



Every month we invite a response to our online survey. Our survey for January asked what one thing Government could give you to improve the quality of your family's life. The aim of the survey was to find out what those parenting alone or sharing parenting feel is the most important issue faced by one-parent families in Ireland today.

The Question

"We are at the beginning of 2015 and a year away from an election. If Government was to give you one thing to improve the quality of your family's life, what would it be?"

The Results

The top three highlighted issues were:

- Lack of Childcare
- Housing Costs and Insecurity
- Impacts of Changes to One-Parent Family Payment

Over 30% of respondents named affordable childcare as the one thing their family needed most to improve their quality of life. The reasons behind this need were mainly to support people going back to education or so that parents could work.

"Affordable childcare and flexible, i.e., not always childcare centres - babysitting,

"Nannies, au-pair etc would work out better and cheaper for most."

"As a single parent who is educated and has work experience, I don't need more training. I need affordable, good quality childcare that won't leave me having to rule out full time work because I can't afford childcare."

"It's hard to take up low-paid jobs when you have to pay such expensive childcare."

"Affordable afterschool childcare and support for me to go to college"

It is clear from these responses that the lack of affordable, accessible, quality childcare is still the biggest barrier to people getting into employment or to go back to education or training in order to access better job opportunities.



20% of respondents cited lack of affordable, suitable housing as the main issue affecting their family's quality of life. One respondent labelled the current housing system as "unequitable" and "demeaning".

"My prior experience was that you have to go cap in hand to landlords requesting that they accept rent allowance and at that, the allowance often doesn't cover all of the rent. There could be a better system such as paying the rent allowance to the recipient and letting them go into the housing market with some dignity."

Other respondents on the housing issue spoke about the ability to claim rent allowance and work full time, and about never feeling secure in their tenancy.

"That I'd be entitled to work full time and still claim the rent allowance. Or that I could get a suitable council house - that way I could work also."

"A long-term lease/security for tenants."

10% of respondents expressed concerns over the One-Parent Family Payment changes which will impact in July this year. Many are fearful about how they will manage with substantial reductions in income as they are already under pressure and struggling financially. Others called for raising or abolishing the eligibility age limit of the youngest child – the new criteria state that a claimant's youngest child must be 7 or younger - as they consider it unrealistic.

"Stop the changes to OFP. I stand to lose €70 a week come July because I work full-time."

Comment

It is clear from respondents that there are three major areas of concern facing one-parent families or those sharing parenting in 2015. Other areas of concern included the cost of education, tax credit issues and a feeling of unfair treatment of one-parent families in Ireland today. Respondents reported experiencing a general feeling of disrespect from Government with regard to how they are treated in relation to other members of society. One Family will continue to lobby on these and other issues of major concern to one-parent families in Ireland.