

I welcome this process but would prefer if decisions such as these were based on independent economic analyses and detailed social analysis of such decisions. Minimum wage workers need to be a formal part of this process. All independent analyses shows that erosion of wages to levels where workers experience the effects of poverty increases the cost to the state, reduces economic activity through reduced consumerism, increases social tension and reduces money supply in the economy as employers seek to reduce tax costs through various schemes. Sadly, based on past trends it seems lobbying elements such as IBEC wield far more power in deciding minimum wage rates than the people actually effected by them. Without any transparency over how decisions are made, I would doubt the power of this process.

Should the minimum wage be increased?

Of course. The rising costs of an unregulated housing sector, increasing costs of utilities which have been privatised (electricity, telecoms and refuse in particular) increases in indirect taxation and the proliferation of a culture of precarious work offered by employers means those earning €9.55 an hour (the vast majority of the jobs that have been created since 2008), together with hostile processes of state aid from the likes of Seetac and Turas Nua mean people are being pushed into extremes of poverty.

Simply put, minimum wage workers do some of the most difficult and essential work in any economy, yet receive the least return from their physical labour. In the years since the mortgage-fueled economic collapse of 2008, wage stagnation and reduction in state services has been followed in parallel by more millionaires being created from 2008 - 2017 than in the previous 100 years of the state. Levels of extreme poverty, destitution and homelessness have risen accordingly. It seems a very low minimum wage is very good for business. If the government feels it necessary to set a minimum wage, I believe it is well past time to begin the discussion on setting a maximum wage as well as legislation making reinvestment of profits a legal requirement rather than offshoring and financial speculation.

What should the wage be? I'll resist the temptation David Drumm faced when he "picked figures from his arse", to quote the man directly. The wage should be set to a level so as to drastically reduce Ireland's outrageous level of income inequality and protect human beings from the brutality of poverty. The wage should be linked to profits generated in each individual business through the labour of minimum wage workers, indexed both to inflation and cost of living metrics so we can stop having this discussion. Or do nothing and keep pooling money upwards, where it is not invested and continue to shrink the economy. I'm pretty sure having gone through 10 years of austerity what choice will be taken, but it was nice of you to ask my opinion.

Kind regards,

