

**Social
Democrats**



Giving People a Break

Measures to Reduce the Cost of Living

For the Future
It Starts Here

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Ask yourself: are you better off than you were in 2020?

All across the country, people are struggling to make ends meet. The price of everything is up, buying the weekly shop, filling the tank, visiting the doctor or taking out insurance.

We are told that the economy is strong, and, in some ways, it is. Yes, there are record numbers of people working. Yes, wages have risen. But for most of us, it hasn't been enough to keep pace with the rising cost of living.

It's true that governments can't control the price of everything. But they can ease the burden on households and take action that reduces the cost of living indirectly.

The current government have tried to do this with once-off payments and other gimmicks. Welcome as they may be at the time, the benefits quickly evaporate and people are left as badly off as before.

What we need are permanent measures to boost incomes and reduce the cost of basic public services.

The Social Democrats have committed in our General Election Manifesto to the following 40 measures that can meaningfully reduce the cost of living:

1. Build 50,000 Affordable Purchase homes
2. Build 25,000 Affordable Rental homes
3. Freeze rents for three years
4. Extend free GP care to all age groups
5. Reform the public dental scheme to improve access
6. Reduce prescription charges for patients to 50c, with a €5 per month cap
7. Reduce the Drug Payment Scheme max payment to €60 per month
8. Introduce a Cost of Disability payment
9. Cap childcare fees at €250 per month
10. Make the Minimum Wage a real Living Wage
11. Abolish the Carer's Allowance means test

12. Apply a 9% VAT rate to food and drink
13. Restore the Electric Vehicle grant to €5,000
14. Introduce a frontloaded 'pay as you save' retrofitting scheme
15. Install solar panels on 100,000 homes every year, cutting electricity bills by up to 40%
16. Free solar panels for the lowest income households
17. Keep the lower 9% VAT rate on energy
18. Benchmark social protection payments to the Minimum Essential Standard of Living
19. Link the State Pension to at least 34% of the average wage
20. Increase supports for Foster Carers
21. Make primary and secondary education truly free
22. Fund hot school meals in every school
23. Reduce third level fees by phasing out the student contribution charge
24. Increase SUSI grant funding
25. Introduce a €1 off-peak public transport fare
26. Make public transport free for under 18s
27. Reduce public transport fares, and expand the '90 Minute Fare'
28. Make the 'Bike to Work' scheme 'Bikes for All', by including those not in work
29. Increase the 'Bike to Work' Scheme rate to €1,500
30. Introduce an annual €200 Culture Voucher for 18 to 24-year-olds
31. Increase paid parents' leave by 4 weeks for each parent
32. Increase Maternity benefit and related payments to €350 per week
33. Introduce a €150 Sports and Activity voucher for all children 6 to 18
34. Regulate dynamic ticket pricing
35. Introduce a price transparency regime for legal services

36. Ban the '3% plus inflation' automatic price increases in service contracts
37. Establish an economic regulator for waste management, and re-municipalise the sector
38. Develop a mortgage switching strategy with the Central Bank and Department of Finance
39. Work to increase competition in the insurance industry
40. Review the banking sector to remove barriers to competition

Please refer to General Election Manifesto for further detail on individual measures'

www.socialdemocrats.ie

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