

Pre-Budget 2023 Submission to the Department of Social Protection

July 2022



Founded in 1995, the Children’s Rights Alliance unites over 140 members working together to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. We change the lives of all children in Ireland by making sure that their rights are respected and protected in our laws, policies and services.

Accompaniment Support Service for Children (A.S.S.C.)
Alcohol Action Ireland
Amnesty International Ireland
An Cosán
Aoibhneas
AslAm
Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)
ATD Fourth World – Ireland Ltd
Atheist Ireland
Barnardos
Barretstown Camp
Bedford Row Family Project
BeLonG To Youth Services
Blossom Ireland
Bodywhys
Catholic Guides of Ireland
Child Law Project
Childhood Development Initiative
Childminding Ireland
Children in Hospital Ireland
Children’s Books Ireland
Children’s Grief Centre
Clarecare
COPE Galway
Cork Life Centre
Cork Migrant Centre
Crann Centre
Crosscare
CyberSafeKids
Cycle Against Suicide
Dalkey School Project National School
Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service
Dental Health Foundation of Ireland
Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC
Disability Federation of Ireland
Doras
Down Syndrome Ireland
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
Dyslexia Association of Ireland
Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland
Early Childhood Ireland
Early Learning Initiative (National College of Ireland)
Educate Together
EPIC
Equality for Children
Extern Ireland
FamiliBase
Féach
Focus Ireland
Foróige
Gaelscoileanna Teo
Galway Traveller Movement
Good Shepherd Cork
Immigrant Council of Ireland
Inclusion Ireland
Institute of Guidance Counsellors
Irish Aftercare Network
Irish Association for Infant Mental Health
Irish Association of Social Workers
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
Irish Foster Care Association
Irish Girl Guides
Irish Heart Foundation
Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)
Irish Penal Reform Trust
Irish Primary Principals’ Network
Irish Refugee Council
Irish Second Level Students’ Union (ISSU)
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Irish Traveller Movement
Irish Youth Foundation
iScoil
Jack and Jill Children’s Foundation
Jigsaw
Katharine Howard Foundation
Kids’ Own Publishing Partnership
Kinship Care
Leap Ireland
Let’s Grow Together! Infant and Childhood Partnerships CLG.
LGBT Ireland
Mecpaths
Mental Health Reform
Mercy Law Resource Centre
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
Mothers’ Union
My Mind
My Project Minding You
Museum of Childhood Ireland
Music Generation
New Directions
National Childhood Network
National Council for the Blind of Ireland
National Forum of Family Resource Centres
National Parents Council Post Primary
National Parents Council Primary
National Youth Council of Ireland
Novas
One Family
One in Four
Parents Plus
Pavee Point
Peter McVerry Trust
Prevention and Early Intervention Network
Psychological Society of Ireland
Rainbow Club Cork
Rainbows Ireland
Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
Realt Beag/Ballyfermot Star
Respond Housing
SAFE Ireland
Saoirse Housing Association
SAOL Beag Children’s Centre
Scouting Ireland
School of Education UCD
Sexual Violence Centre Cork
SIPTU
Simon Communities of Ireland
Social Care Ireland
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
SPHE Network
SpunOut.ie
St. Nicholas Montessori College
St. Nicholas Montessori Teachers’ Association
St. Patrick’s Mental Health Services
TASC
Teachers’ Union of Ireland
Terenure College Rugby Football Club
Transgender Equality Network Ireland
The Anne Sullivan Foundation
The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children
The Irish Red Cross
The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
Traveller Visibility Group Ltd
Treoir
UNICEF Ireland
Women’s Aid
Youngballymun
Young Social Innovators
Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)
Youth Work Ireland

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1. Introduction

The Alliance unites over 140 members working together to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. We change the lives of all children by making sure their rights are respected and protected in our laws, policies and services. We also provide legal information and advice to children, young people and their families through our legal information line and nationwide legal advice outreach clinics.

The Children's Rights Alliance welcomes the opportunity to share its views with the Department of Social Protection with regard to allocating funding which will benefit children and young people in Budget 2023.

Ireland has an international obligation under Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to 'recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development' and States are obliged to:

[...] take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.¹

The annual poverty statistics captured by the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) provide important data on the proportion of the population experiencing poverty. When examined by age, children have the second highest risk of poverty rate at 13.6 per cent, higher than the rate amongst the general population at 11.6 per cent.²

Households with children headed by one adult have a higher rate of 22.8 per cent versus those in two adult households (9.1 per cent). While 13.8 per cent of the population experience deprivation the rate was higher amongst children (17 per cent) and in one parent families (44.9 per cent).

Finally, children are most vulnerable to consistent poverty, with a rate of 5.2 per cent versus an overall rate of 4 per cent. Children living in households headed by a lone parent are significantly more vulnerable to consistent poverty at a rate of 13.1 per cent compared to 3 per cent of two parent families. While SILC provides important evidence on the levels of poverty and deprivation amongst the population a major shortcoming is that it does not provide data on certain cohorts such as the Traveller Community.

The SILC 2021 figures illustrate the levels of poverty and income inadequacy still remain high despite the positive impact of the pandemic related income supports. However, this data was collected prior to the onset of sustained increases in the cost of living. According to the CSO, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 7.8 per cent in the 12 months between May 2021 and 2022.³ For children and their families in or at risk of poverty this crisis is having a profound impact. Many are now faced with stark choices often needing to choose between heating their home or having enough food. The impact of inflation has a varying impact on different groups in society depending on their individual

¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession on 20 November 1989) 1577 UNTS 3 (UNCRC). Ireland ratified the Convention in 1992.

² *ibid.*

³ Central Statistics Office, Consumer Price Index May 2022 (CSO June 2022) <<https://bit.ly/3NO8UgN>> accessed 14 June 2022.

consumption patterns.⁴ The household budget of lower income households tends to largely comprise of necessities.⁵ It is critical that the decisions taken for Budget 2023 have to the forefront the protection of families most at risk of poverty and disadvantage.

⁴ TASC, *The state we are in: inequality in Ireland 2022* (TASC May 2022) 28.

⁵ *ibid.*

2. Summary of Budget 2023 Asks for Department of Social Protection

<p>School Meals</p>	<p>Extend the Hot School Meals Programme to all schools participating in the existing cold school meals programme and set out a roadmap with a clear timeline for how the scheme can be expanded to all schools within the lifetime of this Government. [Estimated Cost: €47.85m].⁶</p> <p>Fund and develop a pilot initiative for the expansion of school meals during holiday time by leveraging existing community infrastructure and relationships between schools and summer camps.</p>
<p>Social Welfare Rates</p>	<p>Raise the Qualified Child Increase by a minimum of €7 for the under 12s and a minimum of €12 for over 12s. [Estimated Cost: €143.5].⁷</p> <p>Increase core social welfare rates by a minimum of €20 for all households with children. Such increases will help to address both the cost of living and the pre-existing inadequacy of social welfare rates.</p> <p>Benchmark all social welfare rates to MESL to ensure that all households with children can afford a minimum standard of living.</p>
<p>Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance</p>	<p>Retain the rate of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance paid in 2022 and ensure that it is increased in 2023 in line with inflation.</p>
<p>Working Family Payment</p>	<p>To ensure equality between different household types and increase the income of one parent families in work, reduce the Working Family Payment weekly work threshold from 19 hours to 15 hours for one parent families.</p> <p>Increase the thresholds of the Working Family Payment to address in-work poverty.</p>
<p>Fuel Allowance</p>	<p>Expand the length of time the Fuel Allowance is paid to families from 28 to 32 weeks. This will go some way towards ensuring that the payment can meet the increased cost of energy. [Estimated cost: €49m].⁸</p>

6 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D., Dáil Debates, Written Answers, School Meals Programme, 24 May 2022 [25960-64/22].

7 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D., Dáil Debates, Written Answers, Social Welfare Schemes, 19 May 2022 [25465/66/72/74/75 /22].

8 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D., Dáil Debates, Written Answers, Social Welfare Schemes, 26 April 2022 [19833 /22].

3. Our Budget 2023 Asks

a. School Meals

Budget 2022 Asks:

Extend the Hot School Meals Programme to all schools participating in the existing cold school meals programme and set out a roadmap with a clear timeline for how the scheme can be expanded to all schools within the lifetime of this Government. **[Estimated Cost: €47.85m].**⁹

Fund and develop a pilot initiative for the expansion of school meals during holiday time by leveraging existing community infrastructure and relationships between schools and summer camps.

Rationale: A survey published in February 2022 indicated that one-quarter of parents were always or sometimes worried about being unable to provide sufficient food for their children.¹⁰ This rose to one-third amongst those not in employment.¹¹ In the same survey, one-fifth of adults indicated, that in the past year, they skipped meals or reduced portions to ensure children have enough to eat.¹²

Ireland is unusual in the European Union (EU) context in not providing a universal school meal programme.¹³ Schools are an excellent setting to reach children, teachers, families and the surrounding community.¹⁴ They provide a social environment where children can access and enjoy food, without financial constraints.¹⁵

In September 2019, the Department of Social Protection launched a hot school meals pilot and this was expanded in the last three budgets. In March 2021, the Department published a report on the pilot scheme.¹⁶ Feedback captured from parents, principals, teachers and SNAs was predominantly positive. In particular, over two-thirds of principals, teachers and SNAs noted that the hot meals were of better quality compared to the cold food provided previously.¹⁷ One-third of parents said the provision of hot meals had a positive impact on their children in terms of attendance at school, physical health and emotional/psychological wellbeing.¹⁸ Two-thirds of principals and teachers indicated that universal provision within the school would be important.¹⁹ The universal provision of hot meals in a school setting counters stigma and provides a social environment where children can access and enjoy food without financial constraints.²⁰

9 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D., Dáil Debates, Written Answers, School Meals Programme, 24 May 2022 [25960-64/22].

10 Amarach, *Food Poverty the Impact on Vulnerable Children and Families* (Barnardos 2022) <https://bit.ly/3bo0vIQ>

11 Amarach, *Food Poverty the Impact on Vulnerable Children and Families* (Barnardos 2022) <https://bit.ly/3bo0vIQ>

12 Amarach, *Food Poverty the Impact on Vulnerable Children and Families* (Barnardos 2022) <https://bit.ly/3bo0vIQ>

13 M Oostindjer and JAschemann-Witzel et al, Are school meals a viable and sustainable tool to improve the healthiness and sustainability of children's diet and food consumption? A cross-national comparative perspective (2017) *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, 57:18, 3942-3958

14 Healthy Food For All, *A Good Practice Guide to School Food Initiatives* (Healthy Food for All 2009).

15 *ibid.*

16 Ian McShane and Rachael Joyce (2020) *Hot School Meals Pilot Project* <https://bit.ly/3zCQf0R> accessed 21 June 2021.

17 Ian McShane and Rachael Joyce (2020) *Hot School Meals Pilot Project* <https://bit.ly/3zCQf0R> accessed 21 June 2021.

18 Ian McShane and Rachael Joyce (2020) *Hot School Meals Pilot Project* <https://bit.ly/3zCQf0R> accessed 21 June 2021.

19 Ian McShane and Rachael Joyce (2020) *Hot School Meals Pilot Project* <https://bit.ly/3zCQf0R> accessed 21 June 2021.

20 Healthy Food for All, *A good practice guide to School Food Initiatives* (Healthy Food for All, 2009).

In Budget 2022 an additional €3m in funding for the Hot School Meals Programme means a further 16,000 students, from schools that previously expressed an interest in the scheme, will benefit from January 2022. This is very welcome. However, in March 2022, the Department of Education published the new DEIS identification model and announced an expansion of the programme. This represented a €32 million investment in the programme. The extended programme will bring an additional 310 schools into the DEIS programme with an additional 37 existing DEIS schools being reclassified, meaning they will receive increased supports.²¹ However, while this funding is significant and will expand additional resources to children experiencing disadvantage it does not include access to free school meals.²²

An evaluation of the School Meals Programme is currently underway and that this will include a review of the provision of hot meals.²³ While we understand the results of the evaluation will inform the further rollout of school meals and hot meals it is critical that Budget 2023 maintains momentum and at a minimum provides for the expansion of hot school meals to the new cohort of DEIS schools.

b. Address the Cost of Living Crisis for Families dependent on Social Welfare

Budget 2022 Ask: Raise the Qualified Child Increase by a minimum of €7 for the under 12s and a minimum of €12 for over 12s. **[Estimated Cost: €143.5].**²⁴

Increase adult social welfare rates by a minimum of €20 for all households with children. Such increases will help to address both the cost of living and the pre-existing inadequacy of social welfare rates.

Benchmark all social welfare rates to MESL to ensure that all households with children can afford a minimum standard of living.

Rationale: As noted in the introduction of this submission, annual poverty statistics captured by the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) highlight the incidence of poverty for children aged 0-17 in comparison to the entire population.

Table 1: SILC 2021 Child Poverty Statistics

	At risk of Poverty	Deprivation	Consistent Poverty
State	11.6	13.8	4.0
0-17 age group	13.6	17.0	5.2
1 adult, with children under 18 years	22.8	44.9	13.1
2 adults, with 1-3 children under 18 years	9.1	10.7	3.0

Source: CSO Survey of Income and Living Conditions 2021

Further insight about the inadequacy of a household's income to meet all expenditure costs is provided in SILC regarding ability to make ends meet. In 2021, 42 per cent of all households

21 Department of Education, 'DEIS Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools' <<https://bit.ly/3QTaUGE>> accessed 28 June 2022.

22 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD, Written Answers, School Meals Programme, 5 July 2021 [34162/22].

23 Communication received by the Children's Rights Alliance from the Department of Social Protection, 11 January 2022.

24 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D., Dáil Debates, Written Answers, Social Welfare Schemes, 19 May 2022 [25465/66/72/74/75 /22].

reported some level of difficulty (from great to little) in making ends meet with 5.6 per cent reporting great difficulty. While a similar pattern of difficulty was reported by adult households with children (39.7 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively), one parent families reported much higher rates across all levels of difficulty. Three-quarters of all one parent households reported some level of difficulty making ends meet, 15.9 per cent of whom had great difficulty.

While the SILC 2021 figures illustrate high levels of poverty and income inadequacy for many children and their families, this data was collected prior to the onset of sustained increases in the cost of living.

According to the CSO, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 7.8 per cent in the 12 months between May 2021 and 2022.²⁵

The impact of inflation has a varying impact on different groups in society depending on their individual consumption patterns.²⁶ The household budget of lower income households tends to largely comprise of necessities.²⁷

In some instances, the annual percentage change in prices for essential items is in excess of the overall growth in CPI. For instance, while food has risen by 4.5 per cent overall, staple items as bread (8.8 per cent), milk (10.5 per cent) and pasta (11.7 per cent) all exceed the overall increase for this category of CPI.²⁸

The costs of clothing have increased by 3 per cent, however, footwear is up 7.1 per cent.²⁹ Given the propensity for the growth in children's feet this is an unavoidable item to purchase for families with children.

Analysis from the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice post-Budget 2022 indicates that deep income inadequacy, whereby social welfare meets just 90 per cent of the Minimum Essential Standard of Living costs, will continue in 2022, and may increase, for households with older children.³⁰ Therefore those households dependent on social welfare were already in receipt of inadequate income supports prior to the onset of substantial increases in CPI. In order to protect social welfare rates against further increases in the cost of living it is critical that social welfare rates are increased substantially in Budget 2023.

The cost of living crisis is no doubt impacting on these families who are in or at risk of poverty in a more pronounced way as well as expanding outwards the numbers struggling. Benchmarking social welfare rates to a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL), is critical and could ensure that everyone can afford adequate and nutritious food.

c. Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance

Budget 2022 Ask: Retain the rate of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance paid in 2022 and ensure that it is increased in 2023 in line with inflation.

25 Central Statistics Office, Consumer Price Index May 2022 (CSO June 2022) <<https://bit.ly/3NO8UgN>> accessed 14 June 2022.

26 TASC, *The state we are in: inequality in Ireland 2022* (TASC May 2022) 28.

27 *ibid.*

28 Central Statistics Office, Consumer Price Index May 2022 (CSO June 2022) <<https://bit.ly/3NO8UgN>> accessed 14 June 2022.

29 *ibid.*

30 Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, Budget 2022 MESL Impact Briefing (VPSJ 2021) <<https://bit.ly/3xvtmw2>> accessed 14 June 2022.

Rationale: In June 2021, building on the Investing in Children Recommendation,³¹ the European Child Guarantee was adopted by the European Union (EU). It aims to prevent and combat child poverty and social exclusion by supporting the 27 EU Member States to make efforts to guarantee access to quality key services for children in need.³² To achieve this commitment, each State is required to identify and address financial and non-financial barriers to participation in education along with ensuring provision of educational materials, including books and uniforms.³³

Just under half of parents of primary level and one third of second level children are able meet the costs of returning to school out of their regular household budget.³⁴ In 2021, the Irish League of Credit Unions reported that one in four parents say they have borrowed money to pay for school costs, incurring a debt of €336 on average.³⁵

The Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is a vital support for families on a low income to help meet the costs of the return to school in September. However, while the original intent is for the payment to be used by parents for uniforms and shoes, many are dependent on it meeting broader costs related to school fees and school books.³⁶ In 2021, the Society of St Vincent de Paul received 300 calls per day from families worried about school costs and this was 10 per cent increase on 2020.³⁷

Budget 2022 made a progressive change to the thresholds for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance by increasing the income thresholds to ensure that lone parents have the same access to the payment as two-parent households. Given the impact that the cost of living is having of the budgets of low income families it is critical that the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance provides real support for children returning to school.

d. Reduce the Working Family Payment Threshold

Budget 2022 Ask: To ensure equality between different household types and increase the income of one parent families in work, reduce the Working Family Payment weekly work threshold from 19 hours to 15 hours for one parent families.

Increase the thresholds of the Working Family Payment to address in-work poverty.

Rationale: The Working Family Payment (WFP) is a weekly tax-free payment available to employees with children. It gives extra financial support to people on low pay. You must be an employee to qualify for WFP and you cannot qualify if you are only self-employed.³⁸

31 *ibid*. European Commission issued its recommendation “Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage” in 2013. This Recommendation outlined a three pillar approach to tackling child poverty: access to adequate resources; access to affordable, quality services and children’s right to participate.

32 European Commission, *Proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee* (Brussels 24.3.2021 COM(2021) 137 final) 1.

33 *ibid* 26.

34 Barnardos *The real cost of school 2020 Back to School Briefing Paper* (Barnardos 2020).

35 Irish League of Credit Unions, ‘ILCU back to school survey shows cost of sending child to secondary school now averaging €1,500’, (Press Release 15 July 2021) <<https://bit.ly/3lGoN5Q>> accessed 28 June 2022.

36 Barnardos *Back to School Survey Results 2021* (Barnardos 2021).

37 SVP, *The Cost of Surviving – Pre Budget Submission 2023* (SVP 2022).

38 Citizens Information,

<www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/social_welfare_payments_to_families_and_children/family_income_supplement.html> accessed 11February 2020.

Over the last recession (2008-2013), research has highlighted that discretionary policy changes particularly affected the incomes of lone parents.³⁹ It is vital that measures are taken to increase income for lone parents to address the discrepancies of the WFP that have a negative impact on lone parents. Currently one-parent families need to work the same number of hours per week as two-parent families to benefit from the Working Family Payment. Reduce the weekly threshold to 15 hours per week for one-parent families to reduce the disproportionate pressure they are under and to help them increase their earning capacity.

e. Addressing Energy Poverty

Budget 2022 Ask: Expand the length of time the Fuel Allowance is paid to families from 28 to 32 weeks. This will go some way towards ensuring that the payment can meet the increased cost of energy. [Estimated cost: €49m].⁴⁰

Rationale: In 2020, there were over 200,000 children living in homes that have issues with leaks, damp and rot.⁴¹ The inability to heat one's home, also a measure of quality, is often referred to as energy poverty a concept which encompasses 'household income, energy costs and the energy efficiency of a home'.⁴² While overall 5 per cent report being unable to heat their home the issue of fuel poverty is more pronounced amongst lone parent households compared to all other household types.⁴³ 11 per cent of one parent households versus 4 per cent for two parent households reported experiencing fuel poverty.⁴⁴ Housing tenure is also an important factor with fuel poverty more common amongst those in the rented sector (9 per cent) versus home owners (2 per cent).⁴⁵ Those in local authority housing had an even higher frequency of reporting fuel poverty at 15 per cent.⁴⁶

The rise in energy costs has been borne out in an increase in calls for help from low-income households.⁴⁷ Overall energy has increased by 56.7 per cent. There are significant annual increases across a number of sub-indices with a 25.9 per cent increase in the cost of solid fuels, 40.9 per cent increase for electricity, 57.1 per cent increase for Gas and 102.5 per cent for liquid fuels.⁴⁸ While these increases are staggering the Government has warned that there are further challenges ahead with regard to energy prices.⁴⁹

39 Doorley, K., Bercholz, M., Keane, C., Callan, T., and Walsh, J.R. (2018). The gender impact of Irish budgetary policy. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute and Parliamentary Budget Office. Regan, M., Keane, C., and Walsh, J.R. (2018). Budget Perspectives 2019, Paper 1. LoneParent Incomes and Work Incentives. July 2018.

39 St Vincent DePaul, Pre- Budget Submission 2020 <<https://www.svp.ie/getattachment/9c80c2ed-9d17-4a47-9dac-0aa86cffb3d7/Pre-Budget-Submission-2020-Investing-in-a-Just-So.aspx>> 9 accessed 10 July 2020

40 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D., Dáil Debates, Written Answers, Social Welfare Schemes, 26 April 2022 [19833 /22].

41 Eurostat, 'Children (aged 0 to 17) living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor - EU-SILC survey' <<https://bit.ly/3y4WPgE>> accessed 29 June 2022.

42 Society of St Vincent de Paul *Growing up in the cold: a policy briefing on the nature and extent of energy poverty in households with children* (SVP 2019) <<https://bit.ly/2RjkogN>> 2.

43 Helen Russell, Ivan Privalko, Frances McGinnity & Shannen Enright, *Monitoring adequate housing in Ireland* (ESRI 2021).

44 *ibid.*

45 *ibid.*

46 *ibid.*

47 Society of St. Vincent De Paul, 'SVP in the North Region reveals Requests for Help have soared' <<https://bit.ly/3QkZVXX>> accessed 14 June 2022.

48 Central Statistics Office, Consumer Price Index May 2022 (CSO June 2022) <<https://bit.ly/3NO8UgN>> accessed 14 June 2022.

49 Tony Connelly, 'Taoiseach warns of 'new era' for high energy prices' (RTÉ, 31 May 2022) <<https://bit.ly/3tBI3MT>> accessed 14 June 2022.