



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

Social Inclusion Forum 2021

“Implementing the Roadmap for Social Inclusion:
reducing poverty and improving social inclusion”

12 – 16 April 2021

#SIF2021

Conference Overview

2020 saw the publication of the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-25: Ambition, Goals, Commitments*, the arrival of Covid-19 and related restrictions on economic and social life, and the publication of a new Programme for Government. This is the backdrop against which the 2021 Social Inclusion Forum will take place. The theme of this year's Forum is "*Implementing the Roadmap for Social Inclusion: reducing poverty and improving social inclusion*".

Reflecting the strong working relationship between the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), the event has been organised in collaboration by both Departments. In addition, our long-time event partners, the European Ant-Poverty Network Ireland and Community Workers Ireland have worked with us throughout the planning of this event.

For the first time, and in line with current guidelines regarding social distancing, the Social Inclusion Forum will be an online event, with a number of sessions delivered during the week of 12 – 16 April 2021.

Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025

The Department of Social Protection published the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 in January 2020. It is a whole-of-government strategy with a mid-term review scheduled to take place in 2022. This will facilitate an evaluation of the impact of the Roadmap commitments, as well as allowing commitments to be updated to reflect new actions and strategies across Government.

The Roadmap will build on the work of its predecessors with the aim of reducing the number of people in consistent poverty in Ireland and increasing social inclusion for those who are most disadvantaged. This is reflected in its clearly stated ambition 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 seven Goals underpinned by 66 unique Commitments (actions) that will be taken to help deliver these goals. These unique commitments have been developed with relevant Departments and agencies to reflect current or planned sectoral strategies and plans. The Roadmap is available here:

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/46557/bf7011904ede4562b925f98b15c4f1b5.pdf#page=1>

“Implementing the Roadmap for Social Inclusion: reducing poverty and improving social inclusion”

Programme of events

Opening Plenary Session: Monday 12 April 2021 10:00am to 12noon

- 10:00 Welcome and opening remarks by Teresa Leonard, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Social Protection
- 10:10 Address by Minister Joe O'Brien, T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for social inclusion and community development
- 10:25 Presentation on the Roadmap for Social Inclusion including its development, progress to date and challenges posed by Covid-19
- 10:45 Feedback from pre-Forum regional sessions by Ann Irwin, Community Workers Ireland and Paul Ginnell, European Anti Poverty Network Ireland
- 11:05 Work at community level and its impact on poverty and social inclusion
- 11.20 Moderated Q&A session
- 11:45 Overview of the four Forum workshops
- 11:55 Closing comments by Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Rural and Community Development

Closing Plenary Session: Friday 16 April 2021 10.30 am to 11:30am

- 10:30 Opening Comments by Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General, Department of Rural and Community Development
- 10:35 Address by Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D., Minister for Social Protection and Rural and Community Development and the Islands
- 10:45 Presentation of key points agreed at the Forum workshops
- 11:10 Closing address by Minister Joe O'Brien, T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for social inclusion and community development
- 11:20 Closing comments by Teresa Leonard, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Social Protection

Workshop Details

Attendees can sign up to any of the four workshops outlined below. Each workshop will follow the same format. A short 5 minute presentation will be provided by a speaker from a relevant Community and Voluntary organisation. A number of questions will be posed for attendees to consider as part of their discussion. Workshop attendees will then break out into small discussion groups for 30 minutes. Each group needs to nominate a rapporteur to report back the key points of their discussion to the workshop facilitator.

At the end of the 30 minutes, all workshop attendees reconvene for a general discussion of the points raised in the break-out sessions. The aim will be to agree on a maximum of 5 key points to be reported at the closing plenary session. These points will be included in the conference report to be prepared after the Forum and will be reported to the Social Inclusion Roadmap Steering Group, chaired by Minister Joe O'Brien, Minister of State with responsibility for social inclusion.

Workshop 1: Core Essentials – Healthcare, Housing, Energy and Food (Chapter 8)

Date & Time: Monday 12 April 2021 2:30 – 4:00pm

Roadmap Goal: to ensure that all people can live with confidence that they have access to good quality healthcare, housing, energy and food

Ireland is relatively well positioned to offer reliable access and secure availability of the core essentials of our daily lives. However good overall availability does not always translate into reliable and quality access for everyone and some people in Irish society can struggle to access the basic essentials. For people who are on low incomes, access to basic essential services on a free or subsidised basis can reduce the expenses to be covered from within that low income. And this means they can make that money go further.

This workshop will focus on three types of core essentials:

- Energy: home energy costs; energy efficiency in the home
- Food: cost, quality, availability, access, skills, knowledge, facilities
- Health inclusion: access, availability, quality, timeliness, cost

Workshop 2: Supporting Families and Children (Chapter 5)

Date & Time: Tuesday 13 April 2021 10:00 – 11:30am

Roadmap Goal: to reduce child poverty in Ireland and to ensure that all families have the opportunity to fully participate in society

The most recent national child poverty target is to lift over 70,000 children out of consistent poverty by 2020, a reduction of at least two-thirds on the 2011 level. The Roadmap notes that it is implicit in this target that no child in Ireland should live in poverty and that, where it happens due to adverse circumstances, available supports should ensure that the child and their family exit poverty as soon as possible. The Roadmap includes a commitment to set a new national child poverty target for the period to the end of 2025.

This workshop provides an opportunity to discuss what this new child poverty target could encompass.

Workshop 3: Expanding the Opportunity of Employment (Chapter 2)

Date & Time: Tuesday 13 April 2021 2:30 – 4:00pm

Roadmap Goal: give everyone who can work the opportunity of employment as a means to improve their well-being

An important element of reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion in Ireland is supporting people to take up employment, education and training opportunities. This can enhance their employment prospects over time and their earning potential so that they can support themselves and their families. A key aspect of employment is obviously earning an adequate wage but employment can also provide an opportunity for learning and development, an opportunity for social interaction, a structure to a person's day and week and a sense of purpose and achievement, among other things.

This workshop will focus on the programmes and services that are in place to support people to take up employment, education and training opportunities (such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP); the activation supports provided by the Department of Social Protection; further education and training supports etc.). It will also focus on the supports needed to allow people to access these programmes and services.

Workshop 4: Making Sure Voices are Heard

Date & Time: Wednesday 14 April 2021 10:00 – 11:30am

The Roadmap includes a definition of what social inclusion in Ireland should look like when it is achieved: *Social Inclusion is achieved when people have access to sufficient income, resources and services to enable them to play an active part in their communities and participate in activities that are considered the norm for people in society generally.* This builds on the existing and long standing 1997 definition of poverty and social exclusion, which remains in place.

Addressing poverty and social exclusion cannot take a ‘one size fits all’ approach. This workshop provides the opportunity to discuss what social inclusion means to different marginalised groups who may face similar challenges but also have challenges that are unique to their situation. Points raised at the first three workshops can form the starting point for a discussion about what social inclusion will look like at the end of 2025 when the Roadmap concludes.

Conference Report

A short conference report will be prepared and published on the Department of Social Protection site on www.gov.ie

Registration

Attendance at the Forum is free but must be pre-booked. Registration will open on Monday 29 March 2021 and will close at 5:30pm on Thursday 8 April 2021.

[Please visit the conference website to book your place.](#)

If you have any special requests or needs, please specify these on the booking form and we will try to accommodate you, subject to receiving sufficient notice.

If you have any queries about the conference and programme, please email:

social.inclusion@welfare.ie .

For any queries relating to your booking please contact

events@morrowcommunications.com