

Understanding and addressing the structural causes of poverty



Paul Ginnell

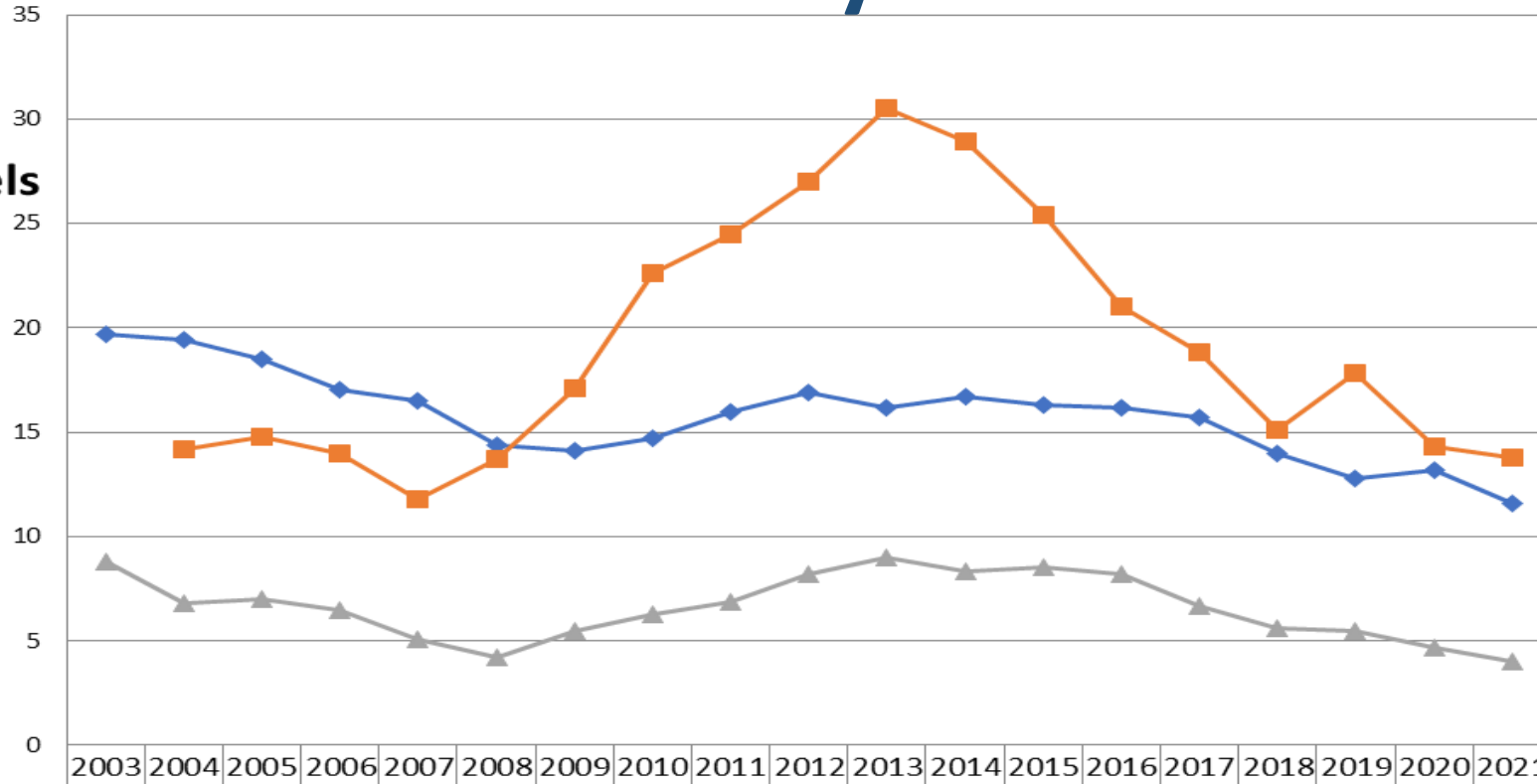
www.eapn.ie

European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland

**IASW Conference
21st October 2022**

Poverty in Ireland

**Poverty Levels
2003-2021**



581,000
people at-
risk of
poverty

691,000
people
experiencing
deprivation

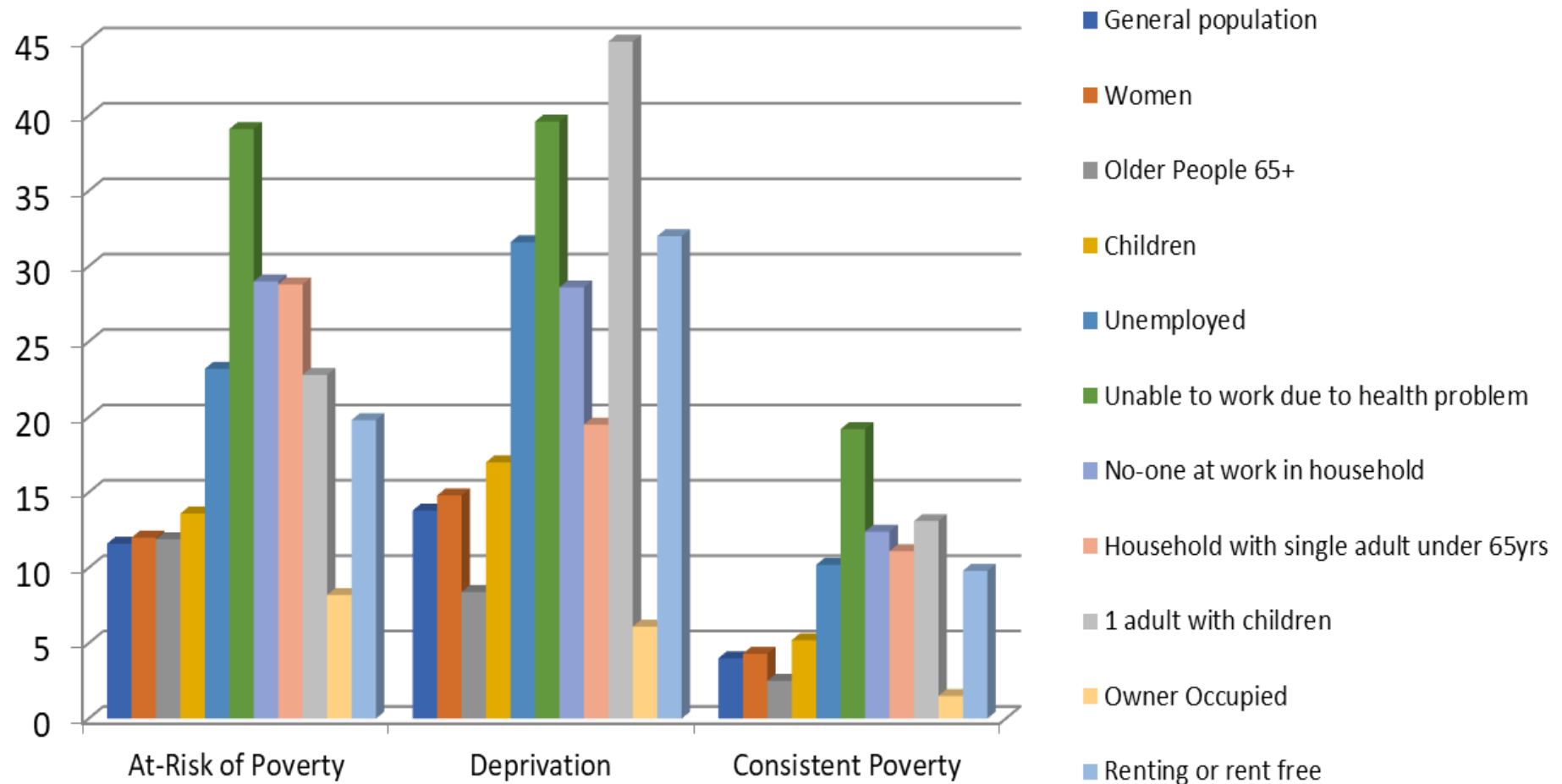
200,400
people in
Consistent
Poverty

Source: CSO Survey of Income and Living Conditions

- Without Covid-19 income supports almost 20% of people would have been at-risk of poverty in 2021.
- **Government Ambition by 2025** Reduce Consistent poverty to 2% or less of the population and make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive States in the EU (ref. Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025)

Poverty experienced differently by different groups in society

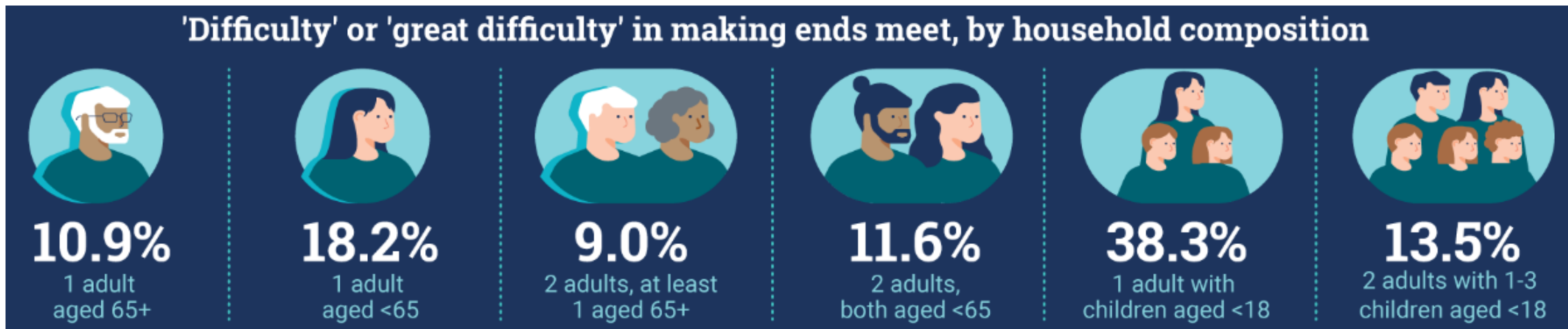
Graph:
Poverty
levels
for selected
groups



Source: CSO Survey of Income and Living Conditions

SILC does not capture poverty for some groups in society e.g. Travellers, migrants, people who are homeless etc

Financial stress



Source: CSO Survey of Income and Living Conditions 2021

Housing



Over **16%** of households paying rent did not pay on time at least once in the past year due to financial difficulties.



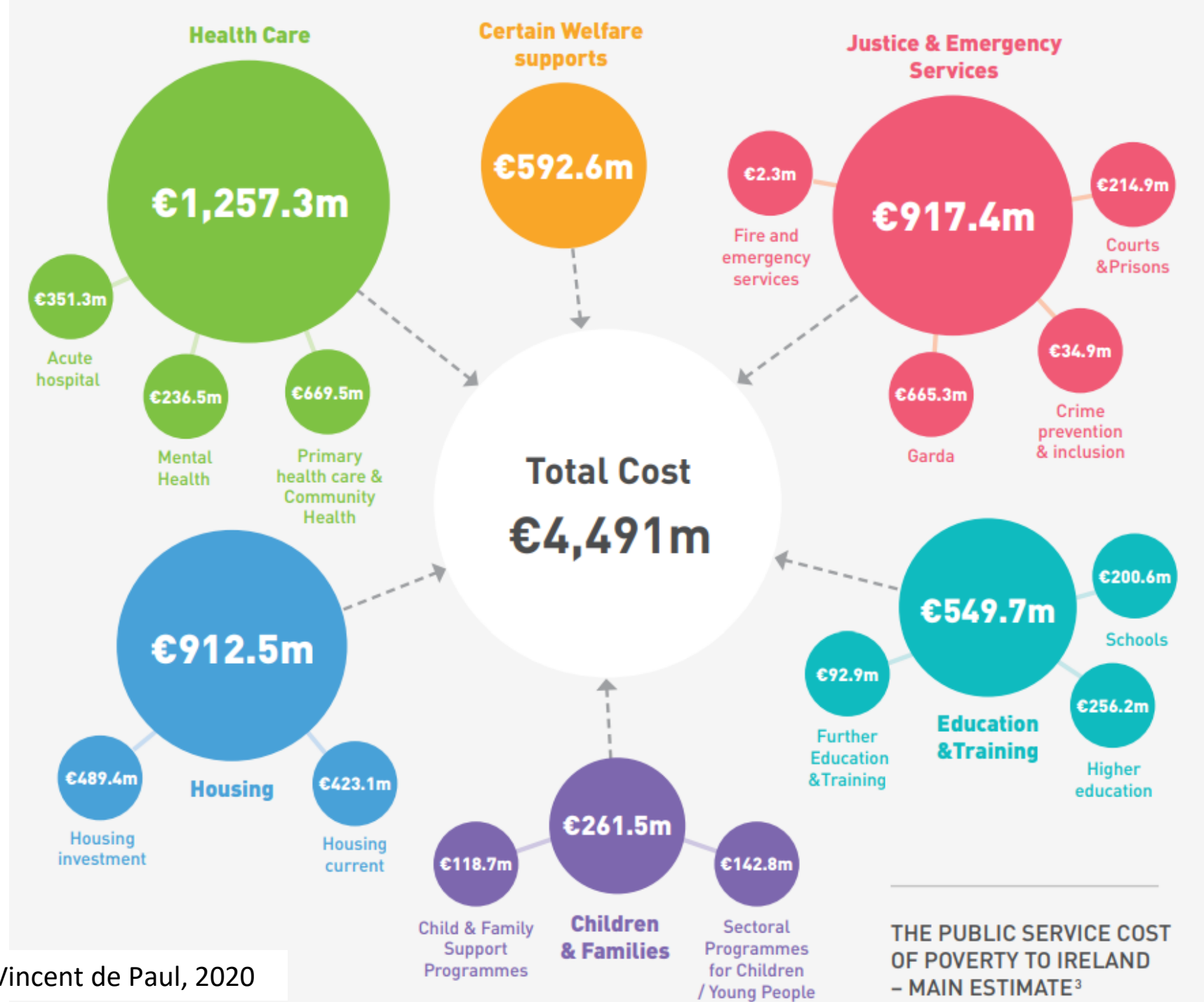
Fuel Poverty
29% in June 2022

Impact



Impact

Public Service Cost



Impact

Trauma

- **Individual**
- **Family**
- **Community**
- **Society**

Impact

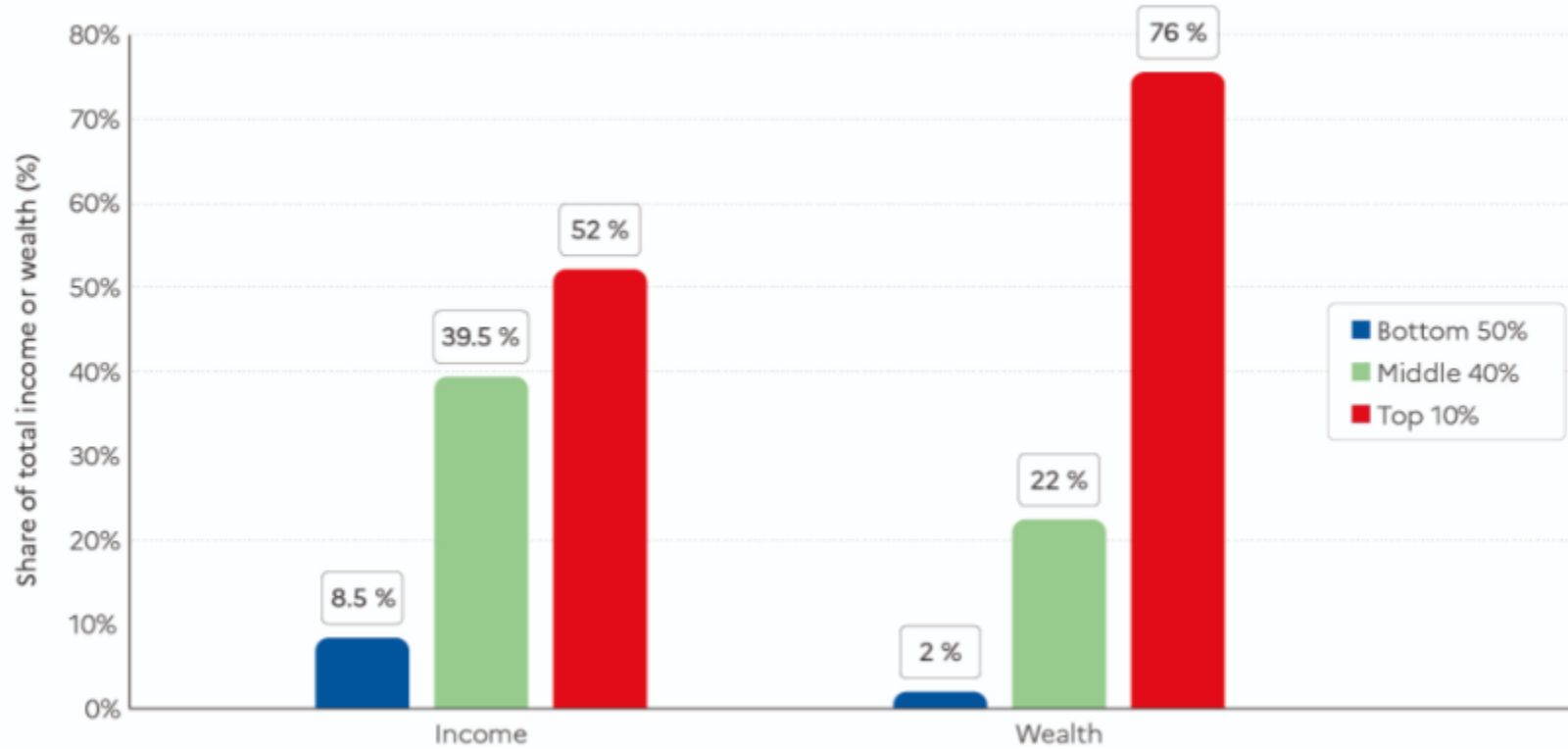
Life Expectancy

Life expectancy at birth 2016/2017	Females	Males
Living in most affluent areas	87.7	84.4
Living in least affluent areas	83.2	79.4

Traveller Life expectancy about 8 years shorter than general population

Economic Inequality

Figure 1 Global income and wealth inequality, 2021



[World Inequality Report 2022](#)

Income Inequality in Ireland

Poorest 20%

9.6% of all
disposable income

x 3.8

Wealthiest 20%

36.5% of all
disposable income

Wealth Inequality in Ireland

CSO statistical publication, 19 May 2022, 11am



An
Phríomh-Oifig
Staidrimh

Central
Statistics
Office

Household Finance and Consumption Survey 2020



Household Net Wealth

Net Wealth Decile:
Net Wealth Threshold:

Net Wealth = Real Assets + Financial Assets – Debt



Bottom 10%
<€600



Bottom 30%
<€58,900



Median
€193,100

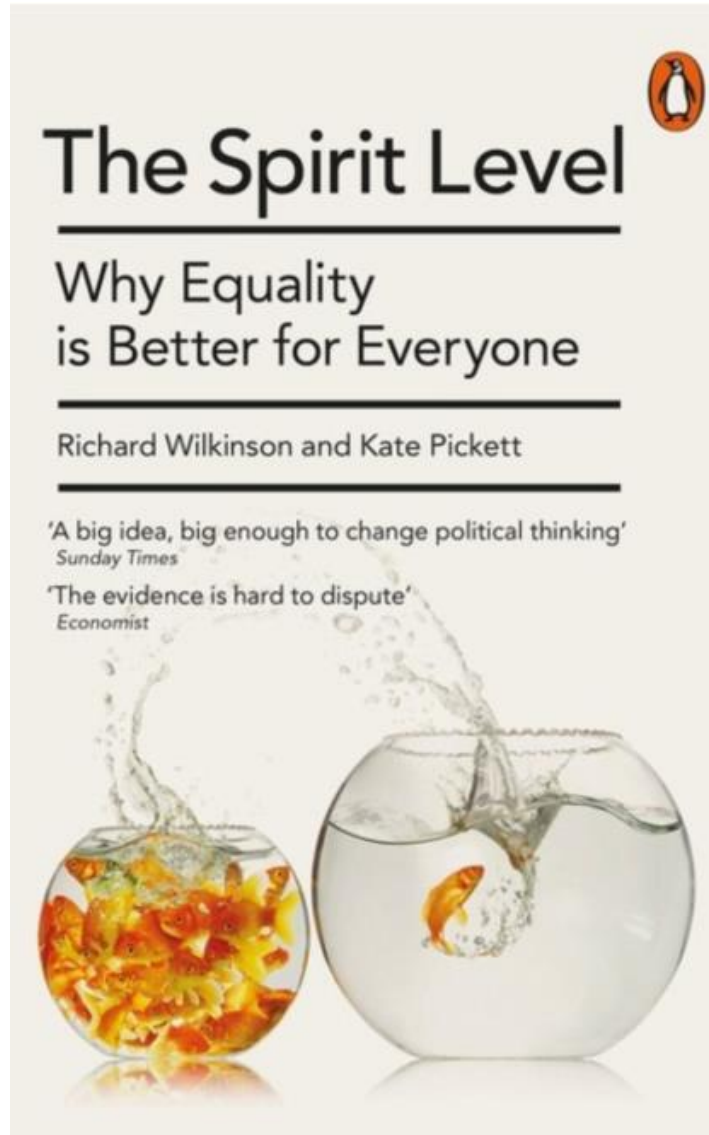


Top 30%
>€359,600



Top 10%
>€788,400

The Impact of Income Inequality



The Spirit Level

Richard Wilkinson and Kate
Pickett, 2009

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqH8rE_c8vk

Solutions

1. Redistribution and investment of income and wealth – Ireland a wealthy low-tax country



2. Adequate incomes to meet the cost of living



3. Investment in quality public services

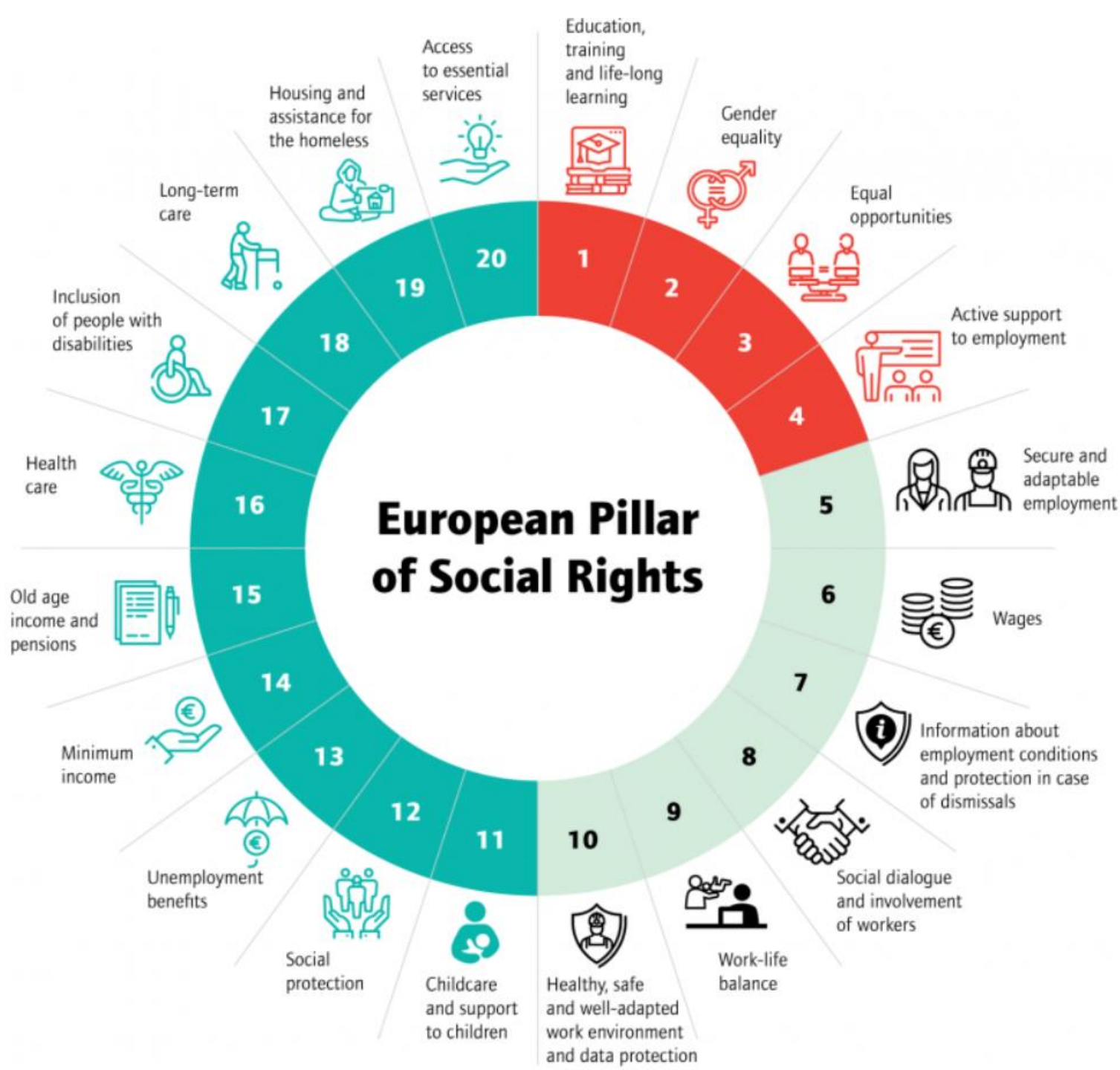


4. Decent jobs



5. Leave no-one behind (Sustainable Development Goals) – tackling discrimination and all forms of inequality

EU Commitments



Target: Reduce by at least 15 million the number of people experiencing poverty or social exclusion by 2030 (must include 5 million children)

UN Commitments

Sustainable Development Goals



Role for Social Workers

- Social workers are powerful witnesses
- Collect evidence and decide how and when to present it
 - what is the story you want to tell?
- Identify structural causes that need to change
 - remember the message of the Spirit Level
- Identify allies