



# Budget 2007

**What the Budget  
means for  
Northern Ireland**



March 2007



HM TREASURY





# Budget 2007

## Building Britain's long-term future: Prosperity and fairness for families



The Government's economic objective is to build a strong economy and a fair society, where there is opportunity and security for all. Budget 2007 sets out how the Government is working to achieve this goal, building on a platform of stability and sustained growth to ensure the UK can continue to succeed in the increasingly competitive global economy. This leaflet outlines the Government's regional economic policy and sets out what the Budget means for Northern Ireland.

## Maintaining a stable economy

The world economy is expected to remain strong in 2007. Economic growth in the UK has been driven by further increases in UK business investment, as well as a recovery in the growth of the major European and Asian economies to which the UK exports. The Government's economic reforms have continued to help the UK maintain macroeconomic stability throughout this period. The Budget shows that:

- **the economy is expected to grow by 2¾ to 3¼ per cent in 2007**, and by 2½ to 3 percent in 2008 and 2009, as forecast in the Pre-Budget Report;
- **inflation is set to remain low and stable**; and
- **the public finances remain sound** and the Government is on track to meet its fiscal rules, with borrowing forecast to be £35 billion in 2006-07 and debt lower than in the US, Japan, Italy, France and Germany.

## Devolved decision making

The Government believes the best way to improve the productivity of the countries and regions of the UK and to overcome regional disparities in economic performance is to allow each country and region the freedom and flexibility to exploit local sources of growth.

The Government is promoting economic growth, full employment and prosperity for all the people of Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland



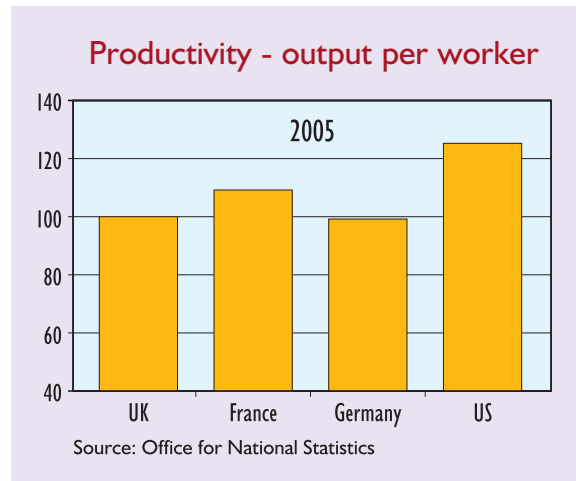


Departments are working with their business economic partner bodies to encourage development in Northern Ireland, supporting employment, entrepreneurship, innovation, skills and regeneration. The Government has published its *Northern Ireland draft regional economic strategy*, focusing particularly on the private sector.

## Promoting enterprise, innovation and skills

Britain has high employment levels but the amount of output produced per worker – productivity – has historically been lower than in other major economies. Britain's relative performance has been improving in recent years, with productivity now higher than Germany and moving close to France.

A flexible, enterprising and high-skilled economy will help deliver faster productivity growth and ensure the UK is well-placed to prosper in the global economy. The Government recognises there are significant regional differences in productivity. In 2005, Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in Northern Ireland was 20 per cent below the UK average. The Budget announces new measures to improve productivity, although it will be for the Northern Ireland Departments to make decisions in devolved areas of policy:



- **major reforms to the corporate tax system**, including a reduction in the headline corporation tax rate from 30 per cent to 28 per cent from April 2008 and a series of reforms to simplify the capital allowance system;
- **further enhancements to research and development tax credits**, to encourage innovation, extending support to firms and building on the 105 tax credit claims already made in Northern Ireland;
- **an increase in the tax rate for small companies to tackle individuals artificially incorporating to minimise tax;**





- **a Northern Ireland Innovation Fund is to be established**, strengthening the science base; and
- **reforms to reduce the regulatory burden on business**, including tackling business' concerns about the burden of workplace dispute resolution, potentially of benefit to the 115,000 businesses in Northern Ireland.

## Building a fairer society

The Government's aim is to build a fairer society in which everyone can contribute to and share in rising national prosperity. The Government is committed to tackling child and pensioner poverty, providing support for families with children and ensuring security for all in old age. It is also creating a modern and fair tax system which raises sufficient revenue for public services and ensures that everyone pays their fair share of tax. Budget 2007 announces the next stage in the Government's reforms to simplify the tax system, to support pensioners, support families and make work pay. The Government will:

- **remove the 10 pence starting rate of income tax and cut the basic rate of income tax from 22 pence to 20 pence from April 2008**. This will benefit around 500,000 households in Northern Ireland;
- **align the tax and national insurance systems**, raising both the point up to which people pay a higher rate of national insurance and the point at which people start paying higher rate tax, aligning them together in April 2009;
- further **increase the child element of the Child Tax Credit by £150 a year** to help families with children, of potential benefit to the 76,000 families receiving Child Tax Credit in Northern Ireland, and **raise the point below which people receive Working Tax Credits by £1,200** to help make work pay;
- **increase the annual Individual Savings Account investment limit from April 2008 to £7,200**, of which £3,600 can be held in cash;
- **modernise the tax system through further reforms**; and introduce a number of measures to tackle tax fraud and avoidance;
- **raise the point at which people aged 65 and over start to pay income tax by £1,180 in April 2008**, thereby taking 10,000 over-65s out of tax in Northern Ireland. By April 2011 no pensioner aged 75 or over will pay any tax on income under £10,000;
- **introduce measures to support the third sector** including £80 million in grants for community organisations; and





- **freeze spirit duties and increase all other alcohol and tobacco duties, in line with inflation.**

## Employment opportunity for all

The Government's long-term goal is employment opportunity for all. It aims to promote a dynamic and flexible labour market in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Since 1997, employment has risen by 12.8 per cent in Northern Ireland and unemployment has fallen by 41.4 per cent.

Introduced in April 2003, the Working Tax Credit helps to make work pay for people on low incomes. By December 2006 tax credits were helping around 200,000 families in Northern Ireland. The adult rate of the National Minimum Wage will rise to £5.52 per hour from October 2007, benefiting around 40,000 people on the minimum wage in Northern Ireland. The Government is now taking further steps to deliver higher employment across the country, by:

- **introducing a four-week run-on in entitlement to Working Tax Credits,** reducing overpayments and easing the transition from tax credits to benefits.





## High quality public services

The Government is committed to providing new investment in Britain's public services. Spending on public services will be £61 billion higher by 2007-08 compared with 2004-05. The Government is determined to secure value for money for the taxpayer and is on track to achieve efficiency savings of over £21 billion by 2007-08, including a reduction of more than 80,000 civil service administrative posts.

The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will set out the Government's spending plans and priorities from 2008-09 to 2010-11 and will identify what investment and reforms are needed to equip the UK for the future. Over the CSR period, the new ambition of 3 per cent value for money savings per year across central and local government will enable the Government to improve further front-line services. This Budget announces:

- **an additional £607 million for Northern Ireland Departments**, as a consequence of spending increases announced for Government departments.
- **a further £86 million to strengthen the fight against terrorism.**

## Protecting the environment

The Government believes that economic prosperity must be achieved while protecting the environment to ensure a better quality of life for current and future generations. In particular, the Government is committed to playing a leading role in tackling the global challenges of climate change. It is also committed to improving the local environment in the UK's towns, cities and rural areas and to promoting an efficient and environmentally sustainable transport system. Budget 2007 announces:

- **an increase in fuel duty rates of 2 pence per litre from 1 October 2007** and a pre-announcement of rates for the following 2 years;
- **increases in car Vehicle Excise Duty rates** including raising rates for the most polluting cars and reducing rates for the cleanest cars;
- from 1 October 2007 purchasers of **new zero-carbon homes costing up to £500,000 will pay no stamp duty**;
- measures to help **householders take cost effective action to improve the energy efficiency performance of their homes**;



- **an increase in the standard rate of landfill tax by £8 per tonne per year** from 1 April 2008;
- **an inflation only increase in the Climate Change Levy from April 2008**, to encourage energy efficiency in the business sector; and
- **£800 million allocated to the environmental transformation fund** to finance overseas development projects.

## Household income

- In the UK a single earner couple with two children earning £27,000 a year – the median for full time workers – will be, as a result of this Budget's personal tax and benefit measures, around £500 a year better off in real terms by April 2009.
- As a result of personal tax and benefit measures introduced since 1997, by April 2009, families in Northern Ireland will be, on average, £1,450 better off. Moreover, in Northern Ireland families with children will be, on average, £2,400 a year better off in real terms, while those in the poorest fifth of the population are, on average, £4,350 a year better off.

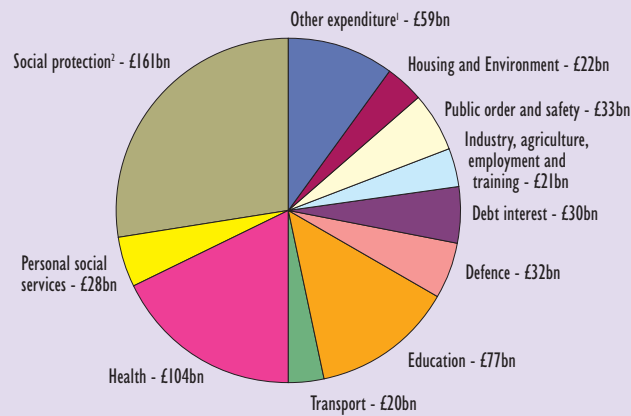




## Where taxpayers' money is spent

Total UK public spending is expected to be around £587 billion for the coming year, around £9,650 for every man, woman and child in the UK. It is set to rise to £615 billion in 2008-09, £644 billion in 2009-10 and £674 billion in 2010-11. It includes spending by the Devolved Administrations.

### Where taxpayers' money is spent



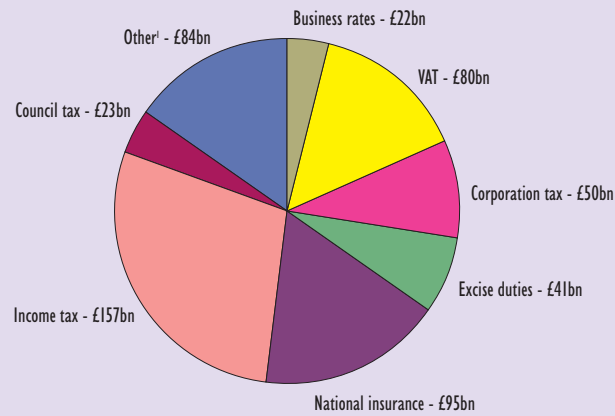
**Total managed expenditure -**  
**£587 billion**

<sup>1</sup> Other expenditure includes spending on general public services; recreation, culture, media and sport, international co-operation and development; public service pensions; plus spending yet to be allocated and some accounting adjustments.

<sup>2</sup> Social protection includes tax credit payments in excess of an individual's tax liability.

Source: HM Treasury, 2007-08 near cash projections. Figures may not sum to total due to rounding.

### Where taxes come from



**Total receipts -**  
**£553 billion**

<sup>1</sup> Other includes capital taxes, stamp duties, vehicle excise duties, and some other tax and non-tax receipts (e.g. interest and dividends).

Source: HM Treasury, 2007-08 projections. Figures may not sum to total due to rounding.

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