



NEWS IN BRIEF

AUGUST 2024

ISCP
VOICE OF OLDER PEOPLE

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Our Main Asks for Budget 2025

After a lifetime of contributing to society, it is only fair for the government to protect those who have no other way of coping with soaring living costs. The Roadmap for Social Inclusion defines social inclusion as 'having access to sufficient income, resources and services to enable [people] to play an active part in their communities and participate in activities that are considered the norm for people in society generally'. This is a clear recognition that avoiding poverty and enhancing social inclusion requires adequate income. We do not want a giveaway budget or another €12 increase in the pension. We want lasting change;

- 🏛️ **State Pension:** A substantial and sustainable increase in the state pension with emphasis on the urgency of Government to benchmark pension rates to 34% of average earnings. We also called for a €25 increase in the Living Alone Allowance
- 🏛️ **Waiting Lists:** Urgent action and investment needed to increase capacity at hospitals, further develop the primary healthcare system and community care.
- 🏛️ **Free Travel Pass:** in relation to pre-booking fees for travel pass holders on buses and trains where a charge should not be incurred and to investigate the incorrect and unfair application of the Free Travel Pass system
- 🏛️ **Homecare and Healthy Ageing:** A call on the existing home care system to be reformed and to fully implement Sláintecare. We are also drafting a pre-budget submission in collaboration with the Homecare Coalition. Overall, the ISCP call for the Department of Health to plan for (rather than react to) our ageing population and to promote and facilitate

positive ageing across all regions, both urban and rural.

- 🏛️ **Industrial Relations (Pension) Bill:** for the Bill to be passed granting access to pensioners in negotiations concerning their pension beyond the current 6-month time limit post-retirement
- 🏛️ **Energy and Cost-of-Living Supports:** Energy guarantee scheme to be introduced or an increase in the duration and amount for fuel allowance and household benefits package.
- 🏛️ **Eligibility and Access to Entitlements:** To improve means testing procedures to be more inclusive, raising thresholds and updating requirements in line with any budgetary changes from all departments

Budget 2025 will be the last opportunity for this Government, and this Oireachtas, to set a course in securing a dignified, worthwhile retirement for our older population which would inspire and incentivise future generations to come. Unless we change the manner in which we treat older people, we may create the future that we fear for our older selves.

Department of Social Protection Pre-Budget Forum 2025



The Pre-Budget forum is our annual opportunity to formally speak with Ministers within the Department of Social Protection about the day-to-day issues affecting older persons as well as what is most urgently needed in the upcoming budget. Secretary General John McKeown acknowledged our ageing population as most Ministers regularly do, however we were hoping to hear about what Government is going to do about it. The Secretary General remarked that we “must not react but rather reflect and take action” for the future. He noted that rural depopulation is still in existence which the ISCP have seen, with our older people getting left behind.

This subject also came up when we broke into our workshop groups to discuss the topic **‘Supporting Retired & Older People’**, led by Collum Walsh and Simon Shevlin. This was particularly in reference to pensions, the Living Alone Allowance, Fuel and Cost-of-Living Allowances. We expressed the need for a substantial increase in each of the above as **1 in 10 older persons are living close to the poverty line**. We also campaigned for the implementation of benchmarking the state pension and other social supports at 34% of average earnings which was done so in solidarity with all of the Age Sector organisations at the table.



A plethora of statistics, reports and real-life experiences were shared with the Department in the hopes that next year's budget will be the one that makes a lasting difference for older persons. We are aware that Government cannot possibly satisfy every person's need but the ISCP feel that older persons have borne the financial brunt of the Irish Economy for far too long. It is well and truly time to restore the purchasing power of our state pension to enable older people to plan for retirement and continue to contribute to the Irish society and economy.

Hustings Event near You

The ISCP in collaboration with Age Action will be conducting a series of Hustings in locations across Ireland in the coming months. Once candidates are confirmed and the General Election is called, we will be ready to pounce.

What are Hustings?

Hustings are panel discussions in the run-up to an election where candidates' debate policies and answer questions from the audience. It can be a great way to find out more about where your candidates stand on key issues and to secure commitments which you can later use to hold them accountable, if elected.



When and Where?

The when depends on when the General Election is called where Government will have to provide at least 30 days' notice before the vote. With even the best resources it would be impossible to visit every constituency but, we do hope that with the aid of our members we can reach multiple areas across the country.

Who is it for?

This is for anyone in Ireland who is registered to vote and wants to find out more about each candidate and what they promise to achieve if elected to Government. We specifically encourage older people to attend these events and ask questions that are most important and relevant to you.

Keep an eye on our website, our social media pages and your post boxes. We will inform all members within these and surrounding areas to give you an opportunity to quiz your local candidates. If you or your group have the

means to host an event like this, please get in touch with Niamh at development@seniors.ie



International day of the Older Person

Mark your calendars for **Tuesday 1st of October** to celebrate this year's International Day of the Older person. Population ageing is a major global trend reshaping societies worldwide. Life expectancy at birth now exceeds 75 years in half of the world's countries, 25 years longer than in 1950. By 2030, older persons are projected to outnumber youth globally, with this increase most rapid in developing countries. This demographic shift has significantly transformed the caregiving landscape, encompassing a wide range of needs for both paid and unpaid support in formal and informal settings. As populations age, the demand for comprehensive healthcare, care, and social support services has grown substantially, particularly for older persons with conditions such as dementia. In recognition of these challenges and opportunities, the 34th commemoration of the United Nations International Day of Older Persons will focus on the theme of:

"Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide"

We will keep you up to date on any celebrations that may yet be scheduled in an area near you. If you would like to host your own event, please do get in touch with us so that we can assist you in any way we can.

ISCP Fundraising Raffle 2024

You will have already received your raffle tickets in the post so now its time to sell!

Funds raised from the raffle directly effects the calibre of work and amount of work we can achieve in the ISCP. These funds support the day to day running of the ISCP Office and renting spaces for public meetings and workshops.

A poster for the 2024 Raffle. At the top, it says '2024 RAFFLE' in large green letters, followed by 'IN SUPPORT OF' and the 'Irish Senior Citizens Parliament' logo. Below this is a list of prizes: 1st Prize: Cash Prize of €1000; 2nd Prize: 2 Nights B&B & 1 Evening Meal for 2 @ Kenmare Bay Hotel by Select Hotels Ireland; 3rd Prize: 1 Night B&B for 2 @ Carlton Hotel Blanchardstown; 4th Prize: 1 Overnight Stay for 2 @ Wynns Hotel Dublin City; 5th Prize: Golf 4 Ball @ Mount Wolseley, Co. Carlow; 6th Prize: Luxurious Drinks Hamper. There are small icons for each prize: a money bag for the cash prize, a hotel for the B&B prizes, a golf ball for the golf prize, and a hamper for the drinks prize. At the bottom, it says 'TICKETS €2 EACH OR €5 FOR A BOOK OF THREE'. Below that, it says 'Draw to take place on Tuesday 22nd October 2024 at the offices of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament, c/o Office 1 Willie Bermingham Place, Kilmainham Lane, Dublin 8. D08 DP8P'. At the very bottom, in small text, it says 'Permit granted to ISCP Office at the above address by Garda Superintendent David Butler'.

And for the first time ever, we have taken our raffle online! We can now provide tickets to friends and family located all over the world who wish to support us in our advocacy work. All you have to do is scan our QR code below and this will take you directly to our Raffle page:



For more information on how to donate or purchase raffle tickets, you can also visit our website at www.seniors.ie

Positive Ageing Week

We are putting a call out for any groups or individuals who would like to host an event or gathering during Positive Ageing Week 2024:

September 30th - October 6th 2024

The event can range from a cup of tea with your friends to a ramble along the Camino like some members have done in the past. You don't need to raise any money or ask for anything in return, we simply want you to celebrate ageing, all of your life's achievements to date and the ones still yet to come.

Positive Ageing Week 2024 will carry on the theme of Challenging Ageism – Reframing How We Think, Feel and Act towards ageing and older persons. To get you started, here are some ideas on how you can begin to challenge Ageism:

What does Positive Ageing even look like? Well, it looks like our members:



Citizens Information

A lot of people had thought that there was a mass closure of Citizens Information Centres but we are here to tell you that they are OPEN and in a location near you. We rely on Citizens Information Services for our own queries from anything to entitlements, means-testing thresholds and help with applications.



If you do not have the ability to attend a centre in person, you can call **0818 07 4000** from **9am to 8pm Monday to Friday**.



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuisithe agus Pobail

