



SEPTEMBER  
2020

# NEW CHALLENGES, KEY PRIORITIES

OUR SPENDING  
PROPOSALS FOR  
BUDGET 2021

*ASIAM Policy Office, part of our  
Community Support Department*

## Education

- Support the continued rollout of the In-School Therapy Support Service on a national level to primary and post-primary mainstream schools.
  - Commit a targeted investment of €20million for 75 schools across the country to continue the progress made by the pilot programme.
- Invest €10million towards a national training programme for all teachers on inclusive education and best practices for engaging with autistic students within school settings;
- Conduct a full review of the Education for Persons with Special Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, as outlined within the 2006 Interim Report, with a view to reform, update, and fully commence the Act on the foot of such a review, in consultation with the relevant bodies/agencies/ stakeholders;
- Put in place a plan for provision of autism class and special school placements, based on demographics and data, and provide the funds to provide the requisite number of places for the 2021/22 academic year;
- Increase the number of Special Needs Assistants and Special Education Teachers allocations to pupils with special educational needs;
- Work towards reducing the Irish pupil:teacher ratio towards the European average over a five year period by reducing the number of students by two per year.

## Healthcare

- €5 million for HSE Autism Action Plan to accelerate its delivery, with particular focus on developing clear and accessible pathways for service delivery;
- €4 million be provided to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to develop an appropriate, timely clinical pathway for young autistic people in mental health crises;
- Invest €3 million towards hiring a target of 250 regional key-workers to specifically support the health and social needs of autistic adults;

- €2.8 million to hire an additional 100 caseworkers to support early intervention services for autistic children and young people.
- €1million to be allocated for the development of a Community Initiative Fund as part of the National Autism Plan, for local organisations to support activities and social schemes to engage autistic people.
- €1million to be sanctioned for the development of an Autistic Youth Strategy to address the social isolation of many autistic young people across the country.

## Social Protection

- Introduce a cost of disability payment;
- Provide an additional €20 to the existing rate of Disability Allowance, with a view to increase it by €10 per annum throughout the course of this Government's lifetime;
- Domiciliary Care should be extended to 18 years of age and increase the rate of allowance by €20;
- Increase the rate of Carer's Allowance by €20, and remove the means testing for present and future applicants.

## Equality

- Invest €9.1 million to establish the Decision Support Service;
- Invest €5 million towards the development and rollout of an Autism Empowerment Strategy for Ireland;
- Fund 100 additional caseworkers within the National Advocacy Service.

## Employment

- Invest €8 million towards the development of a National Plan for Special Education in further and higher education institutions, with a view to establish Learning and Care Support Teams in every campus across the country;

- €3.4 million for the hiring of 126 job coaches within regional Intreo Offices, trained in best practices for engaging with and supporting jobseekers on the autism spectrum and those with other disabilities;
- Increase public awareness of current Workplace Supports available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), including the Wage Subsidy Scheme, the Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant and the Reasonable Accommodation Fund;
- Establish a disability-specific Access to Work Scheme within the DEASP, similar to the model used in the United Kingdom . This will combine existing supports available to jobseekers and employees with disabilities to secure and maintain employment;
- Commence a review of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, with a view to progress on ways to make self-employment a reality for autistic entrepreneurs a viable reality;
- Mandate all State bodies to work towards hiring more autistic employees, in line with the incremental target of at least 6% by 2024 envisaged within the Comprehensive Employment Strategy.