space to €11.234 billion with a limited number of revenue raising measures of approximately to €1,099 million after five years.

We believe that the majority of the fiscal space should be used to invest in improving the quality and scope of our public services and for tax reform that is targeted at low and middle income families.

Tax relief measures amount to €2.866 billion. Total discretionary expenditure will amount to €8.368 billion. The ratio of additional expenditure measures to gross tax relief measures is approximately 3:1

A Strong Economy for a Decent Society

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Pillar 1: Improving living standards for working people

Labour will deliver a new deal on tax and living standards for working people by abolishing USC for low and middle income earners.

Labour will:

- Abolish USC on the first €72,000 of income.
- Change how PRSI operates to reduce the burden on workers earning between €18,305 and €36,608
- Change the tax credit system to ensure those on low to middle incomes benefit most from these changes, while those earning over €120,000 do not benefit at all



Pat earns €25,000. Under Labour's plan he will be €1,132 better off

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{€668} & + & \text{€464} = \text{€1,132} \\ \text{LESS USC} & & \text{LESS PRSI} \quad \text{MORE TAKE HOME PAY} \end{array}$$



Barry and Cliodhna earn €80,000 and €35,000. Under Labour's plan, together they will be €4,584 better off

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{€3,302} & + & \text{€64} = \text{€4,584} \\ \text{LESS USC (BARRY)} & & \text{LESS PRSI (CLIODHNA)} \quad \text{MORE TAKE HOME PAY} \\ \text{€1,218} & & \\ \text{LESS USC (CLIODHNA)} & & \end{array}$$



Sinéad earns €120,000. Under Labour's plan her take home pay does not change ¹

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{€3,302} & - & \text{€3,300} = \text{NO CHANGE IN TAKE HOME PAY} \\ \text{LESS USC} & & \text{LESS TAX CREDITS} \end{array}$$

¹ €2 more per annum

Labour's tax plan 2017 to 2021

	2017 - 2021
Cost(-)/yield (+)	€ million
Tax Relief Measures	
USC Reform:	
Abolish USC on the first €72,000 of income	-2612
Increase Earned income tax credit to €1650	-122
PRSI relief for low to middle earners	-82
Capital Gains Tax Relief	-50
Total	-2866

Revenue Raising Measures	
Phase out tax credits for very high incomes	306
Bank levy increased by €350 million in 2017	350
Sugar Sweetened Drink tax	183
Increased tobacco taxes	260
Total	1,099

USC will be phased out on the first €72,000 of income

In response to the crisis Fianna Fáil hiked taxes on income. They introduced the Universal Social Charge and reduced the personal tax credits. The USC applied to all income provided the individual taxpayer earned more than €4,000 a year.

Labour in Government increased this threshold to €13,000 and removed 700,000 taxpayers from the USC net. We have also reduced the rate of USC payable on the first €70,000 of income. Now we intend to go much further.

Labour will abolish USC on the first €72,000 of income. This will be done progressively over the five-year term of the next Government.

LABOUR WILL ABOLISH USC ON THE FIRST €72,000 OF INCOME. THIS WILL BE DONE PROGRESSIVELY OVER THE FIVE-YEAR TERM OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT



Tax credits

We will adjust personal tax credits for individuals earning in excess of €100,000. The combined effect of this measure and the elimination of USC on the first €72,000 of income will be to gradually reduce the overall financial benefit to such taxpayers. Individuals earning in excess of €120,000 will not benefit from our tax proposals – the gains resulting from the USC measure will be offset by the loss of personal tax credits.

The credit will be withdrawn at the rate of 5% for each €1,000 of income in excess of the threshold amount. This means that the credits will no longer apply for a single person at income in excess of €120,000 (single). A single income couple on income of €120,000 will retain €1,650 in tax credits or €2,650 if they have dependents. The effect will be to ensure that those earning €120,000 or more continue to pay precisely the same amount of tax as they do now.

PRSI threshold

The third part of our tax plan is to target additional relief at low and middle income working people, earning between €18,305 and €36,608.

In the last Budget, we reduced the burden on low and middle income workers by introducing PRSI relief. We will continue this approach, extending PRSI relief of up to €14 per week for those on incomes under €704 per week or €36,608 per year.

The effect will be that the payment of PRSI kicks in gradually, ensuring more take-home pay for low income workers.

Equal treatment for the self-employed

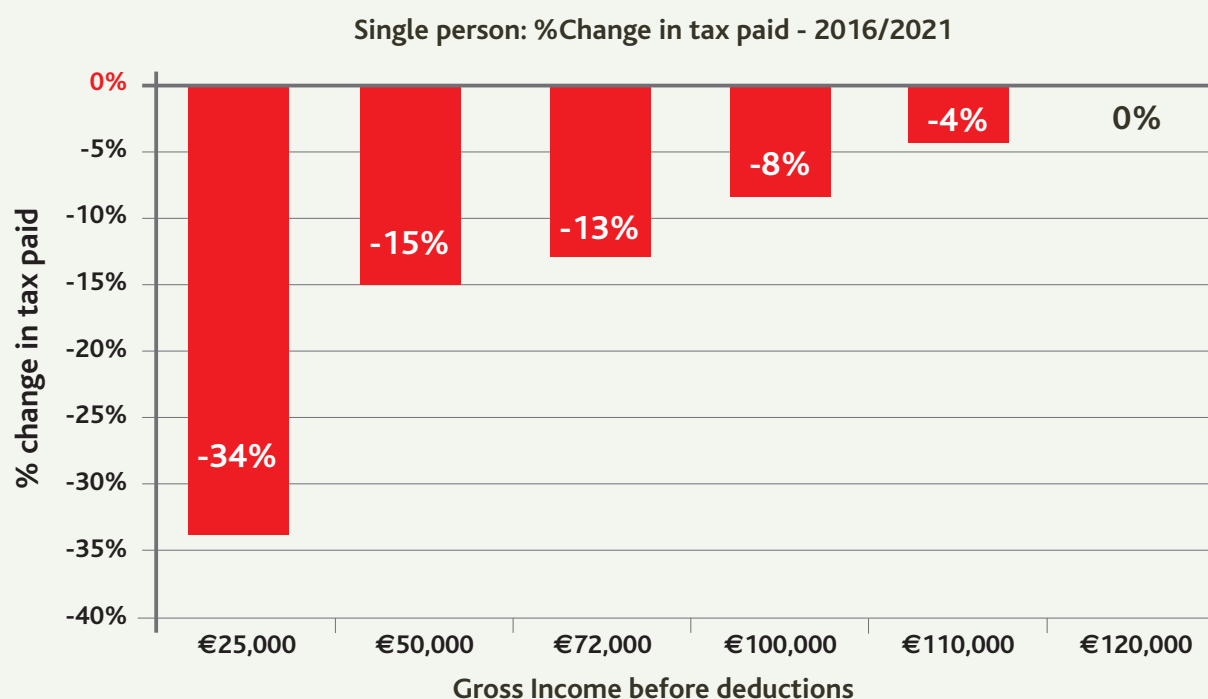
We believe that people should pay the same amount of tax whether they are employees or self-employed.

We introduced a tax credit on income earned from work of €550 for the self-employed in the last budget to bring them closer into line with PAYE workers, and we will continue to equalise the tax treatment of self-employed workers and employees.

The earned income tax credit will be increased from €550 to €1,100 in 2017 and €1,650 in 2018 to bring tax on self-employed trading and professional income into line with PAYE earnings. We will also abolish the USC surcharge of 3% on income over €100,000 for the self-employed to bring the USC top rate to 8% for everyone in this income bracket.



Who pays less tax under the Labour tax plan?



Other tax changes

In order to maintain a sustainable trading environment, Labour recognises that non-banking peer to peer seed investment is a vital part of the support jigsaw for new and early stage firms. We will increase the CGT entrepreneur relief to 15% and increase the lifetime limit to €10m.

The bank levy will be increased by €350 million and will remain in place at this rate until the banks have fully run down their tax loss reserves and resume the payment of corporation income tax at the normal rate.

A tax on sugar sweetened drinks will be introduced at a volumetric rate of €36.96 per hectolitre. This will result in a 15 cent increase in the VAT-inclusive cost of a can of soft drink.

Tobacco duties will be increased each year to yield approximately €260 million after five years.

Pillar 2: Creating more jobs and better opportunities

Labour will continue to prioritise the creation of good jobs and opportunities across the country by investing in skills and infrastructure, supporting small business and strengthening workers' rights.

Labour will:

- Make sure there is a job for everyone that wants one by 2018, with at least 150,000 jobs created over the next three years
- Invest in 21st century skills, including the creation of 50,000 new apprenticeships and traineeships
- Invest in infrastructure to create employment while improving quality of life

We will make sure that there is a job for everyone who wants one by 2018, and in the process we will increase the proportion of women at work, particularly those with children.

Labour has built a job-rich recovery

Five years ago jobs were disappearing at a rate of 1,000 per week. At the most acute phase of the crisis, in early 2009, the rate of job losses approached 6,000 per week. Now in 2016 there are two million people at work and jobs are being created at a rate of over 1,100 each week.

140,000 jobs have been created under Labour, and we have an ambitious plan to create a further 150,000 jobs over the next three years, providing a job for everyone who wants one by 2018.

Through the implementation of annual Action Plans for Jobs, alongside a successful Pathways to Work activation strategy, we have shown the impact that the state can have on job creation. Continuing this work remains our top priority for the coming five years.

Unemployment, at 8.6 per cent in January is the lowest in over 7 years. The numbers on the Live Register (seasonally adjusted) declined by 4,800 in January alone, the 34th consecutive monthly decline.

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A job for everyone who wants one by 2018

Job creation will continue to be the first priority of Labour in Government. We will ensure there is an innovative and competitive enterprise base which provides quality, lasting jobs which will bring a higher standard of living for all of our people.

Labour will:

- Support strategic sectors of the economy and enable indigenous companies to expand and compete abroad
- Work to ensure that the digital economy is thriving across all sectors and workplaces
- Help transform workplaces by investing in management development and workplace learning

When Labour took office in 2011, jobs were disappearing at a rate of 1,000 per week. Now, 1,100 new jobs are being created every week, with 140,000 added over the last two years. There are now over 2 million people in the Irish workforce. But we need to do more.

We will make sure that there is a job for everyone who wants one by 2018. We will also increase the proportion of women at work, particularly those with children.

A Living Wage for all in work

Work must always pay. Those in full-time work should be able to provide their families with a decent standard of living. Labour is committed to raising the threshold of decency in Ireland, and in Government, has increased the Minimum Wage by €1.50 an hour, or €3,000 a year, for those who need it most.

Our plan to ensure that the Government becomes a living wage employer, and to extend this requirement to those who provide services to it in onsite services such as security, cleaning and catering, will ensure that work pays, even for those on modest incomes.

Dignity at work

Our employment policy must strike the right balance between the needs of business and a worker's right to basic job security and a decent rate of pay.

Labour is the party of workers' rights. While other governments across the EU have restricted workers' rights, we broke new ground with collective bargaining legislation, which strengthens workers' legal rights to negotiate with employers. We also boosted protection for workers by reinstating the system of Registered Employment Agreements (REAs) and introduced the concept of Sectoral Employment Orders on a constitutionally sound basis. Already, 55,000 low paid security and contract cleaning staff have received a pay rise after binding wage agreements for both sectors were agreed under legislation enacted by this government.

We will end abusive terms and conditions of employment including zero hour and insecure contracts, low pay, casualisation, and enforced and bogus self-employment.

We will ensure that anyone who works regular hours for a minimum period of 12 hours per week will be legally entitled to a written contract, and create better protection for workers who provide contracted services.

We will confront the scourge of workplace bullying, and will put an end to arbitrary deductions from wages, contrary to the Payment of Wages Act. We will also safeguard the rights of workers in firms that collapse in an informal insolvency, and allow freelance workers to collectively bargain.

Additional support for those who lose their jobs

For a stronger welfare system that combines security with opportunity, we will take steps towards an income-linked system of jobseekers payments to empower workers to move between jobs and bounce back from short-term unemployment secure in the knowledge that the social welfare system will adequately support them and their families as they transition.

This income linked job seekers payment will amount to up to €30 a week extra above existing benefit levels, as a first step towards creating a system of contributory welfare that recognises that those who contribute to our social insurance fund should benefit when they need it most.

A skills revolution

The key to reaching full employment and maintaining it is to invest in people. This means investing in those currently at work and in those who will be the workers of the future, including those who don't go to third level, those who leave school early and those who struggle to find employment after studying.

Labour will:

- Create 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship places over the next five years
- Extend free part-time 3rd level education to those at work, and ensure that 100,000 places are available over the lifetime of the next Government.

In Government, Labour radically reformed further education and training through the establishment of SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards. We established the Apprenticeship Council to expand apprenticeships into new sectors of the economy and create 21st century apprenticeships. We also pioneered the Skills to Work initiative which brought together key programmes and gave jobseekers access to training, work experience and job opportunities.

Bringing the recovery to every corner of Ireland

Creating full employment means bringing employment opportunities to every corner of Ireland. We believe that every person should have the chance to work, which means investing in and supporting the development of regional and rural economies. By building up all our regions, we can reverse the cycle of emigration and provide sustainable opportunities in rural communities.

Labour will:

- Set out a new Regional Growth Strategy that will bring prosperity to all parts of the country
- Focus on creating a stronger rural economy by building up vital sectors such as food, tourism, agriculture and retail
- Labour is committed to recovery that is felt throughout Ireland. That requires building thriving corridors of economic activity in every region.
- We will scale up investment in infrastructure

Labour believes that if we invest appropriately in our people and our infrastructure, we can drive continued economic growth and continue to raise living standards.

By investing in schools, third-level, training and upskilling, we will create a highly-skilled workforce. Investing in better roads, rail links, broadband and other key infrastructure boosts enterprise, generates growth and raises incomes, all of which are critical to ensuring higher living standards. This means stronger domestic consumption, healthier public finances and an economy more resilient to global economic downturns.

We will create a €1 billion dedicated Green Infrastructure fund to invest in clean public transport and energy efficiency projects. This will be funded by €500 million from proceeds from the sale of bank shares, combined with private sector leveraging.

Labour in Government launched a capital investment plan in 2012 worth €17 billion in 2012, and in 2015, we launched Building on Recovery a follow-up, six-year plan worth €42 billion. We increased investment in schools throughout the crisis, completing 84 new schools and 55 major extensions to schools up to 2015. We started the largest social housing programme in the history of the State and we ensured high speed broadband to more than 700,000 homes so that Ireland is on course for 100% coverage by 2020.

Building on the progress we have made to date, we will invest an additional €8.368 billion into the economy in current and capital spending over the next five years. In addition, Labour will prioritise greater funding for infrastructural projects if economic growth continues to exceed expectations. The latest capital plan will be reviewed by the end of 2016. Subject to the continued strong performance of the public finances, we will bring forward a number of additional key projects and expand the plan.

We will bring forward commencement of construction works on Metro North in Dublin and complete the national motorway network by increasing investment to better connect Dublin to the North-West and further develop the Atlantic Corridor to ensure proper road connectivity between Cork, Limerick and Galway.

We will invest in developing the digital economy across all parts of Ireland by rolling out high speed broadband and fostering technology innovation.



Pillar 3: Investing in the Services

Families & Communities Need

Labour will target 75% of the available fiscal space to investment in public services that are available to all to transform the availability and delivery of key services like health, education, childcare and housing.

We will ensure that no family has to worry about the cost of accessing healthcare; that childcare costs do not deter women from working; that children are getting the best possible start in life; and that our older people can grow old with dignity and with the best of care.

We will create a new National Community Health Service

Labour in Government is committed to Universal Health Care. This means free and timely access to the health service from the initial contact with a GP to hospital treatment.

We are committed to ending the two tier health system that exists in this country. We have already introduced free GP care for young children and older people. We will extend this to all. Ireland currently has a private primary care system and a public hospital system. We will create a new National Community Health Service – a public primary care system where access is free to everyone – and create a new Cabinet position with direct political responsibility to oversee this critical national project.

Labour will:

- Introduce a new National Community Health Service providing free GP for all
- Create a better functioning hospital system
- Improve access to mental health services

In Government, Labour has already delivered 80 new primary care centres that have been opened or are under construction with a further 73 planned. Each primary care team will serve 7,000-10,000 people. We also introduced free GP care for the under 6s and over 70s and will make it available to children under 12 this year.

For dental services, we will start by restoring the Dental Treatment Benefit scheme to pre-2009 levels. We will extend access so that all persons are eligible for two free oral examinations, scale plus polish per year plus access to basic preventative treatments such as cleaning and fillings.

We will continue our clear journey towards a fundamental transformation in the way health care is delivered in this country so that access is available to all who need it, not just those who can afford it.

“WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENDING THE TWO TIER HEALTH SYSTEM THAT EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY. WE HAVE ALREADY STARTED THE ROLL OUT OF FREE GP CARE FOR CHILDREN AND OLDER PEOPLE. WE WILL EXTEND THIS TO ALL”

We will make our schools fit for the digital age

Education is a great liberating force in society. Investment in and reform of education will help us build a more equal Ireland. Making every school fit for the digital age is our priority.

Labour will:

- Deliver the smallest class sizes in the history of the State
- End the use of prefabs in our schools
- Reduce school costs for parents

Make 21st century skills and subjects part of the education of every child

Labour in Government has ensured that all teachers working in our schools are qualified. We have reduced the rental bill for prefabs in schools by 40% and provided high-speed broadband free of charge to every second-level school. We will now ensure that all primary schools are similarly equipped.

We delivered the first improvements to literacy and numeracy results for a generation, reformed the Junior Cert to give all of our students the skills they need for the modern world, and introduced new subjects like coding, philosophy and Chinese.

A strong economy and a decent society requires that every child has the opportunity to access a top quality education fit for the digital age.

Only Labour will deliver that.

We will make quality childcare affordable for everyone

Our State has never invested enough in supporting families with young children. Labour will make low-cost, high-quality childcare for all children under 12 a reality, and dramatically increase the level of spending on early years education and childcare.

We also recognise that a high quality childcare sector depends on a skilled childcare workforce with decent pay and fair conditions. We will work to ensure those who provide childcare services receive the respect and remuneration they deserve.

Labour will:

- Cap childcare costs for parents, and reduce these costs to no more than €2 per hour by 2021, with the state funding the remaining cost
- Increase paid parental leave by three months, to be shared between both parents
- Transform the quality of early years care and education by ensuring a higher premium for providers with highly qualified staff

In Government, we have expanded the subsidised childcare available to low-income families, introduced the first supports for children with special needs in pre-schools, begun inspecting the educational qualities of pre-schools so that every child gets a high-quality experience, and passed a referendum enshrining the rights of children in our constitution.

Labour will dramatically reduce the financial burden on parents of young children, and give every child the high-quality care and support that they deserve. These policies will also support increased labour market participation, particularly amongst women.



Costings

Costing for Labour's Investment in the Services Families & Communities Need

	2017- 2021
	€ million
Health	2,975
Education and Children	2,158
Social Protection	1,720
Housing	530
Other Expenditure	985
Total	8,368



The Labour Party,

W: www.labour.ie,

T: 01-678 4700

f /thelabourparty

t @labour