An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

Minister O'Brien publishes the Report of the Social Inclusion Forum 2021

Friday, 1st October, 2021

Joe O'Brien, Minister of State at the Departments of Social Protection and Rural and Community Development with special responsibility for Community Development and Charities, today published the Report of the Social Inclusion Forum 2021.

The annual Social Inclusion Forum is a national event, at which people affected by poverty and social exclusion, as well as the community organisations representing them, come together with officials from relevant Government Departments, the Minister for Social Protection and the Minister of State with responsibility for social inclusion. The Forum was organised by the Department of Social Protection in partnership with the Department of Rural and Community Development, the European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland (EAPN) and Community Work Ireland (CWI).

Minister O'Brien stated that:

> *"The Social Inclusion Forum is an important annual event which allows us, the policy makers, the opportunity to listen to the views, and lived experiences, of those suffering poverty and the people that represent them."*

The 2021 Forum took place online for the first time, due to COVID-19 restrictions, from 12th to 16th April 2021, with over 350 people from Government Departments, communities and various organisations around the country in attendance across the week. It was the first Forum to be held since the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-25: Ambition, Goals, Commitments* was adopted by Government and published early in 2020. The Forum theme was "Implementing the Roadmap for Social Inclusion: reducing poverty and improving social inclusion".

Minister O'Brien continued:

> *"As this was the first time that the Forum was held following the publication of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025, in developing the programme for the Forum I was keen to ensure it focused on the implementation of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion, as it is the overarching national policy for poverty reduction and social inclusion."*

The Forum consisted of four workshops held across the week bookended by the Opening and Closing Plenary sessions. The workshops provided an opportunity for participants to discuss some of the themes from the Roadmap for Social Inclusion:

• Core Essentials – Healthcare, Housing, Energy and Food;

• Supporting Families and Children;

• Expanding the Opportunity of Employment;

- Making Sure Voices are Heard.

The report provides an overview of the event, the Opening Plenary, reports on the presentations by the speakers at the event, the Forum Workshop Discussions, the key themes that arose from these discussions and the Closing Plenary.

The report will be sent to the members of the Social Inclusion Roadmap Steering Group, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Roadmap and they will ensure that it is brought to the attention of relevant areas within their Departments.

The Social Inclusion Monitors for 2018 and 2019 were also published today. They have been combined in one document as it was not possible to publish the 2018 Monitor in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Social Inclusion Monitor reports on progress towards meeting the National Social Target for Poverty Reduction by providing regular, timely and accessible updates on key national indicators.

Welcoming this publication, Minister O'Brien said:

"This *publication provides progress updates on the national social target for poverty reduction, including the child-specific poverty target and the Irish contribution to the Europe 2020 poverty target.*

"These reports provide interesting insights on trends on poverty and its reduction in recent years across a range of indicators"

These reports will be available on https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/8e6f54-social-inclusion-publications/

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