

Post Budget 2027 Reaction

This document should be read in conjunction with our October News in Brief.

Five of our Executive members prepared a personal reaction, and made themselves available for an online meeting to discuss. This document presents the themes identified at that meeting along with commentary on measures announced in Budget 2027 versus motions passed at our Annual Parliament Meeting. The full text of pre-Budget submissions is available on our website www.seniors.ie

State Pension

For yet another year our submission on benchmarking state pension has fallen on deaf ears. It is deeply disappointing that Budget 2027 has not made any moves to increase state pension to 34% of average wage. A €10 increase from January 2027 for those in receipt of maximum weekly rate, pro rata increases for qualified adults and those receiving a reduced rate does not even keep pace with inflation increases over 2026.

Motion No 2 read:

Pension Promise

SIPTU Retired Members Section – National Committee & SIPTU RMS Region 5

Older people deserve a secure retirement. After a life of work, the right to live in older age with dignity is a reasonable expectation. Previous governments have committed to raising the state pension to 34% of average wages, to date they have reneged on this commitment. We call on the ISCP Executive to urge this government to implement the 2018 Roadmap for Pensions and make good the promise to raise the state pension to 34% of the average wage to ensure the fixed income of Older People keeps pace with the rising cost of living.

Living Alone

One of the priorities identified in our pre-Budget survey and in a motion put forward and passed at APM in May is the inequality experienced by older people who are living alone.

The most recent Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data for 2025 (which uses income for 2024) states “at risk of poverty rate was highest in households composed of one adult aged 65 years and over (30.3%)” (Central Statistics Office, 2026). Our pre-budget submissions highlighted that this data refers to a year (2024)

where cost of living measures were in place and situation has deteriorated since their removal.

Motion No 5 read:

Living Alone Allowance

SIPTU Retired Members Section Region 4

We call on Government to increase the living alone allowance which is necessary to keep pace with inflation

This budget has made some progress for older people living alone but **not** in Living Alone Allowance Scheme. A €3 weekly increase is the first increase in five budgets and not a meaningful rate, it will be €25 per week from January 2027. **Living Alone allowance** remains dependent on receipt of core social welfare payment, whereas eligibility for fuel allowance was decoupled from requirement to be in receipt of core social welfare payment in 2023, our request to apply same rationale has been ignored.

Instead, in January 2027 the income threshold for single person households to qualify for Fuel Allowance will increase from €534pw to €641 pw – an increase of €107 pw (€5,564 pa). This is positive and we hope that changes to income threshold for people living alone may have set a precedent for yearly reviews.

We would remind members that you do not have to be in receipt of a core Social Welfare payment to qualify for fuel allowance but it is subject to a means test. This change took place in Budget 2023 and includes those who do not have full PRSI contribution such as Class D. If you were refused Fuel Allowance before 2023 you need to apply now, warning it is not back-dated.

WE NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE TO GET THIS MESSAGE OUT ! PLEASE SHARE THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION AS WIDELY AS POSSILBE.

Increase of €3pw (€156pa) from January 2027 to living alone allowance is insulting – whether you rely on home heating oil or Gas or other fuels increases year to date across the board. For those receiving Household Benefit Package, the free electricity allowance has remained frozen since 2013, the purchasing power of the allowance has significantly decreased. Fuel allowance will increase by €5 to €43 per week but our ask to reinstate to 32 week season on a permanent basis has been ignored (had been 32 weeks prior to Austerity cuts)

Taxes

Age Tax Credit remained static despite €125 increases in both Employee and Earned Income tax credits.

Motion No3 read:

Increase Tax Credit for Pensioners

SIPTU Retired Members Section Region 2

We call on ISCP executive to prevail on Government to substantially increase the Tax Credit for Pensions which hasn't happened in many years, as any increase that Pensioners might get in their pensions is taxable, and therefore does not address the burden of rising living cost.

Standard rate cut off point increased by €2,500 but an increase in Tax Credits would have benefitted those older adults in receipt of modest Occupational Pensions better. We do not agree with the Tánaiste's comments that the 2027 recognises those who have contributed and retired.

Increases in ceiling for second USC band by €1,600 does not benefit those receiving a modest Occupational Pension, we had advocated

Cost of Disability

Much of Government commentary has been around this €500 once off payment being a starting point, without commenting that in Budget 2026 a temporary payment of €1,400 was totally removed. For our members we are outraged that this new Statutory scheme payment is not extended to those on Pensions; a person's disability does not disappear when they retire or move from long term illness to State Pension payment. To us this is a case of systemic Ageism.

Health Related

Medical Card

Our asks for improvements to eligibility criteria have not been addressed. There has been no move to restore Full Medical Card for Pensioners as proposed by members at APM

Motion No 7 read:

Health Care - Full Medical Card for Pensioners

SIPTU Retired Members Section Regions 1 & SIPTU NRSC

We call on the ISCP Executive to lobby the Government and all TDs to ensure that all pensioners have access to adequate health care, by ensuring access to a full medical card including optical, dental and aural packages as well as the removal of prescription charges for card holders. The policy of providing Primary Care facilities and care in the Community as promised in Sláintecare, must be delivered with immediate effect.

Means Test

In Summer 2025 we were advised that a review of Means Test for various schemes was nearing completion. We asked for clarity in our pre-Budget submissions. During a post Budget 2027 call with Department of Social Protection, we were advised that the review has not yet been finalised, this is deeply disappointing.

Minister for Health announced details of an online facility which allows people to check their eligibility and acknowledged that their department recognises that many individuals who should have an Over 70's GP only card have not applied.

WE NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE TO SPREAD THE WORD ON ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO APPLY FOR FULL MEDICAL CARD AND GP ONLY CARD.

For those comfortable using online check out:

<https://www.mymedicalcard.ie/eligibility-calculator>

Alternatively, please seek assistance of Citizen Information Centres in submitting your application.

Numerous additional benefits apply to those who hold a full medical card. A lower USC rate of 2% to those under 70 who hold a full medical card. It is also one of the conditions to qualify for Warmer Homes Scheme. (see October NIB for comprehensive piece on this)

Shingles Vaccine

Motion No 6 read:

Shingles Vaccine Retired Nurses Eastern Branch

The Shingles vaccine to be made available free of charge to all seniors and to vulnerable or compromised people, taking into consideration its possible benefit in reducing dementia

At time of printing this document the exact details of roll-out of free vaccine are unclear, an announcement was made by Minister for Health on Prime Time rather than any announcement by Ministers of Finance and DPER during Budget speeches.

Cost of Living

Heating a home

Reduction in VAT on Home Heating Oil while welcome is totally inadequate. We have been contacted in recent weeks by people who rely on Electricity or Natural Gas heating with increases in double digits to recent bill. While problematic, rationale for increases in unit price is understood due to global crises, increases to standing charges are not.



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