

COUNTRY FACT SHEET ON RBs: IRELAND

IRELAND	
	2006
Name	Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL)
Year of first construction	2006
State of use	In use
Key moments	<p>2006: Minimum Essential Budget Standard for Six Household Types The first Consensual Budget Standards research project by the VPSJ, establishing the current MESL dataset, conducted from 2004 to 2006. Produced budgets for six urban household types, published in 2006.</p> <p>2010: Minimum Essential Budgets for Households in Rural Areas Established budgets for six household types, when based in rural Ireland.</p> <p>2012: A Minimum Income Standard for Ireland Further research in 2010-11, published early 2012, expanded the dataset through individualising the household data and establishing the minimum needs of additional child age-groups. This brought flexibility to the dataset, enabling the examination of a broader range of family household compositions, beyond those established in the initial two projects.</p> <p>Further research, in 2012, established the additional minimum needs of larger family household compositions (up to four children).</p> <p>2012: Minimum Income Standard calculator www.misc.ie The calculator is a web based tool for making the MESL data accessible to individuals and organisations. It can be used to compile an MESL household budget for a user specified household composition and employment situation. It also measures the adequacy of social welfare supports and/or minimum salary needs for the situation specified.</p> <p>2013: Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI) A new statutory body was formed to address personal insolvency, the ISI. The MESL data provided the evidence base for the ISI's Reasonable Living Expenses (RLE) guidelines for individuals and households entering personal insolvency arrangements with creditors.</p> <p>2015: Minimum Essential Food Basket SafeFood, an all island statutory body operating in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, commissioned the VPSJ to produce reports on the cost of a Minimum Essential Food Basket for multiple household types in Ireland. This ongoing research focuses on the food element of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living. It is updated on a biennial basis, and provides an important food poverty indicator.</p> <p>2017: An MESL for a Single Adult with Vision Impairment This research, undertaken in collaboration with National Council for the Blind Ireland, utilised the Consensual Budget Standards approach and MESL data to identify additional and different needs of a working-age single adult with a vision impairment.</p> <p>2018: Stories of Struggle A series of in-depth interviews explored the experiences of households with children living in a situation of persistent income inadequacy. Using the MESL data as a frame of reference the research aimed to add understanding, depth and context to the term 'inadequate income'.</p> <p>2020: Review and Rebase The MESL basket costings are updated annually, applying a set of CPI sub-indices rates. The contents of the basket are also reviewed periodically, and the prices rebased. This process was undertaken for households with children in 2018 and other household types in 2019.</p> <p>The reviewed and rebased baskets are currently being finalised and readied for publication in the first half of 2020.</p>

Geographical focus	Ireland	
Data used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberative Focus Groups • Expert consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food baskets and weekly sample menus verified by a nutritionist ○ Home energy usage data informed the budget allocation for home heating and electricity ○ Childcare costs – sourced from annual national survey of childcare costs carried out by a statutory body 	
Household types	Household Types Two Parents, with 1 to 4 children One Parent, with 1 to 4 children Single Adult, working age Cohabiting Couple, working age Pensioner, living alone Pensioner Couple	Child Age Groups Infant Pre-School Primary School Second Level
	<p>The MESL data is focused on single family-unit households, households comprised of either a single adult or a couple, and up to four dependent children.</p> <p>The dataset is highly flexible, a total of 142 distinct household compositions may be examined within the core MESL dataset.</p>	
Institutions involved	VPSJ's Minimum Essential Budget Standards Research Centre	
Key publications	See below. The full list of publications are available here www.budgeting.ie	
Updates	Annual adjustment published in May/June. Periodic review and rebase.	
Last update	Adjusted in 2019; Review & Rebase 2018-19, currently being finalised for publication in 2020	

Reference: EU Platform on Reference Budgets (2020). Country fact sheet on reference budgets in Ireland, January, 2020, Antwerp: EPRB.

All available publications about RBs in Ireland

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MacMahon, B., Moloney, N. (2016a). [What is the cost of a healthy food basket in the Republic of Ireland in 2016?](#) Dublin: safefood and VPSJ.

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Policy recommendation submissions to government, based on the findings of the MESL RB research available here: www.budgeting.ie/publications/category/submissions/

‘Budget Impact Briefing’ analysis of the impact changes to tax and welfare system announced by government in the annual ‘budget’. Available here: www.budgeting.ie/publications/category/budgetimpactbriefing/

Full catalogue of Research Reports is available here www.budgeting.ie/publications/category/researchreports/