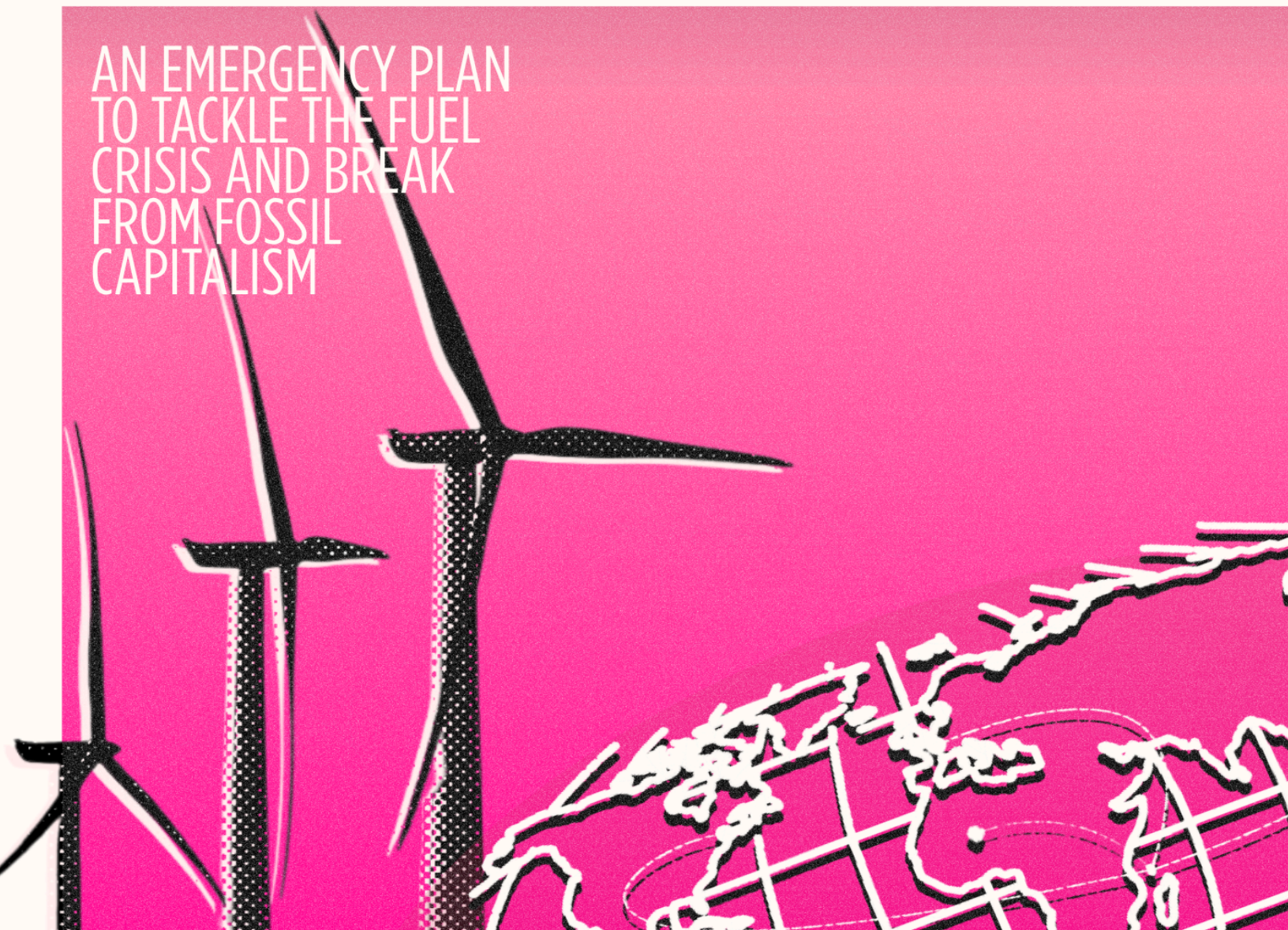


CUT COSTS NOT LIVING STANDARDS

AN EMERGENCY PLAN
TO TACKLE THE FUEL
CRISIS AND BREAK
FROM FOSSIL
CAPITALISM



Executive Summary

To address the cost of energy crisis facing households People Before Profit is proposing a radical plan to:

- Cap electricity prices at 25 cent per unit and gas at 8 cent per unit
- Cap the price of home heating oil at €1 per litre, and establish a rebate scheme to compensate retailers for price differentials with wholesale costs
- Cap the price of petrol and diesel at €1.75 per litre and green and white diesel at €1 per litre
- Introduce a windfall tax on the profits of energy and fuel companies to fund cost measures on fuel and energy
- Provide a universal €500 energy credit funded by a levy on data centres
- Introduce Free and Frequent Public Transport
- Introduce a legal right to remote working
- Abolish the carbon tax and tax the big polluters
- Pay an emergency disability payment
- Pay a double week to those on social welfare and pensions
- Nationalise the energy sector to control costs and drive the transition to renewable energy
- A major step up on retrofitting to cut energy bills
- A major investigation into price gouging by energy providers

Introduction

Many households are experiencing a severe and intensifying cost of living crisis. Prices of goods and services have increased by more than 24% since the Covid pandemic¹, and inflation overall has increased by 2.7% from February 2025 to February 2026². There are already indications inflation will be higher in March.

Trump's and Israel's coordinated attacks in the Middle East have not only killed innocent people but also driven up the cost of fuel, which is having a huge impact on households across the country. The Irish government has been complicit in America's aggression by allowing them to use Shannon Airport as a military base to refuel war planes before sending them on to commit war crimes. It will not take any real action to kick the US military out of Shannon, or sanction them, or implement any kind of appropriate cost of living supports for the people of Ireland to cope with increasing costs of living due to American aggression.

A significant reason for rising costs of living is rapidly increasing energy costs. Household electricity costs have gone up by 71% and almost doubled for gas since 2020³. Over the past five years, this has resulted in many more families having to choose between feeding themselves or paying for electricity and heating.

Almost 320,000 households are in arrears on their electricity. Over 50,000 more customers were in energy arrears at the end of 2025 than in December 2024. A total of 26% of all domestic gas customers were in arrears in December last year, with 14% of electricity customers unable to pay part or all of their bill. The average electricity arrears is €466, which has increased from €292 in 2021. At the same time almost one third of households are living in energy poverty.

While many households are clearly struggling the government chose to remove cost of living supports from households in the last budget. Instead they gave tax breaks to developers and fast food giants at a full year cost of over €1.2 billion. The result of this was to drive many more households into poverty and reduce the incomes of the poorest households⁴. It is estimated that disabled people lost up to €1,400⁵ due to cuts in cost of living support payments. The same pattern is being repeated now with the government

¹ CSO, 'CPI Inflation Calculator', <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/cpicalculator>

² CSO, 'Consumer Price Index February 2026', <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpi/consumerpriceindexfebruary2026/>

³ Money Guide Ireland (2026), 'How Much is the Average Electricity Bill in Ireland?', <https://www.moneyguideireland.com/much-average-electricity-bill.html>

⁴ Parliamentary Budget Office (2025), 'Budget 2026 Flash Impact Analysis', https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/parliamentaryBudgetOffice/2025/2025-10-07_budget-2026-flash-impact-analysis_en.pdf

⁵ Irish Wheelchair Association, 'IWA calls for Emergency Winter Payment', <https://www.iwa.ie/iwa-calls-for-emergency-winter-payment/>

giving most to their friends in the haulage industry while households relying on heating oil get almost nothing.

It is not acceptable that in one of the richest countries in the world with large budget surpluses that households have to choose between heating and eating.

The current crisis has also exposed our reliance on fossil fuels and the failure to reduce emissions across the board. We can no longer rely on a market-driven approach to drive the transition to renewable energy and the implementation of major energy-saving measures such as retrofitting.

Reliance on the market economy to set the price of energy means that the end consumer has no real alternative to energy sources and that they must accept the price set by energy companies. To address this, we introduced an Emergency Price Controls Bill in May 2024 to set the maximum price for petrol, diesel, natural gas, electricity and heating oil in order to provide price stability and safeguard the people from huge price increases. This bill could be enacted as a matter of emergency if the government is willing to help the people with increasing costs of energy.

The cost of energy has been increasing due to geopolitical events, like wars in Ukraine and Iran, but also as a result of profiteering by energy companies. Despite the availability of legislative measures and over €12 billion in budget surplus in 2025, the government has done very little to help people with increasing cost of living pressures. Indeed, budget cuts have made the situation significantly worse for many households

In this radical plan to reduce the cost of energy we outline measures that will help to reduce energy costs immediately, as well as in the long term, to improve living standards for all. We also provide costings for our proposals in the appendix.

Energy Costs

The price of electricity that consumers pay is three times higher than what it costs energy companies to buy from the wholesale market, which is the largest gap in the EU. Irish electricity prices are the 3rd most expensive in Europe⁶ and 24% higher than the EU

⁶ Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2025), 'National Energy Affordability Taskforce - Interim Report', https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/cb7653ef/National_Energy_Affordability_Taskforce_Interim_Report_2025.pdf

average⁷. This is largely the consequence of profiteering by energy companies that increase prices when costs go up but are reluctant to reduce them when costs go down.

While many struggle as a result, the government has been largely indifferent to surging energy costs. The recent energy support package of measures is completely inadequate.

People Before Profit proposes the following actions on electricity and gas costs:

1. Cap electricity prices at 25 cent per unit and gas at 8 cent per unit by enacting People Before Profit's Emergency Price Controls Bill
2. A €500 universal electricity credit funded by an energy levy on data centres. Data centres consume more electricity than all homes in the State and pay half what households pay for electricity; increasing their charges per unit to the average paid by households or levying the equivalent amount on them as a tax would fully fund this credit for all households
3. Invest €5 billion in a rapid rollout of state-owned renewable energy for household and public use
4. Invest €1 billion in a Climate Action Service to provide free retrofitting and solar panels to households in order to reduce household costs by €750 – €1,120 per year and cut energy bills by at least 50%
5. Abolish standing charges for electricity and gas and the Carbon Tax

Fuel Costs and Use

Ireland imports all of its oil requirements at prices determined by global markets. Therefore, geopolitical events like US and Israel's illegal attacks on Iran have disrupted oil supply and increased the price of fuel and heating oil.

Latest figures in March 2026 show an average price of a litre of petrol at €1.81 and diesel at €1.90, which is an increase of 8 cents and 18 cents respectively since February 2026⁸. Even before the Government announced the excise cuts, diesel had reached more than €2.30 per litre at many pumps, while petrol was costing around €2 per litre in many locations. Based on this, it would be reasonable to say diesel jumped by around 60 cent a litre, and petrol went up by roughly 30 cent a litre⁹. In the same period the cost of home heating oil almost doubled going from €0.99 per litre in

⁷ Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, 'Energy price trends', <https://www.seai.ie/data-and-insights/seai-statistics/prices>

⁸ AA, 'Irish Fuel Prices: March 2026', <https://www.theaa.ie/aa-membership/fuel-prices/>

⁹ RTE, 'Do allegations of fuel price gouging stack up?', <https://www.rte.ie/news/clarity/2026/0404/1566651-clarity-fuel-prices>

February to €1.76 per litre in March¹⁰. This is particularly troubling since up to 700,000 households still use heating oil.

Over half of heating oil and fuel price is made up of taxes, levies and charges, like the regressive carbon tax. To reduce the price of fuel in late March 2026, the government cut the excise per litre of diesel by 20 cents and petrol by 15 cents, as well as tax on Marked Gas Oil by 3 cents per litre. On top of that, the government is reducing the National Oil Reserve Agency levy on fuel to ease the financial impact of energy price inflation. All these measures are temporary and relatively insignificant if future prices of fuel continue to increase. Furthermore, the measures as applied to home heating oil are completely inadequate.

The reality is that the failure of the state to wean itself off fossil fuels has left many totally dependent and without any real choices as to how to move around or heat their homes.

In the context of the current crisis and the need to reduce fuel use, Ireland should follow other countries in implementing measures to make public transport more accessible for all and ultimately free. We also believe that workers should not be required to travel to work if their job can be done remotely, and thereby saving travel time, environment, and travel costs. Therefore, we believe that a legal right to remote working should be introduced.

People Before Profit therefore proposes the following actions on fuel costs:

1. Set the maximum price of petrol and diesel at €1.75 per litre at the pump. This could be achieved by adjusting taxes on fuel while ensuring that supply continues and there is no profiteering by fuel companies
2. Cap the maximum price of green diesel at €1 per litre
3. Cap the price of home heating oil at €1 per litre, and establish a rebate scheme to compensate retailers for price differentials with wholesale costs. Immediate measures to reduce prices include reduction of VAT to 9% as applied to electricity and abolish the Carbon Tax
4. Fares should be abolished completely to promote fuel conservation and to cut transport costs
5. Immediately introduce a legal right to remote working, where possible, so that workers can reduce their fuel costs by working from home

¹⁰ OilPrices.ie, 'Heating Oil Prices in Ireland (500 Litres)', <https://www.oilprices.ie/>

6. Oppose the diesel rebate scheme increase and backdating it to 1st January 2026, because hauliers are already benefiting from excise cuts on diesel and petrol and should not be compensated more than ordinary workers who are not having their excise cuts backdated or extended

Price Gouging

Many are bewildered at the rate at which prices have gone up in recent weeks particularly the cost of home heating oil. They believe there is price gouging with energy companies making very high profits as result of this crisis and others that have come before it. This is not against the law and retailers are free to set and change their prices as they wish as long as they do not engage in anti-competitive practices.

The public do not have confidence that price reductions are passed on as rapidly as price increases. What is not clear is how quickly any increases or decreases in wholesale costs are passed onto motorists.

We need a transparent system for ensuring that price gouging is not taking place. Energy providers should have to demonstrate that price reductions are passed on and that increases are justified on the basis of movements on the wholesale market. Our demand is that companies are forced to open their books and fully justify any and all price increases. We would therefore expand the remit of the Commission for Regulation of Utilities to investigate petrol and diesel prices at the pumps for price gouging and profiteering. It should also have power to regulate the operation of the home heating oil market.

Other Cost of Energy Measures

The cost of energy crisis cannot be isolated from more increases in prices facing households. Incomes need to rise to match rising prices. Budget 2026 offered miserly increases to those on social welfare and pensions. Therefore, the following actions should be taken immediately to address the cost of living crisis:

1. €400 emergency payment for disabled people and carers to assist with increasing costs of living
2. Pay a double week for benefits and pensions
3. Pay a double child benefit payment

Conclusion

Sudden energy price increases have once again highlighted the flaws in the system that prioritises profiteering by private energy companies. Reliance on energy from imported fossil fuels and lack of direct investment in renewable energy means that the government has failed to ensure that energy prices are low and stable, and that we are rapidly transitioning to 100% renewable energy. Instead, the government continues to encourage the construction of energy-guzzling data centres, which consume 22% of all metered electricity, and drive-up electricity prices for all households while bringing us closer to the brink of electricity blackouts.

Although we want to introduce price controls on energy as a matter of emergency, we also understand that introducing price controls while leaving the energy market in private hands will result in subsidising private energy companies. Therefore, we propose to complement price caps on energy with renationalisation of the energy sector. A key element of this will be reversing the mandate of the ESB so that it operates on a not-for-profit basis. We need to significantly increase state investment to drive the renewable energy transition and to tackle the cost of living crisis by guaranteeing affordable power to all households.

Appendix

Cost of proposals:

Action	Cost
Cap on electricity price at 25 cent per unit for households	€900 million absorbed by profits of energy companies and data centres paying the same price as households
Cap on gas price at 8 cent per unit for households	€133 million absorbed by profits of energy companies
€500 universal electricity credit	€1.15 billion funded by a levy on data centres
Investments in renewable energy (€5 billion), Climate Action Service (€1 billion)	Funded by current expenditure and savings in the Future Ireland Fund
Abolish standing charges for electricity and gas for households	€720 million absorbed by profits of energy companies and big business consumers

