



# NEWS IN BRIEF

## AUGUST 2025

ISCP  
VOICE OF OLDER PEOPLE

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### 2026 Pre-budget Forum Department of Social Protection

Our MDO, Sharon Casey would like to thank all who participated in compiling motions for our APM and those who completing the 407 individual pre-budget surveys we received. Items relevant to remit of DSP were used to collate a pre-budget submission.

Sharon represented your views at DSP pre-budget Forum on 17<sup>th</sup> July. Additional submissions are being prepared for Departments of Health and Finance, they will represent the specific motions and survey results relevant to those Depts. A copy of the full submission was circulated; it is also available to download on our website. A synopsis of themes follows.

#### **Simplify Access to Entitlements:**

Complexity of DSP application processes and how it can negatively affect those who need it most is reported by ESRI research. Myriad of payment schemes with differing application systems. Improve accessibility with a particular focus on those who do not have access to online facilities.

**State Pension:** Implement commitments in previous two Programme for Governments and in Roadmap for Pensions Reform 2018-2023 for a State Pension set at 34% of average weekly earnings with annual review to ensure its continued adequacy. Increase the pension rate by a minimum of €25 pending implementation. Widen pension eligibility, especially for women, who have spent years providing care.

**Fuel Allowance:** Re-instate the duration of the Fuel Allowance to 32 weeks from its current level of 28 weeks. Provide other qualifying options for this scheme for

low/middle income households and those marginally outside of the income limit.

Link Electricity/Gas allowance to number of units rather than present system. Increasingly large proportion of Fuel Allowance is paying standing charges and levies – those in receipt of Fuel Allowance should be marked exempt.

**Over 80 Increase:** Members queried whether this is applied automatically or whether they need to apply for it?

**Living Alone Allowance:** Outreach initiative to those over 66 at key age milestones e.g. reaching 70 - to be advised they may now fall in scope for 'living alone allowance'.

Transparency about income thresholds/means test applied, eliminating risk that individuals in need of support will self-select that they do not qualify.

*Motion 1 passed at our 2025 APM reads:*

"The loss of a partner at any time in life can cause distress, but for those dependents on the fixed income of a state pension, the financial burden incurred by losing half of the household income adds to that suffering. Conference call on the ISCP to impress upon the government the need to provide additional financial support to meet the extra burden of facing such loss"

*Motion 3 passed at our 2025 APM reads:* "All semi state employees who commenced employment since 1995 have paid A1 PRSI. The number of employees who paid D1 is potentially reducing every year. This motion requests the Government to legislate for the Living Alone Allowance to be extended to apply to all pensions irrespective of their PRSI class. This payment would help pensioners living alone and in receipt of an occupational pension as they have no entitlement currently. This payment to be available to all pensioners over 70 years of age".

## Household Benefits package:

**Saorview** Public information initiative specifically aimed at recipients of free TV licence. Members report paying increasing premiums to access digital TV to try stay connected, using TV as company when unable to engage with in-person activity due to a myriad of issues. Lack of awareness that a once off outlay on a Saorview enabled TV or a standalone Saorview Box will suffice for their needs.

**BIN Charges**—Survey respondents concerned about increased refuse costs. When waste charges first introduced, local authorities gave a number of free tags to older persons. There is no allowance in household benefits package. €200+ pa and rising, with those living alone disproportionately affected due to standing charges.

**Property Tax** - consideration be given to a solution for recipients of this benefit who are liable for Property Tax

*Motion 4 passed at our 2025 APM reads:*

“That all property tax be abolished on principle Home dwellings for all seniors over seventy years of age”.

**Telephone Support Allowance:** ISCP requests DSP to decouple this payment from stipulation that individual needs to qualify for Fuel Allowance. The rate of €2.50 per week leaves a shortfall of circa €35 in meeting basic package with Eir for those who qualify.

Request DSP engage as advocate with Eir, a significant number of customers remain on ‘Legacy’ account contracts; to negotiate a reduction in bills and rewinding the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases they have introduced in recent years, an additional €3 annual increase for April of each year advised to customers in March 2025. E.g. some members’ bills have increased to €43.11 pm for landline only with Eir. If they switch to another provider they cannot switch back in to ‘legacy’ type account with Eir.

Campaign to inform individuals in receipt of suite of payments for older people that they can switch provider. Competitor companies provide mobile phone and data bundles suitable for older persons offering a saving of €30 or more a month.

Request DSP to seek tenders with telephone providers for a package to those in scope for Telephone Support Allowance with optional add on for WIFI and mobile phone.

**Free Travel Scheme:** Members welcome communication to them by letter of the changes from September 2025 where those aged 70 years or over with Free Travel entitlement will receive a Free Travel Companion Public Services Cards (PSC).

DSP to use its influence to force services operating public transport contracts to remove booking fee charges with immediate effect. In the era where Bus Connects and other changes in public transport this is becoming an increasingly common issue.

Request DSP Free Travel Section to actively lobby operators, as part of their public service obligations to retain the option for passengers to book manually and mandate provision of ‘how to book’ pages using plain English and Irish. Any proposals to change booking systems to be cognisant that many people do not have smart phones or online access. No further operators be permitted to remove a telephone booking system, reinstatement of telephone booking option where it has been removed. There is an ongoing ‘creep’ where it is assumed that everyone either has a smartphone, a device with internet access or are comfortable in using online options.

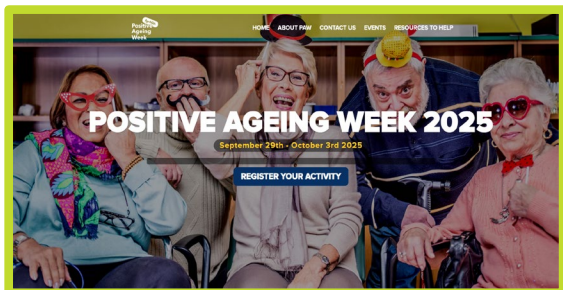
**Benefit payment for 65-year-olds:** See June NIB for details

**Digital Exclusion:** *Motion in our 2024 APM called on* “Government to implement a strict code of practice requiring all public service providers to have cognisance of the fact that 65% of older people in Ireland experience ‘digital exclusion’.” Call on DSP to support older adults in feeling confident, informed, and safe in using online portals including MyWelfare within MyGov. Vital that options to call in person to DSP offices/avail of telephone support is maintained. Those using basic mobile phones do not have the option to use many of the MyGov services, it requires iOS and Android on a smart phone or tablet. The cost of upgrading devices is beyond the means of many of our members.

**Means-tested Thresholds:** Urge DSP to review and revise upwards the thresholds to ensure that any increases awarded in

payments do not result in unintended consequences. Tax bands and thresholds should be adjusted in line with inflation. We urge DSP to adopt a graduated reduction in benefit where individuals' income is marginally over the threshold

## Positive Ageing Week



Positive Ageing Week is an annual initiative in Ireland which this year will be held from September 29th to October 3rd, spearheaded by Age Action. It is a week-long celebration that aims to change the perceptions of ageing, challenge ageism, and highlight the valuable contributions older people make to their families, communities, and society. Members of the Irish Senior Citizens can and should actively engage with Positive Ageing Week and Age Action in a variety of ways, from participating in events to availing of support services and volunteering.

Local events: Many communities, libraries, and local councils across Ireland will have events during Positive Ageing Week. These can include:

- Talks and workshops on health and wellness.
- Social gatherings like coffee mornings or intergenerational events.
- Creative activities such as art, music, or writing workshops.
- Physical activities like walking groups, "dancercise," or "chair zumba."
- Digital skills training.
- Exhibitions and campaigns celebrating the lives of older people in the community, such as the "Local Heroes" campaign.

Organise your own event: If you belong to a local group or club, you can register your own activity to mark the week.

Participate in national campaigns: Keep an eye out for national campaigns and events and get involved. These often focus on advocacy and raising awareness about issues affecting older people.

The Irish Senior Citizens Parliament would encourage our members to see Positive Ageing Week as an ideal time to tell and explain to friends, neighbours and local organisations of the work the ISCP do and encourage them to join us in building a stronger voice for advocacy for older people.

## 2025 Raffle - Fund Raising



Please help the ISCP by actively selling Raffle tickets within your networks and area's. This is the only fundraising asked of our members by the

ISCP and core to our efforts to give voice to our senior citizens.



Age-Friendly AI ran a series of events around the country earlier this year. Further events coming up – check out

<https://agefriendlyai.ie/events/> or Contact us via [AgeFriendlyAI@adaptcentre.ie](mailto:AgeFriendlyAI@adaptcentre.ie) or call or text them on 087 2815 224.

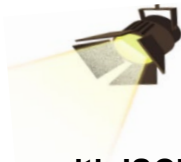
## Irish Senior Citizens Parliament Welcomes Meagher's Pharmacy as New Sponsor

The Irish Senior Citizens Parliament is delighted to announce a sponsorship with Meagher's Pharmacy, who will be joining us as a valued sponsor. This collaboration marks an exciting step forward in our mission to champion the rights and enhance the quality of life for older people across Ireland.

We look forward to a fruitful partnership with Meaghers Pharmacy and are confident that their support will be instrumental in achieving our shared goals for a better healthy future for all senior citizens in Ireland.

A huge thank you to Pat Daly, Executive Committee Member, who facilitated the introduction and recommendations of both parties.

## In the Spotlight:



### Health & Wellness:

#### Meagher's Pharmacy Partners with ISCP to Support Your Wellbeing



We've all heard the saying, "Your health is your wealth." But what does that really

mean - especially as we grow older? Good health is about more than just avoiding illness. It's about feeling strong, energetic, and confident in your body and mind. It's about taking small, meaningful steps each day that help you feel your best.

At Meaghers Pharmacy, we believe that health isn't just about treating illness - it's about supporting your overall wellbeing. That's why we're delighted to introduce you to our Pharmacy 360 programme - a holistic approach to health that looks at the *whole person*, not just the symptoms.

Our aim is to help people of all ages and abilities live healthier, more active lives. Whether you're managing a long-term condition or simply want to feel more energised and resilient, Pharmacy 360 is here to support you every step of the way.

#### What Is Pharmacy 360?

Pharmacy 360 is all about looking at your health from every angle. While medication is often essential, we also focus on important lifestyle factors — like how well you sleep, how you eat, how much you move, and how you manage stress.

Think about how we fuel our bodies. Would you put diesel into a petrol car and expect it to run? Of course not - and yet it's easy to overlook the importance of good food, hydration, sleep, and rest. Even something as simple as drinking more water each day can improve energy levels, digestion, and joint health.

Our goal is to help you feel informed, empowered, and in control of your health

choices, with a better understanding of what your body needs to thrive.

#### The Seven Elements of Health

Pharmacy 360 is built around seven key areas, which we call our **Seven Elements of Health**:

1. **Core Values** – Understanding what matters most to you helps guide and motivate your health decisions.
2. **Sleep** – Restorative sleep supports memory, mood, and the immune system.
3. **Stress Resilience** – Learning to manage stress protects both your mental and physical health.
4. **Nutrition** – Eating nourishing food gives you energy and supports every part of your body.
5. **Movement & Exercise** – Staying active, even with gentle movement, helps maintain strength, mobility, balance & heart health.
6. **Relationships & Connections** – Staying socially connected supports mental well-being and reduces feelings of loneliness.
7. **Environment** – Your surroundings can impact your health, from air quality and noise levels to feeling safe and comfortable at home. Even spending time in nature has proven benefits for the body and mind.

#### Complementing Medication

Medication plays a vital role in managing many health conditions, and it's essential to follow your doctor's advice carefully. But when medication is combined with positive lifestyle changes, the benefits can be even greater. A new diagnosis can sometimes feel overwhelming or disheartening - but making small, healthy changes can help restore a sense of control and confidence, leaving people feeling more in charge of their well-being.

#### Supporting Your Wellness

In the coming months, we will be shining the spotlight on each element of Pharmacy 360, sharing tips and guidance along the way. In the meantime, you can visit our website at [meagherspharmacy.ie](https://meagherspharmacy.ie) for more information. If you would like to discuss obtaining health information leaflets or to organise a group event, please contact us at

[service@meagherspharmacy.ie](mailto:service@meagherspharmacy.ie)

Alternatively, please contact the Membership Development Officer in Irish Senior Citizens Parliament at [development@seniors.ie](mailto:development@seniors.ie) or 085 2604955. Here's to your health! (**Liz O'Hagan - Pharmacist & Lifestyle Medicine Expert**)