

## Press release

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# Minister Humphreys and Minister Joe O'Brien host the annual Social Inclusion Forum

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Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys, and Minister of State, Joe O'Brien, today hosted the Department of Social Protection's annual Social Inclusion Forum.

This event brings together policy makers, service providers and service users from across government departments, and the community and voluntary groups that represent them, to discuss and debate national policy on poverty reduction and social inclusion.

The Forum focuses on the delivery of the government's Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025. This year's theme is "Revitalising the Roadmap: Progress and Priorities" and reflects on the findings of the mid-term review of the strategy, which is published today.

The Forum includes four workshops on key Roadmap themes – supporting older people, social inclusion and children, employment: expanding opportunities and ensuring work pays, and core essentials – with facilitators from the community and voluntary sector, and presentations from expert practitioners.

Commenting today, Minister Humphreys said:

"I am pleased to have the opportunity to engage with everyone attending today, both in-person and online. The Social Inclusion Forum is an important event in the government's diary, which allows for constructive engagement between government departments, people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and the community and voluntary sector groups representing them. I look forward to hearing about the lived experience of those attending, which informs future policy making."

Minister O'Brien stated:

"As Minister with responsibility for the Roadmap for Social Inclusion I'm glad to have the opportunity to listen to everyone in attendance today and hear the discussions at the different workshops. The Social Inclusion Forum provides a vital opportunity for policymakers to engage with and take account of the experiences of those that their policies affect."

Ministers Humphreys and O'Brien also launched the Mid-term Review of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion: 2020 – 2025 at today's Forum.

Speaking about the Mid-term Review, Minister O'Brien stated:

"The publication of the Mid-term Review of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion reinforces the government's commitment to deliver the Roadmap's ambition to significantly reduce the rate of consistent poverty and social exclusion in Ireland. The review allowed us the opportunity to consider the changed social and political circumstances since the publication of the Roadmap in January 2020, and reflect on the progress made and the priorities for the remaining lifetime of the strategy."

The mid-term review included a review of progress in implementation, an assessment of the existing Roadmap ambition, goals and commitments, and a review of the existing Roadmap indicators.

All aspects of the review were informed by an independent stakeholder engagement process, undertaken by Ipsos. Under the joint Poverty and Social Inclusion research programme, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) undertook a review of

the EU and national indicators used to measure progress against Roadmap ambitions and goals.

Commenting on the findings of the review, Minister Humphreys said:

"I welcome the commitment towards the delivery of the Roadmap ambitions and goals across Government, which is highlighted by the addition of new commitments assigned to nine departments, including my own. Government remains fully committed to the implementation of the Roadmap and the mid-term review will be used to realise its goals."

A report on the Forum will be published and made available on the department's website on [gov.ie/dsp](https://www.gov.ie/dsp). (<https://www.gov.ie/dsp>).

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## Notes

The 'Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments' was approved by Government and published in January 2020. The primary ambition of the Roadmap is to "reduce consistent poverty to 2% or less and to make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive countries in the EU." The Roadmap translates this ambition into 7 Goals underpinned by 69 commitments (actions) that will be taken to help deliver these goals.

At the end of 2022, 39 of Roadmap commitments were either fully achieved or achieved with ongoing delivery, with a further four commitments in progress on schedule with ongoing delivery, and delivery on 26 commitments in progress.

The Roadmap commits that "an independent mid-term review of the Roadmap will be undertaken in 2022". The mid-term review was informed by the following independent inputs:

- Ipsos were appointed to undertake independent stakeholder engagement
- the ESRI carried out a review of the indicators used in the Roadmap

- a Mid-Term Review Advisory Group was established comprising Steering Group members, and an external representative from NESC

The mid-term review included a review of progress in implementation; an assessment of the existing Roadmap ambition, goals and commitments; and a review of existing Roadmap indicators.

Consultation informed all aspects of the review. The Department of Social Protection appointed Ipsos to undertake independent stakeholder engagement, which included:

- a session at the Social Inclusion Forum 2022
- a public consultation exercise, which ran from 6 September to 14 October 2022
- qualitative interviews with external members of the Roadmap Steering Group and the mid-term review advisory group in November 2022
- a survey of departmental representatives

A report on the findings of this consultation was completed by Ipsos and is published alongside the mid-term review report.

Under the joint Poverty and Social Inclusion research programme with the Department of Social Protection, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) undertook a review of the indicators used to measure progress against Roadmap ambitions and goals. There are two sets of targets in the Roadmap covering income and broader social inclusion areas: EU level targets; and national targets. The resulting paper was completed by the ESRI and is also published alongside this report.

The Department of Social Protection used these inputs to help identify possible revisions to existing commitments, assess key areas where new commitments could usefully be added, and identify new indicators, which would better show progress against the Roadmap's targets.

The review recognised that there have been significant changes in context since the publication of the Roadmap and that many strategies referenced were out of date. In total 12 additional commitments have been added to the Roadmap as a result of the mid-

term review, with updates made to 17 existing commitments. Additionally, two new targets have been included and are complemented by seven revised targets.

The mid-term review report, Ipsos report and ESRI report are available online.  
(<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ca8bf-roadmap-for-social-inclusion-2020-2025/>).

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