

EMPLOYMENT

At a glance: What is in the Programme for Government for Employers and Employees?

18 June 2020

The draft Programme for Government has been agreed between Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party and was published on 15 June.

The result of the vote of the parties' members on the Programme will be announced on 26 June.

We have set out below the key points of the Programme for employers and employees which reflect the proposed

intentions of the parties, should they go into government together.

SUPPORTING NEW WAYS OF WORKING	Facilitate and support remote working .
	Bring forward proposals on a right to disconnect and consider a role for the Workplace Relations Commission in drawing up a code in this area.
	Public Transport: enable schools, workplaces and institutions to stagger opening and closing times .
	Enable increased remote, flexible and hub-working arrangements to promote better work-life balance, higher female-labour-market participation, less commuting and greater regional balance.
	Extend paid parental leave .
	Mandate public sector employers, colleges and other public sector bodies to move to 20% home and remote working in 2021 and provide incentives for private-sector employers to do likewise.

ECONOMY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION	Introduce the Senior Executive Accountability Regime for the financial services industry.
	Review whether the legal provisions surrounding collective redundancies and the liquidation of companies effectively protect the rights of workers.
	Bring forward a July Jobs Initiative , centred on a Recovery Fund , to support the economy and help restore employment to the end of 2020. A longer-term National Economic Plan will be set out in October.
	The Recovery Fund will have three different elements: Infrastructure Development, Reskilling and retraining and Supporting Investment.

<p>ECONOMY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION CONT.</p>	<p>No increases in income tax and the Universal Social Charge. Credits and bands to be indexed linked to earnings from Budget 2022 and will increase if incomes are rising.</p>
	<p>Equalise Earned Income Tax Credit (self-employed) with the employee tax credit.</p>
	<p>Increase Home Carer Tax Credit to support stay-at-home parents as subsidies for childcare increase.</p>
	<p>Seek to negotiate new public pay deal with the public service unions. Bargaining clause to be introduced to new agreement to make progress on sectoral issues.</p>
	<p>Protect core weekly social welfare rates.</p>
	<p>Consider increasing all classes of PRSI over time to replenish the Social Insurance Fund to help pay for measures such as state pension system, improvements to short-term sick pay benefits, parental leave benefits, pay-related jobseekers benefit and treatment benefits.</p>
	<p>Progress to a living wage over the lifetime of the Government.</p>
	<p>Introduce returnships in partnership with employers, to support women who have taken time out of work to raise their families or care for loved ones, to re-enter labour market through new education, training and personal development programmes</p>
	<p>Publish an updated Apprenticeship Action Plan which will have specific targets for the uptake of apprenticeships by women, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups.</p>
	<p>Provide for a paid internship programme within government departments, targeted at migrant communities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>
<p>Be guided by recommendations of the Low Pay Commission with regard to any future changes in the minimum wage.</p>	

<p>EQUALITY</p>	<p>Legislate to provide adoptive leave and benefit for male same-sex adoptive couples.</p>
	<p>Amend the gender ground in equality legislation, to ensure that someone discriminated against on the basis of their gender identity is able to avail of this legislation.</p>
	<p>Legislate to require publication of the gender pay gap in large companies.</p>
	<p>Develop a comprehensive Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan.</p>
	<p>Examine introduction of a new ground of discrimination, based on socio-economic disadvantaged status to the Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts.</p>
	<p>Finalise legislation following Ireland’s recent ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The legislation will, amongst other provisions, include a 6% target for employment of people with disabilities in the public sector.</p>
	<p>Expand targeted employment schemes, such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Ability Programme, to help more people with disabilities stay in the workforce.</p>

PENSIONS	65 year olds who retire can receive 'Early Retirement Allowance or Pension' at the same rate as jobseekers benefit without requirement to sign on, partake in any activation measures or be available for a genuinely seeking work.
	Establish a Commission on Pensions to examine sustainability and eligibility issues with state pensions and the Social Insurance Fund.
	Pending the report of the Commission (by June 2021) and any subsequent Government decisions, the State Pension age will remain at 66 years and the increase to 67 years will be deferred.
	Enable people to defer receipt of state contributory pension on an annual basis.
	Facilitate those without a full social insurance record to increase their retirement provision by continuing to make PRSI payments beyond pensionable age.
	Examine options for pension solutions for carers.
COVID-19 SUPPORTS	Introduce pension auto-enrolment system.
	Set out a pathway for the future implementation of the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme.
	Set out the future distribution of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment.

The Programme for Government is available [here](#).

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