

ATD Ireland
2026
Pre- Budget
submission

ATD Ireland welcomes the opportunity to make a submission for budget 2026.

ATD Fourth World is an international, non-governmental human rights organisation that works through grass-roots projects in partnership with people living in consistent and extreme poverty.

For the past 25 years, ATD Ireland has been working alongside families and individuals facing persistent and extreme poverty and struggling daily to live in dignity. Our experience gives us a unique perspective on the causes, impacts and possible solutions. Our submission draws from the experience of ATD Ireland and relevant research from e.g., the ESRI and from the community and voluntary sector.

ATD Ireland aims through public participatory projects to empower people with experience of poverty to express their views and offer solutions to the problems affecting their lives, while offering policy makers, practitioners and people in positions of power an invaluable insight into overcoming poverty from the bottom up. ATD Ireland recognise that people experiencing poverty are the experts in identifying causes, and in speaking out about the impact and possible solutions to consistent poverty. While ATD Ireland does not engage in empirical research it records the lived experiences of people in persistent poverty.

The following is the main proposal from our submission.

Income adequacy

ATD Ireland's experience with families living in extreme and persistent poverty convinces us that an inadequate income is one of the main causes of poverty and social exclusion. While many other factors, e.g., addiction, family breakdown, unemployment, lack of access to quality education and other essential services, etc., all contribute to the prevalence of poverty, income inadequacy is the primary cause of individual and household poverty. ATD Ireland were very concerned to learn from the latest Children's Rights Alliance Child Poverty Monitor Report that the number of children living in consistent poverty rose from 4.8% in 2023 to 8.5% in 2024. However, this confirms the experience of ATD Ireland in our work with families who are finding it extremely difficult to meet basic household expenses and who live with food and energy poverty.

ATD Ireland believes that everyone should be entitled to a level of income which enables them to have a minimum essential standard of living. The MESL research centre states that a minimum essential standard of living "is a standard of living which people agree no one should be expected to live below. It represents the minimum required to meet physical, social, and psychological needs, and enable a life with dignity".

Our experience has provided us with grounds to believe that an inadequate income leads to; homelessness, poor health, malnutrition, discrimination, lack of opportunities in education and employment, isolation and social exclusion, etc. It also impacts negatively on wellbeing, resulting in poor self- confidence, self- belief, depression and anxiety.

The experience of ATD Ireland has shown us that people living in consistent and extreme poverty often suffer, to a high degree, the hidden dimensions of poverty such as shame, stigma, a lack of self- worth and an estrangement from society. This is also evidenced in the ATD international research; “The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty”. All these conditions are an affront to the inherent dignity of all human beings and are an indictment on society.

Proposal

ATD Ireland submits the following proposal which encompasses the multidimensional nature of poverty (including income poverty, food poverty, energy poverty and social isolation).

A. In order to improve income adequacy ATD Ireland requests the following increases;

Working age personal weekly rate by €16,

Children 12 years and over weekly rate by €15,

Children under 12 years weekly rate by €6

B. ATD Ireland also requests, in line with the 2023 ESRI finding, that a second tier of child benefit be introduced which would target households with the lowest incomes.

