



TWO PAIRS OF STRONG SHOES
A WARM WATERPROOF OVERCOAT
REPLACE ANY WORN OUT FURNITURE
KEEP THE HOME ADEQUATELY WARM
BUY NEW NOT SECOND-HAND CLOTHES
HAVE A ROAST JOINT OR ITS EQUIVALENT ONCE A WEEK
BUY PRESENTS FOR FAMILY OR FRIENDS AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR
HAVE FAMILY OR FRIENDS FOR A DRINK OR MEAL ONCE A MONTH
HAD TO GO WITHOUT HEATING DURING THE LAST YEAR THROUGH LACK OF MONEY
EAT MEALS WITH MEAT, CHICKEN, FISH (OR VEGETARIAN EQUIVALENT) EVERY SECOND DAY
HAVE A MORNING, AFTERNOON OR EVENING OUT IN THE LAST FORTNIGHT, FOR ENTERTAINMENT

POVERTY IN IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

In 2007, the Irish government launched the **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016: Building an Inclusive Society**. According to this plan, the overall poverty goal is to *'reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2% and 4% by 2012, with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016, under the revised definition'*.

The most common method for measuring poverty is by a survey in which a representative sample of people are asked to answer questions on their income and spending. A person is considered poor if either their income or spending falls below some minimum level that represents basic needs in each society. This is called the 'poverty line'. The poverty line is not the same everywhere because it is relative to what is the norm in a particular country.

The revised consistent poverty measure, devised by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI - to be used from 2007 onwards) uses a set of up-to-date indicators that are reflective of living standards in Ireland today.

An individual is regarded as being in consistent poverty if:

- Their income is below 60% of median income, and
- They experience deprivation in relation to the list of deprivation items (see below).

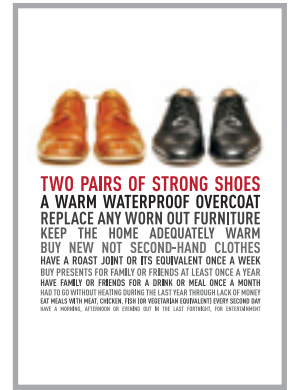
Persons lacking two or more items from this index are regarded as being in consistent poverty.

- Two pairs of strong shoes
- A warm waterproof overcoat
- Capacity to buy new not second-hand clothes
- Eat meals with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day
- Have a roast joint or its equivalent once a week
- Have had to go without heating during the last year through lack of money
- Keep the home adequately warm
- Buy presents for family or friends at least once a year
- Replace any worn out furniture
- Have family or friends over for a drink or meal once a month
- Have a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight, for entertainment

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE POOR?

Poverty in Ireland is measured by the Central Statistics Office using two forms of measurement - *consistent poverty* and *at risk of poverty*. The most recent data on poverty in Ireland is from the 2007 European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions:

| POVERTY IN IRELAND 2007 | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Consistent Poverty | 5.1% | 216,232 people |
| At Risk of Poverty | 16.5% | 699,575 people |
| Poverty Threshold (60% of median income) | €11,890 per adult per annum | |



- **‘At Risk of Poverty’**

This is also known as **relative poverty** or **income poverty** and means having an income that is below 60% of the median income (the median is the mid-point on the scale of incomes in Ireland). In 2007, that was an income of below **€228.65** a week for an adult.

- **‘Consistent Poverty’**

This means having an income below 60% of the median and also experiencing *enforced deprivation*. This means being on a low income and not being able to afford basic necessities such as new clothes, not having the money to buy food such as meat or fish, or not being able to heat your home.

OTHER MEASURES

Apart from the measures above which are commonly used in Ireland and Europe, a number of other measures are used internationally:

- **Budget Standard Approach:** a poverty line is calculated based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services that are considered, by experts, to represent a basic living standard.
- **Food Ratio Method:** where the poor are distinguished from the non-poor by the proportion of their money spent on necessities such as food, clothes and shelter.
- **Social Security Poverty Line:** when the lowest level of social welfare payment is used as equivalent to a poverty line.
- **United Nations Poverty Index:** combines measures such as life expectancy, literacy, long-term unemployment and relative income.

The European Anti-Poverty Network is an independent network of 150 of non-governmental organisations and groups in Ireland involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union. It is affiliated to the European Anti Poverty Network. EAPN aims to put the fight against poverty and social exclusion at the top of the EU agenda and to empower members through information, advocacy and networking.

The Network has published a 10-point plan for combating poverty across the European Union:

- Make social cohesion and the fight against poverty and inequality in the EU and the promotion of global equity a named EU priority
- Set and monitor EU and national level targets for poverty and inequality reduction as part of a highly visible EU strategy against poverty
- Set benchmarks for active governance in decision-making processes at EU and Member State level, ensuring the participation of anti-poverty NGOs including people experiencing poverty
- Make progress on developing an EU framework to defend high level social standards and guarantee a dignified life for all. A framework directive on adequate minimum income schemes would be an important step in creating such a framework
- Ensure access for all to affordable quality services, including social, educational, child care and health services and housing, transportation, energy and water services
- Put the commitment to ‘Decent and Quality Work’ back at the centre of the European employment strategy, through analysing the causes of the rise in ‘working poor’ as well and the benefits of adequate living wages and keeping the focus on maintaining jobs and the creation of quality sustainable employment
- Support the social economy and inclusive entrepreneurship as vital sources of inclusive job creation and concrete support for those furthest from the labour market

- Strengthen EU anti-discrimination legislation, including the fight against discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic status and enhance enforcement of existing legislation
 - Mainstream the fight against poverty across all policies through effective and participative social impact assessments, which ensure engagement of stakeholders
 - The development of an indicator for societal progress that reflects social and environmental well-being and that goes beyond progress measured by GDP used as an important tool to enable citizens to be aware of whether real progress is being made
 - 2010 has been declared the EU Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. MEPs can play a positive role as ambassadors for the Year, in doing so they can help to ensure that the fight against poverty and social exclusion is given a high profile in the first year of life of the renewed European institutions.
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FURTHER INFORMATION

The Irish Government's 2007 [National Action Plan for Social Inclusion](#) is required reading for anyone living in Ireland – it sets out a strategy for children, people of working age, older people and those living with a disability. It takes stock of minority communities in Ireland and assesses the risk of social exclusion and poverty for all of them.

<http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf>

The [European Anti-Poverty Network](#) (EAPN) is composed of 25 national networks of NGOs, as well as a number of European Organisations. Their website publishes EU calls for proposals for various poverty- and social exclusion-related projects, as well as news on EU-wide poverty issues. The EAPN's [Irish site](#) has much more Irish-centric information, as one would expect.

<http://www.eapn.eu/>

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