

**Question: What progress do you feel has been made in reducing poverty and social exclusion since publication of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 in January 2020?**

Recent crises impact most on those at greatest risk of poverty and social exclusion and highlight the urgency of implementing a truly integrated anti-poverty strategy.

Ireland is a wealthy country and the poverty reduction targets and commitments need to provide a standard for guiding Government's priorities, particularly during a crisis.

SILC shows that there has been a reduction in overall poverty levels since the Roadmap began.

However, progress has been uneven for some groups. SILC also does not capture poverty levels for all groups.

There has been a growing dependence by people on community and voluntary organisations to meet their basic needs. This is a symptom of the deep levels of poverty and existed before the Covid-19 crisis. A major concern is that the role of charities, including food banks, in meeting people's basic needs would become a normalised.

While there is progress on the delivery of specific commitments under the Roadmap, the delivery on some crucial measures is behind schedule.

**Question: In your experience, what has worked well in reducing the number of people in Ireland experiencing poverty and social exclusion?**

The reduction poverty in 2021 shows the positive impact of the provision adequate incomes for many people. The enhanced Covid-19 income supports clearly protected recipients from falling into poverty. This finding supports calls for income adequacy as a key tool in reducing poverty, as part of a wider integrated strategy.

The process of reviewing Ireland's equality legislation is an important opportunity to widen grounds e.g., socio-economic status, and make legislation more effective. It can also support a cultural shift to a greater focus on the promotion of equality and human rights alongside protecting people from discrimination.

The dedicated commitment of a Minister of State, and the commitment of specific senior officials to ensuring delivery of specific measures within their Departments and to being accountable in the monitoring process is important to ensuring a focus on delivery. The role played by external members of the monitoring group is also important in ensuring transparency and oversight.

**Question: And in your experience, what has not worked so well or is challenging in reducing the number of people in Ireland experiencing poverty and social exclusion?**

The Government has not moved to benchmark social welfare at level that is adequate to live with dignity.

Wages are below the cost of living. The new benchmark to average wages will not ensure they are adequate.

Failure of policy implementation across a range of strategies.

Over reliance on the private sector and the private market to deliver on many public services.

A dysfunctional housing system that is a major driver of poverty - private rented sector becoming a pathway to homelessness and a lack of adequate measures for low-income households.

People from marginalised groups and communities face ongoing barriers to accessing the labour market and earning a living income.

Ongoing need for an improved approach to cross-departmental working

The capacity of communities experiencing poverty and social exclusion to have a collective voice in decision making is weak following the Governments de-investment and changes to programmes.

**Question: What would you like to see prioritised in terms of moving people out of poverty and social exclusion, up to the end of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 in 2025.**

Integrated response to structural causes. Implement agreed policy and delivery on commitments Social Welfare benchmarked to MESL. NMW set to Living Wage as recommended by LWTG Adequate social and affordable housing controlled by local authorities and AHBs. All housing should energy efficient and accessible. Adequate provision of Traveller specific accommodation. Implement Sláintecare and address health inequalities. Shift to a public model of childcare. Provision of low-cost public transport available to people where they need it. Climate measures to take account of social inequality and the needs of those on the lowest incomes. Greater focus is needed on addressing the barriers for those groups and communities most distant from the labour market, ensuring decent jobs. Add disadvantaged socio-economic status as a ground in legislation Implement more integrated approaches to address the inter-generational and structural challenges in disadvantage communities. Expand the Pilot Community Development Programme

**Question: If there are any specific aims, ambitions, commitments or targets in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 that you would like to comment on, please provide details. This can include identifying gaps in what is included in the Roadmap, or any other comments you may have.**

Roadmap should not undermine adequate income as a key measure. Retain current ambition and targets. The main EU linked target should be the ranking. Add sub-targets for at-risk of poverty and deprivation. Add new targets for energy poverty, sub-groups with high poverty levels and child poverty. More ambitious targets for poverty reduction and employment for people with disabilities. A data strategy to capture data gaps. A better process to ensure commitments and policies are adequate to meet the overall ambition and targets, including annual Budget. Monitoring adequate to ensure commitments are on track and identify necessary changes. Commitments must be outcome focused and concrete Greater link to other named strategies Add a commitment to address the bias faced in accessing employment Add measures to address the drivers of the cost of living, in particular housing, childcare, fuel and energy. A referendum on the constitutional right to housing. New Energy Poverty Strategy agreed and implemented.

**Question: The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 includes 7 high-level goals. Please indicate below which of these goals are most relevant to your participation in the Mid-Term Review.**

Extend employment opportunities to all who can work;  
Ensure work pays – fair pay, fair conditions for workers;  
Provide income security for older people; Support families – reduce child poverty;  
Reduce poverty among people with disabilities – help them to maximise their ability;  
Build inclusive communities – encourage active citizenship;  
Ensure that all people have access to quality services

**Question: Which county are you located in?**

National

**Question: Are you responding on a personal basis or on behalf of an organisation?**

Organisation

**Question: Which organisation are you responding on behalf of?**

European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland