



VINCENTIAN  
**MESL**  
RESEARCH CENTRE

# MESL 2024

Prepared by:  
MESL Research Team

# Outline



Minimum Essential Standard of Living



Change in MESL costs



Income adequacy



Policy recommendations

What do people need to live with  
dignity?

# Household Types



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Household type

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Two Parents, 1 - 4 children

One Parent, 1 - 4 children

Single adult, working-age

Couple, working-age

Older single adult

Older couple

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# MESL Baskets

Covering everything from socks to wi-fi, school bags to toothpaste, and apples to electricity.

Deliberative focus groups discuss what's required.



Food



Clothes



Personal Care



Health



Household Goods



Household Services



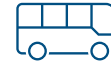
Communications



Social Inclusion



Education



Transport



Home Energy



Personal Costs



Insurance



Savings



*Housing*

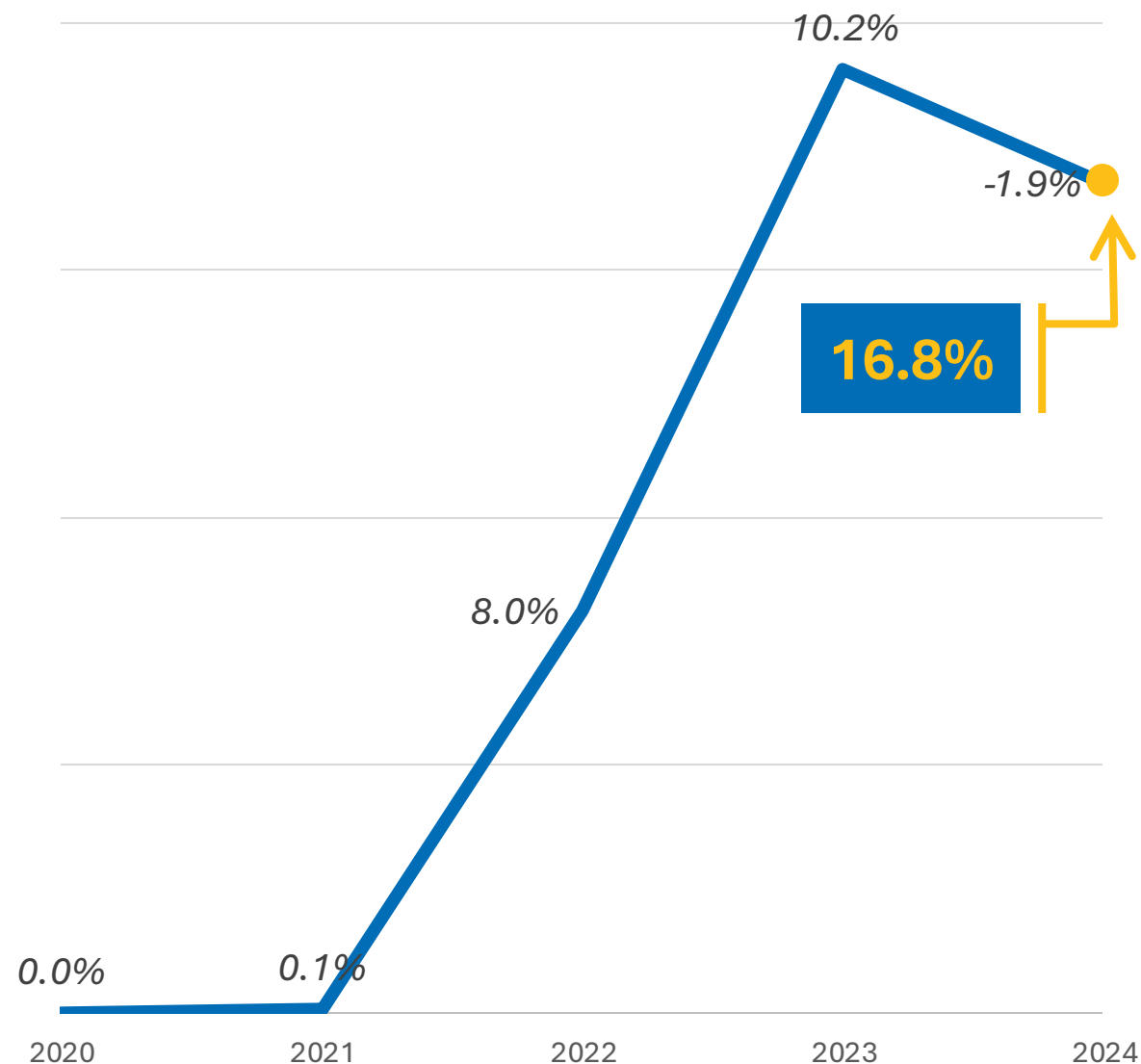


*Childcare*

# Cost of a MESL in 2024

# Change in MESL cost

- Stabilisation & slight decline into 2024
  - ↓ 1.9% from 2023 high point
  - ↑ 16.8% from 2020
- 2020 a pre-pandemic and inflation shock reference point
- Food & Energy are substantial proportion of MESL basket





# Food

# Rising Food Costs 2023 – 2024

**URBAN HOUSEHOLDS**

1.4% Increase

**RURAL HOUSEHOLDS**

1.6% Increase

# Cumulative Change in Food Costs 2020 – 2024

**URBAN HOUSEHOLDS**

**23.1% Increase**

**RURAL HOUSEHOLDS**

**17.8% Increase**

# Changes in Food Item Prices

## 2023 – 2024

## 2020 – 2024

### VEGETABLES

- General price increase from 2023 to 2024, further building on increases from past number of years
- Four vegetable items detailed in the report show between a 9-13% price increase from 2023 to 2024
- From 2020 to 2024, these four items show between a 20-36% price increase

### MEAT

- General price decrease from 2023 to 2024, however, prices have not returned to what they were in 2020
- Four meat items detailed in the report show between a 5-14% price decrease from 2023 to 2024
- From 2020 to 2024, these four items show between a 4-14% price increase

# Infant Child MESL Food Cost

**2023 – 2024**

7.2% Increase

**2020 – 2024**

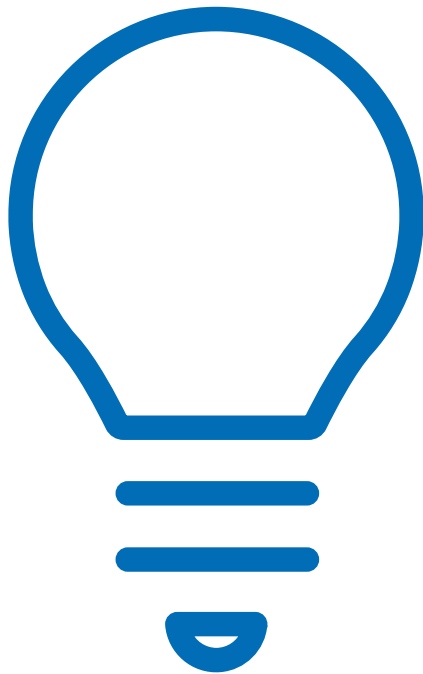
27.3% Increase

- Largest increase across all individual MESL food budgets from 2023 to 2024.
- Largest increase across all individual MESL food budgets from 2020 to 2024.
- Caused by general food inflation, alongside significant price increases in specific infant related items – baby formula, baby food jars, Liga biscuits.
- From 2023 to 2024, these items have increased by between 6-21%
- From 2020 to 2024, these items have increased by between 30-37%
- Overall core MESL costs for the infant child shows the largest increase of all child age-groups from 2020 to 2024 – 22.4%
- Largely caused by the price increase in baby formula, 37%, and nappies, 84%, from 2020-2024.



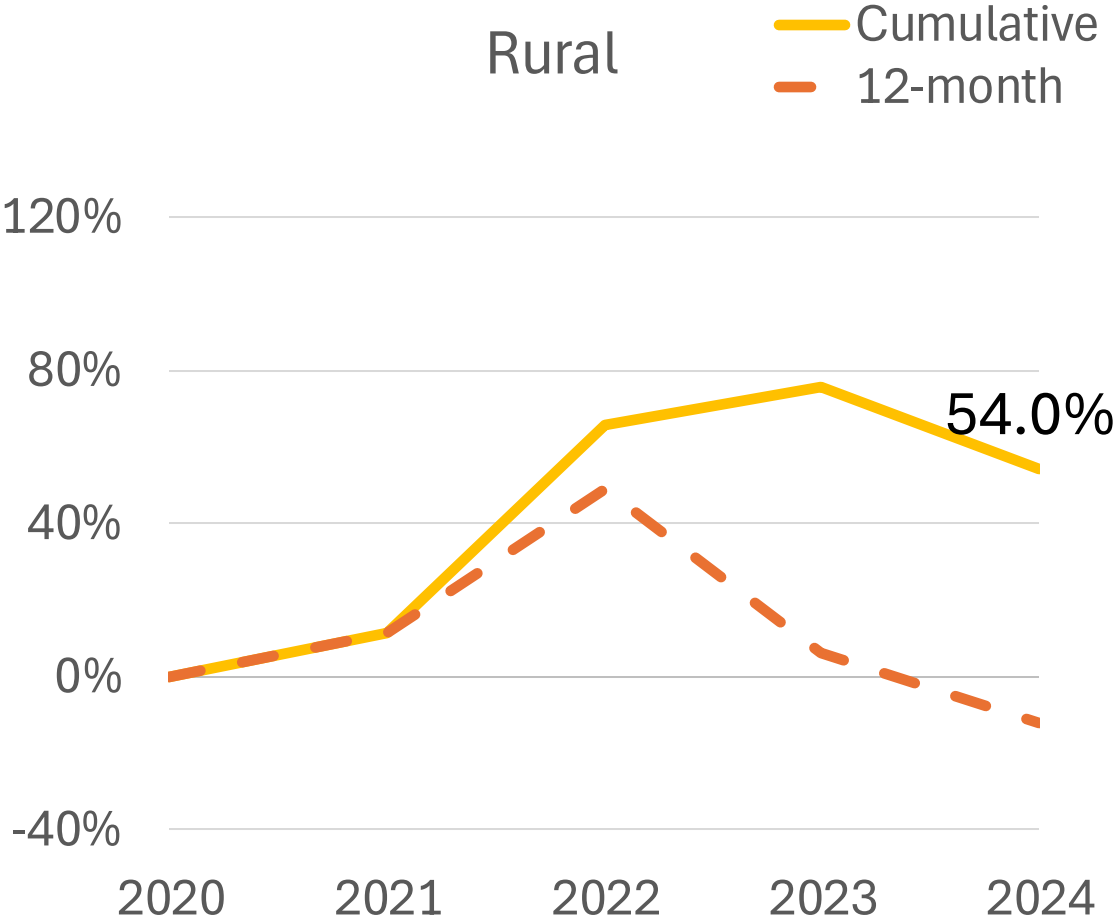
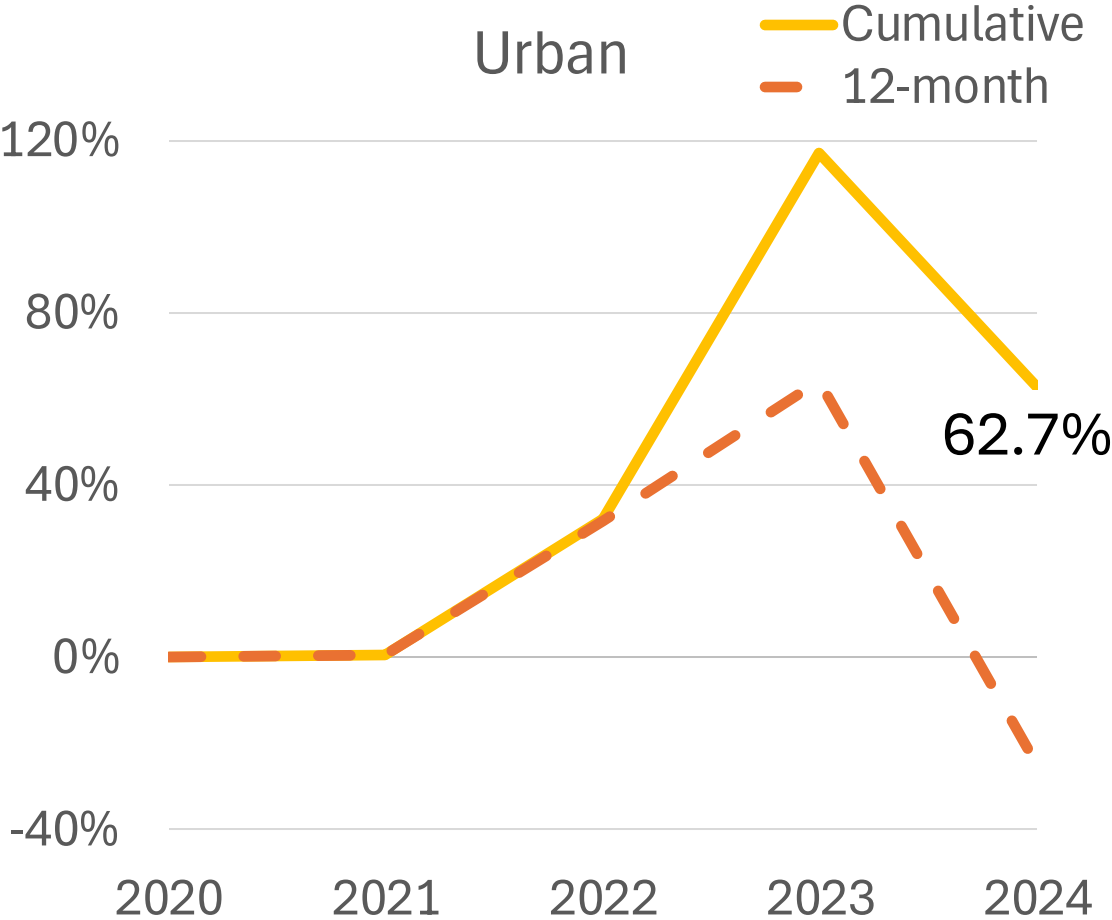
# Energy

# Change from 2023 to 2024

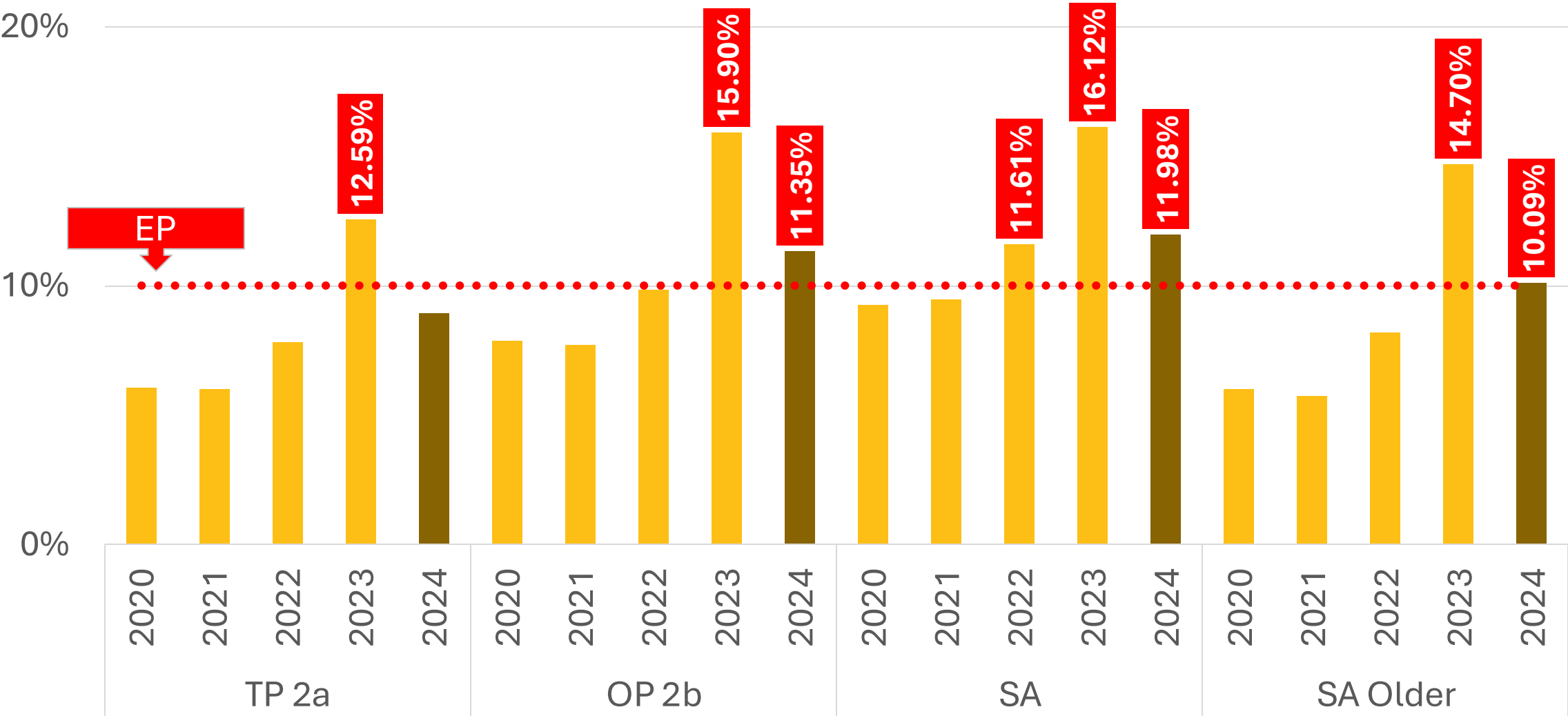


- Urban Household Energy (Natural Gas + Electricity) -24.9%
- Rural Household Energy (Home Heating Oil + Electricity) -12.2%
- Volatility in energy prices has disproportionate effect on minimum living costs
- Urban based gas costs continue to exceed equivalent rural household using oil in 2024

# Cumulative & 12-month change



# Household Energy as % of SW Income



## Energy Poverty in 2024

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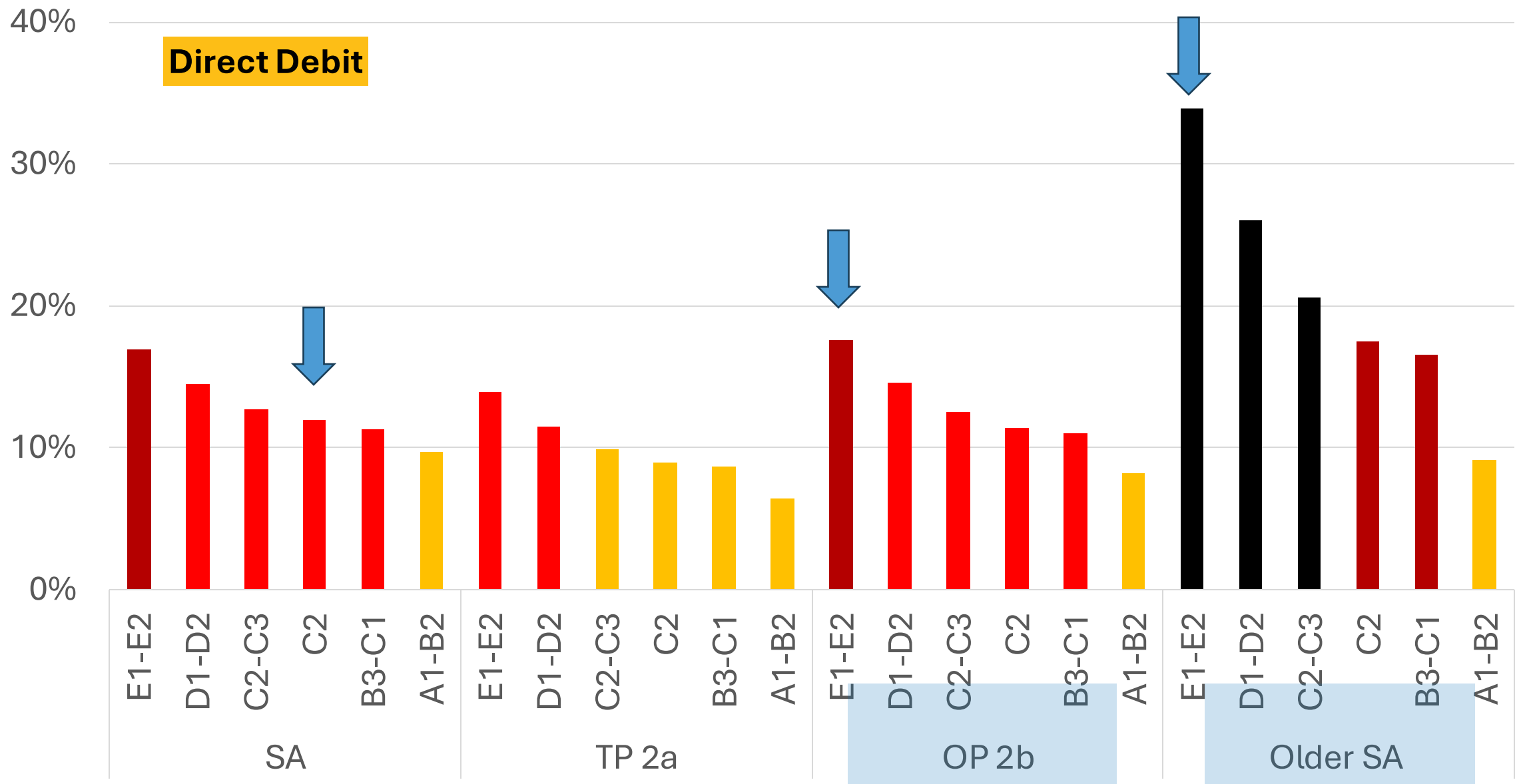
Energy poverty results from poor energy efficiency, high energy costs and low household income

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‘The cost of adequately heating the home’ Working Paper found that in 2023, 47 of 48 social welfare dependent scenarios demonstrated energy poverty

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In 2024, 40 of the 48 cases examined demonstrated some level of energy poverty

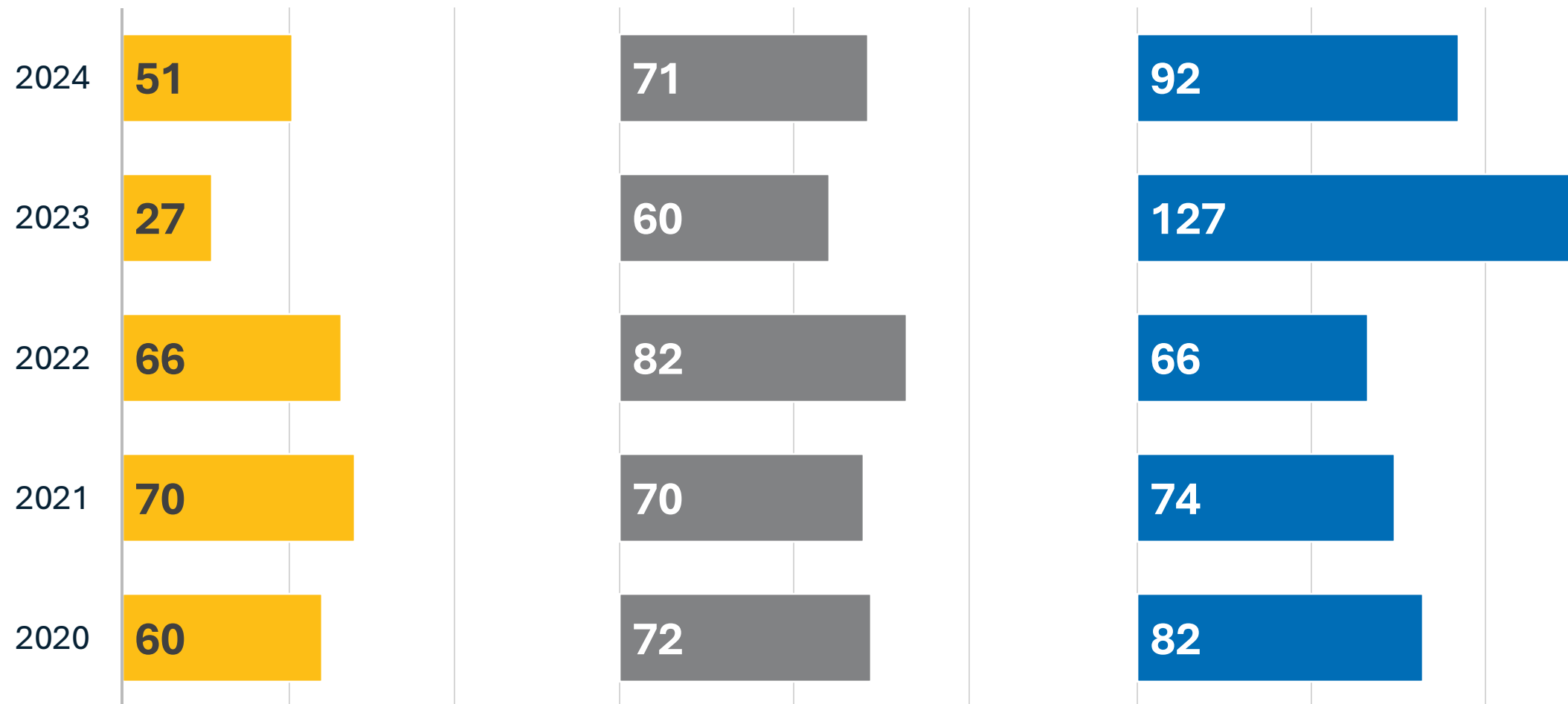


# Social Welfare

## Adequate

## Inadequate $\geq 90\%$ and $< 100\%$

## Deeply Inadequate $< 90\%$





## Working-Age Single Adult

MESL €280

SW Income €232

Shortfall (RS) **€48**

Shortfall (HAP) **€86**

*Consistently demonstrates deep income inadequacy*

HAP



HAP top-up

Rent Supplement



MESL Need

€0 €50 €100 €150 €200 €250 €300 €350

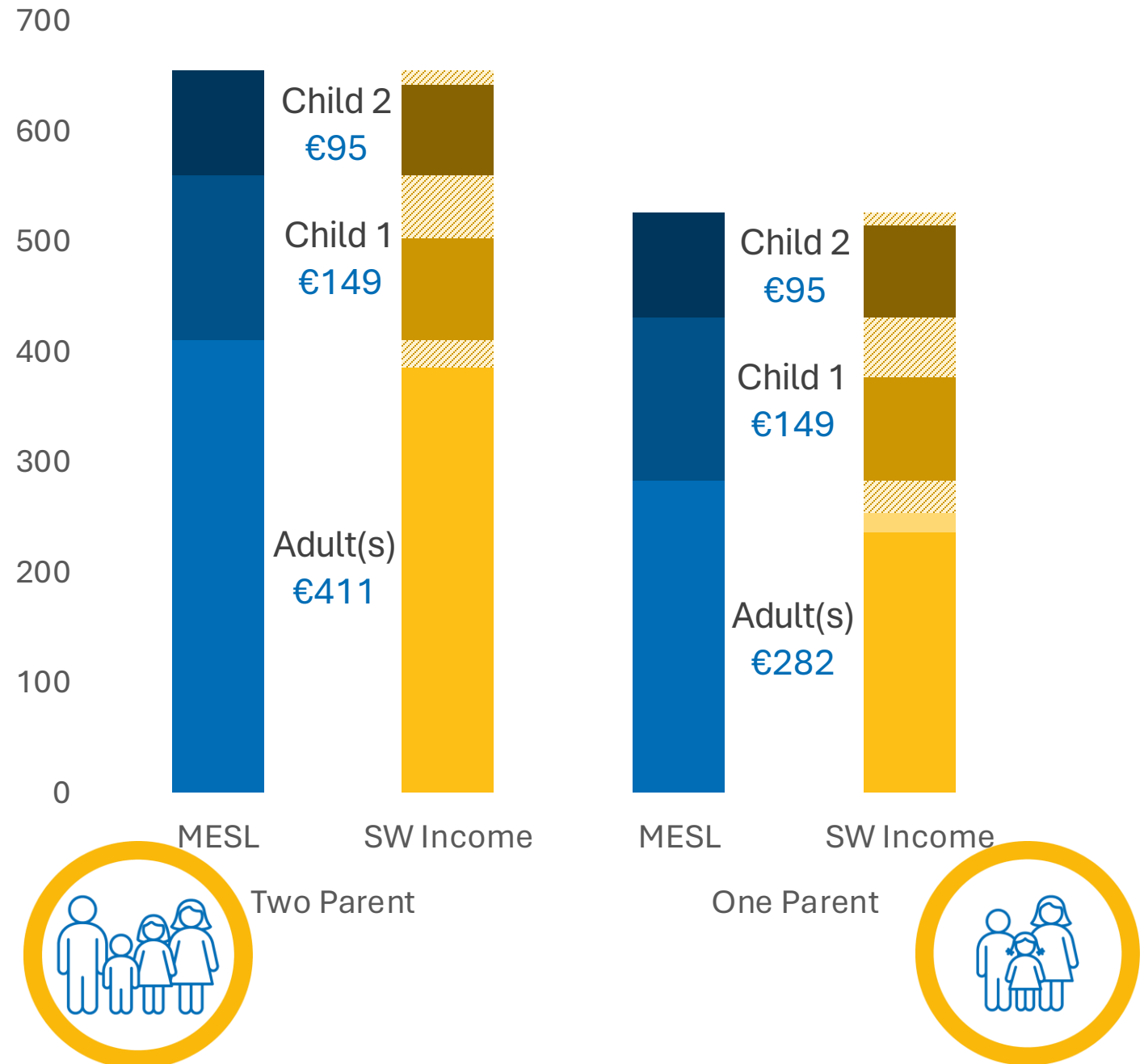
# Households with children

Household with two children  
(primary school & second level age)

- Two Parent 94%
- One Parent 92%
- Child 1, second level 63%
- Child 2, primary school 88%

Cumulative Inadequacy

- Two Parent household 85%
- One Parent household 83%



# Cost of Living supports

Multiple sets of supplementary supports and payment, including

- Electricity Credits
- Targeted lump sums
- Adjustments to VAT and excise
- **2024**
- January 'Cost of Living' double payment
- Two €150 electricity credits

	Adequacy	Inadequate	Deeply Inadequate
<b>2022</b>	13 pp ↑	8 pp ↑	21 pp ↓
<b>2023</b>	8 pp ↑	13 pp ↑	21 pp ↓
<b>2024</b>	4 pp ↑	1 pp ↑	5 pp ↓

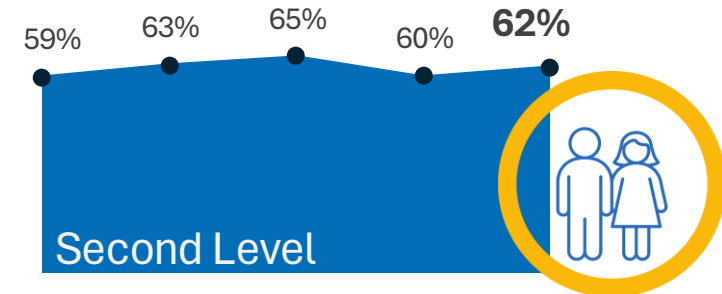
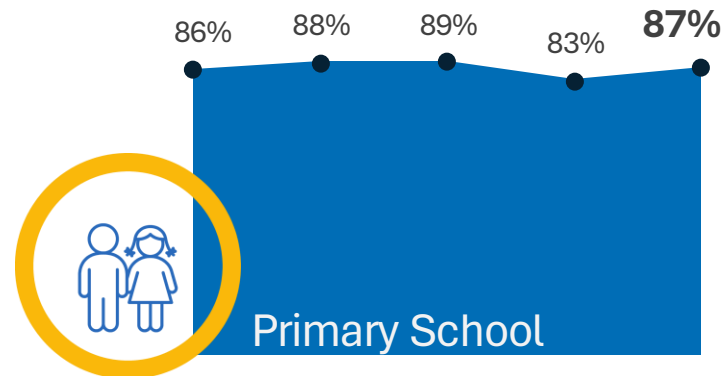
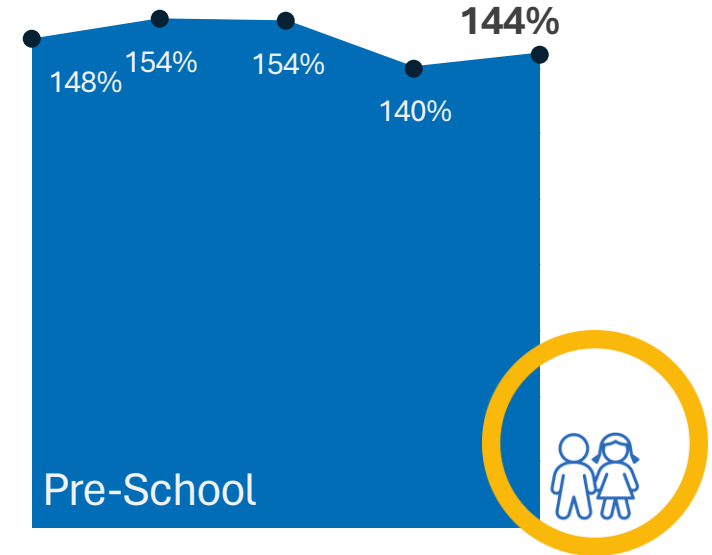
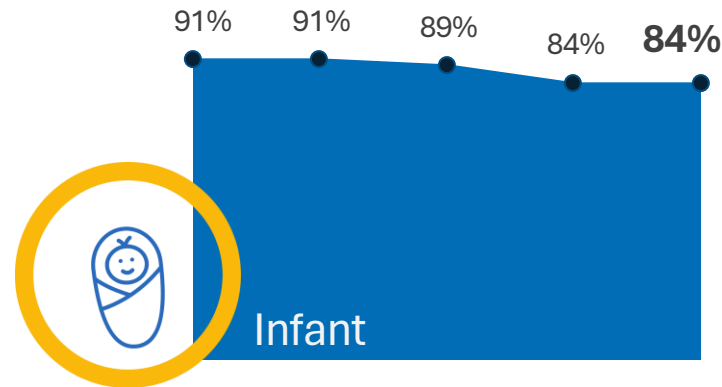
# Real value of core social protection rates

Real value has fallen, relative to MESL  
2024 remains below previous high points

MESL costs highest at Second Level

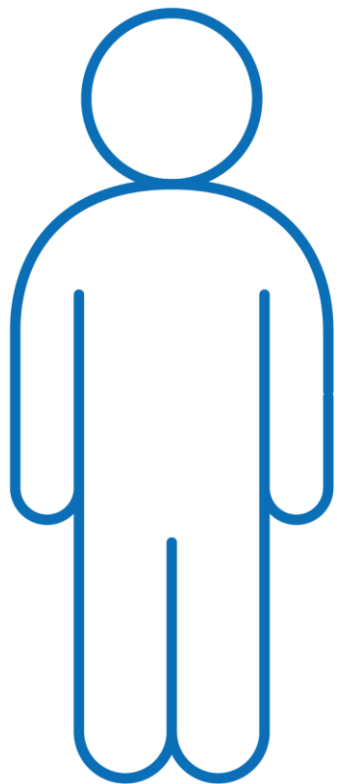
Infant MESL costs have largest increase

- Infant €94
- Pre-School €55
- Primary School €95
- Second Level €149



# Employment

# Single Adult



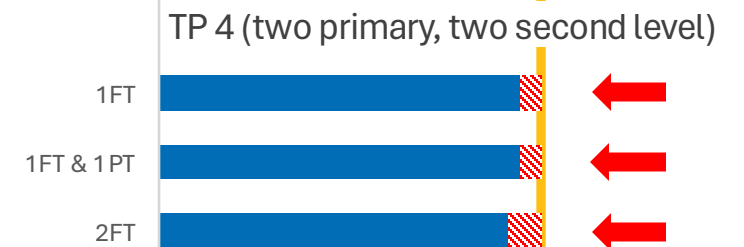
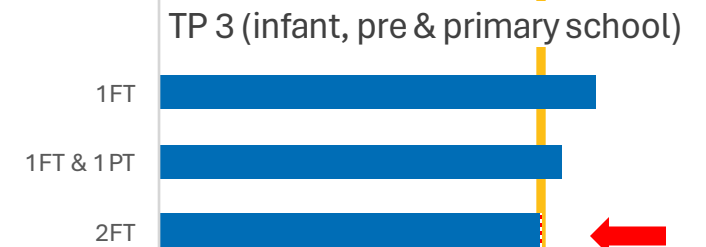
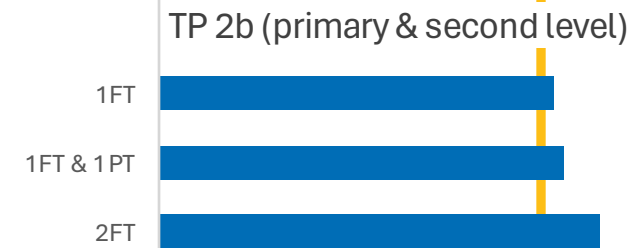
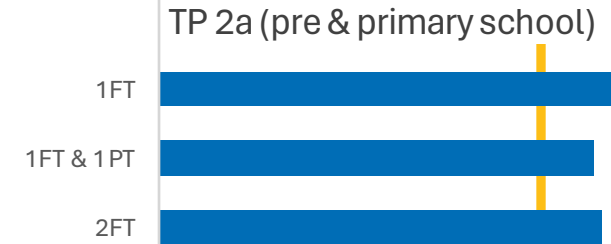
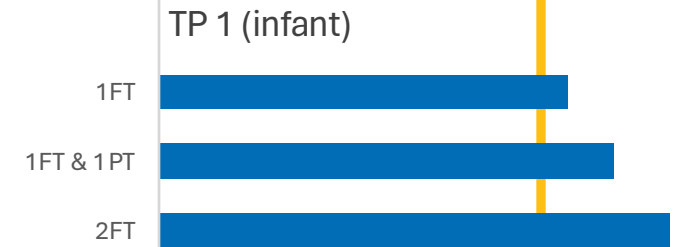
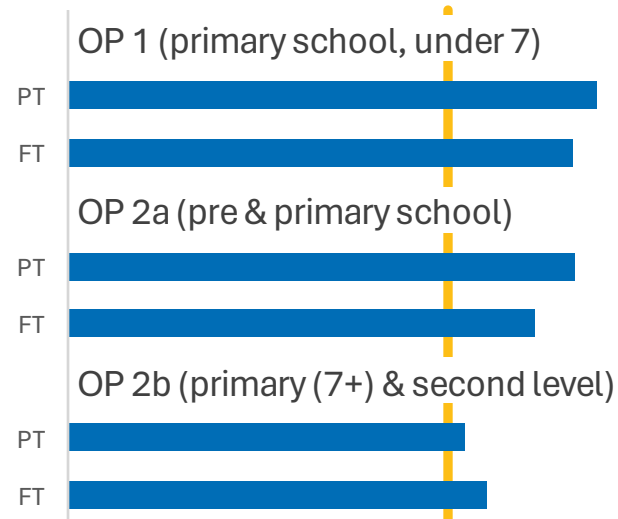
	Market Rent
<i>MESL Core</i>	252
<i>Housing</i>	320
Total MESL	<b>572</b>
Net Income	<b>442</b>
Adequacy Gap	<b>-130</b>

MIS, per week	679
MIS, per hour	18.10

HAP + top-up
269
99
<b>368</b>
<b>428</b>
<b>+60</b>

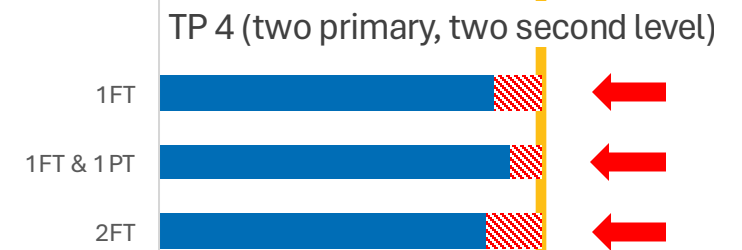
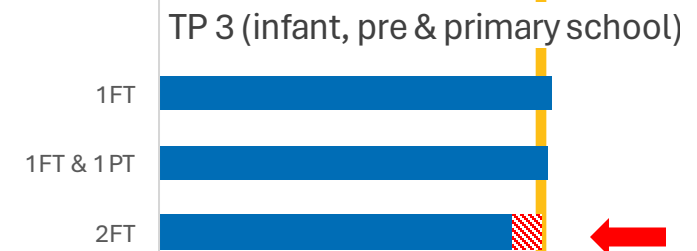
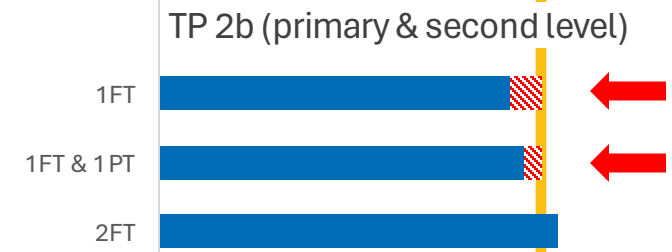
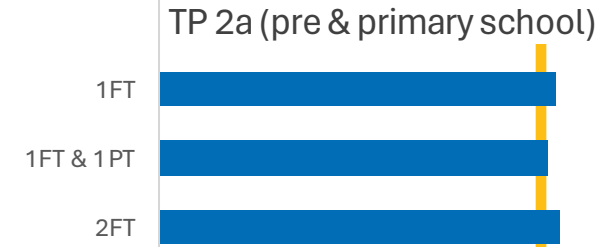
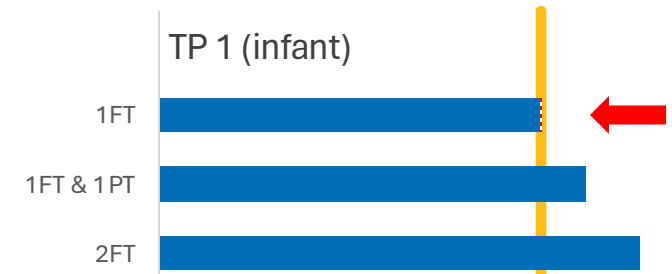
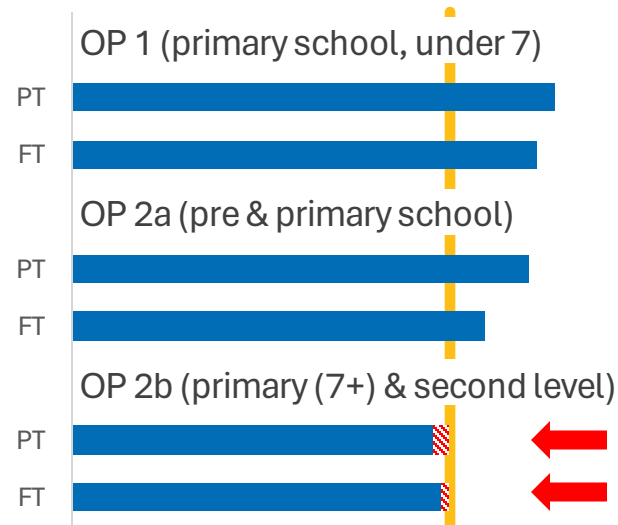
# Households with children

- 21 NMW employment cases examined
  - Full-time & part-time
  - Single & dual income
  - Social Housing **17 of 21 cases adequate**



# Households with children

- 21 NMW employment cases examined
  - Full-time & part-time
  - Single & dual income
  - HAP **12 of 21 cases adequate**



# In-work supports

## Income Supports

- **Back to School Clothing & Footwear**  
Income limits remained at 2023 levels
- **Working Family Payment**  
Income thresholds adjusted for 1 full-time NMW
- **One-Parent Family Payment & Jobseeker's Transitional**  
Earnings disregard not updated since 2020

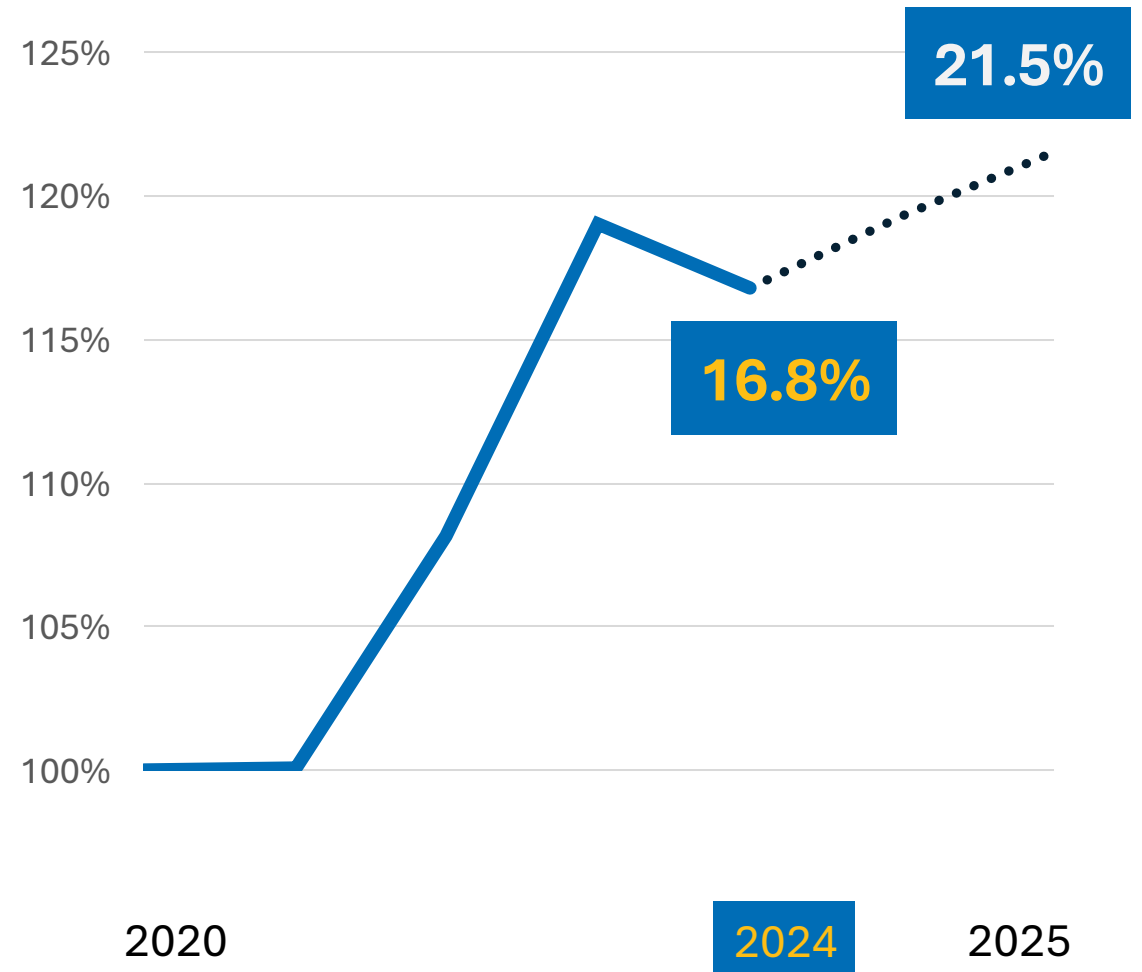
## Services

- **Medical Card**  
Income limits not changed since 2006
- **National Childcare Scheme**  
Means test income limits unchanged since 2020

# Budget 2025

# Cost of MESL basket in 2025

- Stabilisation & slight decline into 2024
  - Cumulative impact, 16.8% from 2020
  - Food           ↑ 21.2%
  - Energy        ↑ 64.5%
- Forecast
  - Energy prices stabilise
  - Food continues to increase
  - Spill over into other areas
- Potential ↑ 21.5% in 2025 (from 2020)



# Budget 2025 Recommendations

Working Age Rate

↑ €20 to €252

Qualified Child, under 12

↑ €6 → €52

Qualified Child, 12 plus

↑ €15 → €69

Fuel Allowance

↑ €7 → €40

International Protection

Child Payment

In-Work Supports

Maintain value



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