Ireland has the most progressive system of taxes and transfers of any OECD member. Ireland ranks 32 of 34 among OECD members for income inequality before taxes and transfers. Taxation and transfers does more to reduce income inequality than in any other member. However, compared to other OECD countries, Ireland remains moderately unequal after taxes and transfers, ranking 15 of 34 (Figure 13.7).

Chapter 13 – Core government results

Figure 13.7. Differences in household income inequality among the working-age population pre and post-tax and government transfers, 2018

Ireland’s civil service is highly centralised. Ireland has the second most centralised civil service in the OECD, with 91% of government staff employed in central government, and only 9% in sub-national government (Figure 3.3). At least 17 OECD countries employ the majority of their staff in sub-national government.

Chapter 3 – Public employment

Figure 3.3. Distribution of general government employment across levels of government, 2019

Ireland performs well in education services, but should examine issues underlying satisfaction with healthcare. Ireland ranks joint 1st in the OECD on school enrolment at age 4 (Scorecard 1), and score highly on measures of quality of education (Scorecard 3). However, satisfaction with the healthcare system of 66% lags the OECD average of 71% (Figure 14.1).

Chapter 14 – Serving citizens

Figure 14.1. Citizen satisfaction with the healthcare system, 2010 and 2020
Government resources

Government expenditures (2019, 2020) % of GDP

- 25% in 2019
- 41% in 2020
- 25%
- 56%

Source: OECD National Accounts

Government investment (2019, 2020) % of GDP

- 1.3% in 2019
- 2.3% in 2020
- 3.3%
- 6.3%

Source: OECD National Accounts

Fiscal balance (2019, 2020) % of GDP

- 0.5% in 2019
- 2020
- -3.2%
- 0.5%
- 6.6%

Source: OECD National Accounts

Government gross debt (SNA definition, 2019, 2020) % of GDP

- 13% in 2019
- 69%
- 109%
- 73%
- 2019
- 2020
- 13%
- 69%
- 109%
- 227%

Source: OECD National Accounts

Government expenditures by selected functions (2019) % of GDP

- Environmental protection: 0.4%
- Education: 3.1%
- General public services: 5.1%
- Health: 5.4%
- Social protection: 7.9%

Source: OECD National Accounts

General government employment as a % of total employment (2019)

- 14.9%
- 17.9%

Source: OECD National Accounts

Central government workforce by age (2020)

- 18-34: 16% 19%
- 35-54: 58% 55%
- 55+: 27% 26%

Source: OECD Survey on the composition of the workforce in central/federal governments

Share of women in management positions in the central government (2020)

- Senior management: 36% 37%
- Middle management: 43% 48%

Source: OECD Survey on the composition of the workforce in central/federal governments

OECD

Range of OECD country values

N. A. not available
Values have been rounded

Ireland

13.3%

8.9%
## Public governance practices

### Composite indices of public service leadership and capability (2020)
From 0 (worst) to 1 (best)

- Development of a diverse workforce: 0.60
- Policies to manage senior civil servants: 0.49

### Green budgeting tools (2021)

- Ex ante or ex post environmental assessment: YES (12 YES, 2 NO)
- Ex ante or ex post green budget tagging: YES (7 YES, 7 NO)

### Objectives included in infrastructure and public procurement strategies (2020)

- Public procurement strategy includes responsible business conduct objectives on...
  - Environment: N. A.
  - Human rights: N. A.
  - Gender: N. A.
  - Infrastructure strategy includes objectives on...
  - Environment: YES (19 YES, 5 NO)
  - Human rights: NO (5 YES, 19 NO)
  - Gender: NO (7 YES, 17 NO)

### Citizen and stakeholder participation (2020 or 2021)

- Centres of government consulted stakeholders on COVID-19 recovery: YES (18 YES, 8 NO)
- Early consultation in the regulation-making process: NOT SYSTEMATIC (8 SYSTEMATIC, 2 NEVER, 27 NOT SYSTEMATIC)
- Centres of government consulted stakeholders on strategies to manage the COVID-19 crisis: YES (20 YES, 6 NO)
- Central government portal(s) for carrying out online consultations: NO (22 YES, 20 NO)

### Digital government index (2019)
Composite index from 0 (worst) to 1 (best)

- Ireland: 0.51
- OECD: 0.41
Government results

Citizens who express satisfaction with public services (2020)

- Police: 77% (38 - 92%)
- Healthcare: 66% (26 - 93%)
- Education: 76% (27 - 92%)
- Judiciary: 67% (15 - 91%)

Source: Gallup World Poll

Citizens who express trust in public institutions (2020)

- Civil service: 49% (8 - 71%)
- Parliament: 59% (5 - 70%)
- Government: 51% (15 - 85%)

Source: World Justice Project, Rule of Law Index 2020

Citizens who believe they have a say in what government does (2018)

- 40% (15% - 40% - 74%)

Source: Gallup World Poll, World Values Survey and European Values Study.

Income inequality before taxes and post taxes and transfers (GINI index, 2018)

- Maximum inequality: 0.41 (0.31 - 0.48)
- Minimum inequality: 0.29 (0.23 - 0.46)

Source: OECD Income Distribution Database

Figure notes

- Data on Public finance and economics, which are based on the System of National Accounts (SNA), were extracted on 11 May 2021 and data on General government employment were extracted on 12 April 2021. The range of country values refers to year 2019.
- Fiscal balance as reported in SNA framework, also referred to as net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) of government, is calculated as total government revenues minus total government expenditures.
- Government gross debt is regarded according to the SNA definition, which differs from the definition applied under the Maastricht Treaty. It is defined as all liabilities that require payment or payments of interest or principal by the debtor to the creditor at a date or dates in the future. All debt instruments are liabilities, but some liabilities such as shares, equity and financial derivatives are not debt.
- The range of country values for the central government workforce by age refers to the 18-34 group.
- Data on trust in the civil service and parliament are 2018 for most countries.
- The range of country values for share of women in management positions in the central government refers to senior management.
- Citizens who express satisfaction with public services for the judiciary and the police, the data reflect the proportion of citizens who express having confidence in the institutions.
- The range of country values for income inequality before taxes and post taxes and transfers refers to GINI after taxes and transfers for the working age population.

Government at a Glance 2021

Published every two years, Government at a Glance provides reliable, internationally comparable indicators on government activities and their results in OECD countries.

The 2021 edition includes input indicators on public finance and employment; while processes include data on institutions, budgeting practices and procedures, human resources management, regulatory governance, public procurement, the governance of infrastructure, public sector integrity, open government and digital government. Outcomes cover core government results (e.g. trust, political efficacy, inequality reduction) and indicators on access, responsiveness, quality and citizen satisfaction for the education, health and justice sectors. Governance indicators are especially useful for monitoring and benchmarking governments’ progress in their public sector reforms.

Each indicator in the publication is presented in a user-friendly format, consisting of graphs and/or charts illustrating variations across countries and over time, brief descriptive analyses highlighting the major findings conveyed by the data, and a methodological section on the definition of the indicator and any limitations in data comparability.

The Excel spreadsheets used to create the tables and figures in Government at a Glance 2021 are available via the StatLinks provided throughout the publication: https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en

For more information on the data (including full methodology and figure notes) and to consult all other Country Fact Sheets: www.oecd.org/gov/govataglance.htm