

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY AND INTERVENTION



# Strategic Overview

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# Thinking about Where We Are Now

- The system had been showing some improved outcomes prior to COVID-19
- COVID-19 indicates capacity for innovation and rapid response
- Selective generosity and some inclusive and integrated responses (the self-employed, those in direct provision, the ban on evictions)
- Significance for Irish welfare state long-term?
  - The temporary and unique nature of provisions militate against reform
  - The robustness of the Irish welfare system and its capacity to deal with shocks is in doubt

# The Developmental Welfare State Model

- A tripod model comprising: income support, supportive services and community development
- Strengths include the life course/life long programming in it plus also the idea that transitions need supporting, and the focus on skills and retraining
- 3 main requirements/weaknesses:
- A vibrant labour market with career progression and adequate pay and conditions – not clear that Ireland met these conditions even before COVID-19 (growth of precarious jobs)
- A strong infrastructure of training and also supportive services (such as childcare)
- Matthew effects – in that the better off tend to make most use and benefit of public services
- Overall question is whether the conditions are in place to realise a developmental welfare state in Ireland and whether it is the best model

# Four Things that Deserve Special Attention

- 1. Participation income needs to be genuinely considered
- 2. Service provision needs to be considered as an essential part of the Irish welfare state, as important as income support – status quo won't do – services should be seen as a source of quality
- 3. Settlement in private life, regarding care and also gender equality has to be rethought – we need to keep trying to find an equality respecting system that can replace the full-time breadwinner model and the 'economy first' orientation
- 4. Reenvision the objectives and principles of the Irish welfare state – principles of social justice and anti-poverty need to hold court