

EDUCATION IS...

A STUDENT
GUIDE TO
BUDGET
2016



Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

€3m allocated towards the SAF. This is split into two specific allocations: €1m, in line with our pre-budget ask, towards topping up the fund. €2m towards specific support for students who are considered “vulnerable” by virtue of background etc. Details as to the arrangements for the latter will be made available in the spring.

No increase in fees, change to grant levels, or reduction in adjacency rate of < 45km.

Some 2,200 new teachers will be hired in an effort to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio at primary level from 28:1 to 27:1 and at second level from 19:1 to 18.7:1.

€2m will be available towards the creation of Technological Universities in Dublin, Munster, and the South-East.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND REFORM

Reduction in the 3.5 per cent and 1.5 per cent Universal Social Charge (USC) bands by half a percentage point each. The entry point to the USC will rise from €12,012 to €13,000.

The threshold to the new 5.5 per cent rate will also rise from €17,756.

ARTS, HERITAGE GAELTACHT

€50m allocated to the 1916 centenary.

The Minister of State has indicated that a total sum of €44.206 million will be provided to the Department for the year 2016 for the Irish language, Gaeltacht and Islands functions. In addition, €13.201 million will be provided for the Language Body.

JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

The statutory minimum wage is to rise from €8.65 to €9.15 per hour from January as previously recommended by the Low Pay Commission.

A 12c charge is to be introduced on ATM transactions as a replacement for the current €5 stamp duty on debit and ATM cards. However the charge will be capped at €2.50 or €5, depending on the type of card being used.

The excise duty on a pack of 20 cigarettes is to increase by 50 cent from midnight on Tuesday, which Minister Noonan said was the only tax increase in the budget. The price of tobacco will rise on a pro rata basis.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Christmas bonus, a top-up, once-off payment for social welfare recipients, has been restored to 75 per cent of the recipient's weekly payment. Applies to BTEA and One-Parent Family Benefit recipients in education.

€3 increase in the weekly state old-age pension
Respite care grant returned to €1,700.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND MARINE

A stamp duty exemption for young trained farmers is to be extended for a further three years to the end of 2018.

ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVT.

500 social houses built in the greater Dublin area.

NAMA is to deliver 20,000 residential units before the end of 2020 with 90 per cent of these to be in the greater Dublin area.

TRANSPORT, TOURISM AND SPORT

An additional €28 million or a 14% increase in Public Service Obligation (PSO) subvention is also being provided to support increased public transport services, including those operated under the Rural Transport Programme.

Almost €25 million is being provided in 2016 for the development of the National Sports Campus, including completion of the National Indoor Arena.

HEALTH

Tax credit for carers in the home of between €800 and €1000.

Free GP care scheme extended to under 12s.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Child benefit is to be increased by €5 per month per child from next year to €140.

Two weeks of paid paternity leave.

After school care allocated €3m to services in existing buildings.

Free pre-school childcare will be available for 3-year-olds until they start primary education or reach the age of five and a half years. Parents will be given three enrolment windows: September, January and April.

Funding of €15m would also be introduced which would facilitate the participation of children with disabilities in the scheme.

8,000 places will be created through the Community Childcare Subvention Programme to support parents in low paid employment, or in training and education.

JOBS, ENTERPRISE INNOVATION

Reduction in capital gains tax from 30 per cent to 22 per cent for the self-employed and entrepreneurs. €1,650 PAYE tax credit for self-employed and farmers, worth €500.

Significant, OECD-compliant corporation tax incentive for businesses who invest in research & development.

Employer PRSI, the Government is increasing the entry point to the top rate of 10.75% by €20 per week to €376 per week



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CONTACT US

Twitter: @TheUSI
Facebook: facebook.com/usi.ie
Web: www.usi.ie
Email: info@usi.ie
Tel: +353 (0)1 7099300