

# Presentation in Leinster House

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**S.P.A.R.K**  
*Single Parents Acting for the Rights of our Kids*

# Budget 2012 Effects on Lone Parents

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- Financial Hardship
- Barriers to Work and Education
- Loss of support once a child reaches age 7
- Housing concerns

# Financial Hardship

- €1,549.60 loss - (per child) this applies to existing CE participants only
- €416 loss – reduction in weekly income disregard
- €312 loss – increased contribution to housing
- €120 loss – reduction in fuel allowance
- €50/€55 loss (per child) reduction on BTSFCA

# Poverty Rates

Poverty Risk Consistent

Total Pop. 14.1% 5.5%

**Lone Parents 35.5% 16.6%**

Unemployed 24.8% 11.5%

Ill/Disabled 21.7% 8.8%

Children (0-17) 18.6% 8.7%

Older (65-74) 8.9% 1.3%

Older (75+) 10.6% 0.9%

# Barriers to Work and Education

- OPFP recipients are not entitled to apply for Job-bridge or Tus Schemes
- Introduction of €25 contribution towards childcare for VEC or FAS participants. As lone parents only receive an additional €29.80 per child, this cost is prohibitive
- Reduction of Income disregard- In 1997 the income disregard was increased to €146.50 to assist lone parents back into workforce. This never increased but will now be reduced to €60 by 2016. This will act as a barrier to lone parents entering the workforce.
- Effective closure of CE schemes to lone parents – CE schemes have been stepping stone to re-enter the workforce. Lone parents will now be paid an additional €20 for 19 1/2 hours work with no childcare or travel allowance. They will not be able to afford to participate in these schemes.

# Loss of support from age 7

- A seven year old child still has very high care needs. School helps but there are still a lot of hours of care to be provided for.
- Lone Parents will be forced to fund childcare from one salary or remain on long term welfare dependency. Loss of support at this age means that parents will no longer be able to work part-time and to be flexible around school hours. Many will have no choice but to give up part-time work. The choices will then be to remain wholly welfare dependent or take risks with unsafe child care options.

# Housing Concerns

- Reduction in maximum rent is causing huge concerns for vulnerable families.
- The state is the major purchaser of private rental accommodation and has the power to control rental market, yet it is expecting individuals to negotiate directly with landlords and expect families to be forced to move if they can not reach the imposed limits. Lone parents may be forced to move miles from schools, childcare facilities and existing support networks.
- Lone parents appreciate that rent supplement is very expensive for the exchequer. However, it arose because the state failed to provide adequate social housing, when it was in a position to do so. It is unfair that poor policy making should result in vulnerable families having to move and having no security of tenure.

# Conclusion

- The state has signed up to various UN and EU Human Rights conventions. Even in times of austerity, it has a duty to honour these conventions. Budget 2012 has introduced many retrogressive measures that are unfairly impacting upon children and women. Lone parent families are the poorest in the state and although stereotyping means we have very little public sentiment, we as parents are determined to stand up for the rights of our kids.