

# MANIFESTO

## 2020



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## FOREWORD

Labour has a vision of how Ireland can be more like other European countries that have built enough homes and provided good quality healthcare for all. We want Ireland to be like countries that have reliable public transport, excellent schools and strong rights for people at work.

Ireland can be in the top ten countries for quality public services, climate action and genuine equality, if we choose it. These countries are also more productive and highly entrepreneurial. But first of all we need to stop wasting the people's money, so that we can make the necessary strategic investments to build an equal society.

Labour wants to build homes, fix health and provide better pay and job security. Labour is committed to a fair start for every child, better work-life balance and to socially just climate policies that benefit everyone, not just the wealthy.

Our candidates bring a mix of new talent and experience. They are all hard-working and rooted in their communities. If elected to serve, every Labour TD will give us a stronger voice to build a progressive society for our children.

*Building an Equal Society* sets out Labour's vision for Ireland. It sets out what Labour will do, if we have the power to do it. But Labour's ability to do any of these things will be limited by our level of support in the next Dáil.

That is why it is so important for you to vote Labour on 8th February.

Let's end the waste of public money, build homes and fix health.

In solidarity,



**Brendan Howlin**  
**Leader of the Labour Party**

## LABOUR'S VISION FOR IRELAND IN 2030

When the Labour Party was formed in 1912, most working people and women generally did not have the right to vote, and poverty and hardship were widespread. The country was run for the benefit of the wealthy few. We have come a long way since then, although there is still a large and growing wealth gap between rich and poor. Ireland is now a prosperous country. Most people's quality of life is better than it was for previous generations. We are living longer, young people have many more opportunities, and the economy now provides 2.3 million jobs.

But despite these positive developments, we still face major challenges:

- Nearly a quarter of workers are on **low pay**, and too many **jobs are insecure**.
- Around 10,500 people are **homeless**, including nearly 4,000 children, and **housing is too expensive** for people earning an ordinary wage who rent or who are trying to buy a home.
- Many people are not getting the **medical care** they need due to **long waiting lists** and **overcrowding**.
- Our economy produces too much **pollution** and **waste**, including greenhouse gases that are causing **climate change**.
- One in every ten children are being brought up in **consistent poverty**.

Labour's vision for 2030 is Ireland as an equal society, in which:

- All workers are paid no less than the **living wage hourly rate** and have **job security**.
- The **homeless crisis** is solved and enough **homes are being built** that people can afford.
- **Local primary care health centres are fully staffed** and equipped to provide a wide range of health and disability services at local level, cutting out the overcrowding and long waits in the health system.
- **Greenhouse gas emissions are cut in half** through clean public transport, warm well-insulated homes, electric vehicles in rural Ireland and the creation of new, decent sustainable jobs.
- **Every child has a fair start in life** and children of all backgrounds are fully included.

For 108 years, Labour has made Ireland a fairer society, and we will continue to fight to achieve equality and justice.

## LABOUR'S CORE POLICIES

### HOUSING HEALTHCARE WORK CHILDREN CLIMATE

Labour will not support any party to form a government, including from the opposition benches, unless as a minimum they agree to implement Labour's core policy proposals.

#### 1. WE'LL BUILD HOMES

Reliance on the private housing market has failed. Labour's immediate proposal to end the housing crisis is to freeze and cap rents until enough homes are built. At the same time, Labour will direct state agencies to build 80,000 homes on public land over the next five years ensuring adequate services, transport and jobs alongside new housing.

##### STOP FINE GAEL WASTE

Fine Gael are allocating over €700 million every year to private landlords to house people, rather than building public housing. That is bad value for money.

Fine Gael has wasted the opportunity to push the market to build homes that people can afford. It is more profitable to build expensive student accommodation, hotels or "co-living" units for professionals. Under Fine Gael, vulture funds have bought up entire housing estates so that they can be rented out, which means that local people don't have the opportunity to buy a home.

**Labour will change the tax treatment of property development so that investors have the incentive to build homes that people can afford.**

##### CONTROLLING RENT LEVELS

So many people are struggling to pay their rent or simply can't find an affordable place to live. Adult children are living with their parents, people are spending more time commuting, and even people in good jobs are struggling to save a deposit to buy their own home.

Labour's proposal is to introduce **stronger rent control**. At least 14 OECD countries have some form of rent control, including several states in the USA. Ireland's current model of rent control is not working: Fine Gael had permitted rents to go up 4% every year in so-called "Rent Pressure Zones". People's wages are not going

up 4%, so Fine Gael's approach allows rents to take more and more of people's take home pay. Outside of Rent Pressure Zones, rents are rising even faster than 4%, and all Fine Gael does in response is to create new Pressure Zones.

Labour froze rents in the past by forbidding landlords to raise rents for two years after a contract was signed. This can be done again.

**Labour will freeze rents** for a longer period, to give people certainty and to allow time for more homes to be built. Rents are at an all-time high, so landlords can afford to accept a rent freeze.

**Labour will introduce rent caps** for a limited period until the housing crisis is solved. Several countries, and specific cities, set maximum rents. Rents are set based on the size, type and quality of homes. We already have the data on house valuations from Local Property Tax, the Property Price Register and the Residential Tenancies Board. Using this information, we can set maximum rents area by area.

##### BUILD HOMES

Nearly 70,000 households – 44% with children – are on the housing waiting lists for council housing/social housing, and nearly half of them have been waiting for over four years. Many more people are over the threshold to be on the social housing list, but they don't earn enough to buy a home at today's prices.

Labour's solution to the housing crisis is for the State and public agencies to build 80,000 social homes and affordable homes. This will be the next generation of high quality, energy efficient public housing. Labour will develop a public housing model to permanently address affordability and to include those currently above the income thresholds for social housing. Across Europe, up to a third of people



enjoy secure, affordable homes provided by cities and local authorities. Fine Gael has simply refused to fund local government to directly build and has instead relied on the housing market, which has failed to deliver.

Labour kept land in public ownership. We can now build more cost-efficiently than the private sector, as we already own enough zoned residential land to build 80,000 energy efficient homes. By building on public land, we can build homes for €200,000 each. (For example, the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland gives the construction costs of apartments from €1,700 to €2,800 per square metre. An 80M<sup>2</sup> apartment could be built from €136,000 to €224,000, a large 110M<sup>2</sup> apartment construction would cost €187,000 to €308,000). Everyone, from all walks of life, will be allowed to rent or buy them affordably.

**Labour will fund the building of 80,000 homes in five years through a €16 billion fund.** This will be created using €5 billion from the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund and €4 billion redirected to housing rather than the so-called Rainy Day Fund. NAMA has announced a surplus of €4 billion, some of which could also be put into home building. Labour will draw on funding from the European Investment Bank and create an investment vehicle for the credit union movement to invest some of their €14 billion available savings. From these and other sources we can build 80,000 homes without the need to raise taxes.

In addition to our financing model, Labour has an implementation strategy to get homes built.

**Labour will combine national expertise into a single National Housing Development Agency to start building on public land.** That means bringing the Housing Agency, Housing Finance Agency and certain personnel from other organisations under one roof, so that expertise is being shared daily, rather than have different groups working in silos like at present. Unlike Fine Gael's proposed Land Agency, which seems largely designed to sell off public land, Labour's National Housing Development Agency will act as a non-profit public developer. Initially it will commission homes from construction companies, while building up capacity for direct build by public agencies.

The second phase of Labour's implementation strategy will be to establish regional Housing Executives, as part of local government and working regionally to pool expertise and key personnel (architects, planners, quantity surveyors, etc) to restore local government's capacity to build homes. **Labour will establish Housing Executives**, accountable to elected Councillors, to restore the capacity of local government to build. These will operate on a shared service basis, serving two or three county councils, or a city and its catchment area.

**Labour will allow public bodies to compulsory purchase land at current use value**, building on the recommendations of the 1973 Kenny Report and to put an end to land hoarding.

#### ENDING THE HOMELESS CRISIS

**Labour will launch a stronger national homeless strategy and homeless youth strategy** within 100 days of coming into office.

**Labour will strengthen the Housing First approach to end the homeless crisis**, by moving people into long-term homes with whatever ongoing support they need with other issues, so that they can maintain their tenancies. This has been shown to be more humane, more successful and a better use of public money.

#### PROMOTING SECURITY OF TENURE

**Labour will bring in long-term leases for renters and stop unfair evictions.** Labour believes that secure, long-term renting should be made into a viable option so that people have security and can make a place into their long-term home. While home ownership is an attractive option for many, not everyone can afford it. But everyone deserves to have a secure home at a cost they can afford.

#### REGULATING THE PRIVATE HOUSING MARKET

**Labour will review and change the incentives and tax treatment of property development**, so that incentives in the private housing market are aligned with the goal of building homes that people can afford. We will regulate the building of built-to-rent, student accommodation and co-living, to require the construction of more long-term homes.



## 2. EQUALITY IN HEALTHCARE

Hospital overcrowding and waiting times are worse than ever, despite Ireland spending more on health than ever before. After nine years of Fine Gael in charge of health, it is time for change.

### STOP FINE GAEL WASTE

We all want to see our children benefiting from a world-class National Children's Hospital, but does it really need to be the most expensive hospital ever built in the world? Fine Gael have overspent on the project, with a final cost that could be over €2 billion. They ignored advice from the IMF, which warned the Government about rising costs. Where was Fine Gael's Minister for Public Expenditure, who should have been closely monitoring these costs from day one? Meanwhile, Fine Gael are now spending over €320 million every year on agency staff. We can get better value for money by reducing over-reliance on temporary workers and filling the staffing gaps on a permanent basis.

### ENDING OVERCROWDING AND SHORTENING WAITING LISTS

Labour is committed to creating a single health system that works for everyone, so that everyone gets equally good medical treatment, based on medical need or disability, not by how much they can afford. The roadmap for this is in the all-party SláinteCare Report, and it is the norm across Europe. But the Government has not made serious headway in delivering a changed system.

**Labour will end the de facto HSE recruitment embargo** and the over-reliance on agency staff.

**Labour will implement an investment plan to deliver more hospital beds, and the staff required**, to end the crisis of overcrowding and waiting lists.

**Labour will redirect health funding so that it is aligned to population medical need.** We want to end the shame of Ireland being the only country in the European Union that still has a health system governed by market forces and ability to pay, with deep inequality between regions and a widespread lack of medical staff.

**Labour will redirect funding to local primary care centres**, which will bring health services closer to communities including medical tests, early intervention/prevention of illness, disability supports, eldercare and mental health services. They will also help people to manage long-term disease like diabetes.

Having more staff in primary care centres will mean fewer people need to travel to hospitals.

Staffing will include nurses, home help workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and counsellors. Improving services at local primary care level will reduce overcrowding and waiting times. Primary care is internationally proven to lead to more efficient treatment, is more cost-effective and reduces healthcare inequalities.

**Labour will increase funding for home help and respite care**, so that more people can be cared for in their homes. Labour will also increase the number of step-down beds, which allow people to make the transition from acute hospital settings back to their own home.

**Labour will extend free-of-charge GP care to all under-18s**, and to everyone with a long-term illness or disability. We will train more GPs and invest in practices, so your community has access to a doctor. Labour will expand the role of advanced nurse practitioners, physician associates and community pharmacists to help fill the gap while additional GPs are being sourced. The primary care setting will provide administrative support, better equipment and other incentives to make the career of GP more attractive and to improve retention levels. We will develop regional scholarships and other incentives, such as the practice manager subsidy and HSE locum relief scheme, to encourage graduates to practice in rural areas and disadvantaged urban areas.



### 3. BETTER PAY, JOB SECURITY

Work is changing. A job for life doesn't exist anymore. But that doesn't mean we can't have better pay, job security and the ability to balance work, family and other commitments. Too many are underpaid, and wages aren't keeping up with the cost of living, especially for young workers and young families. People need a pay rise.

**Labour will guarantee everyone the right to be represented at work by a trade union**, and employers will be required to negotiate with their employee's representatives. This system, collective bargaining, is the norm across Europe and it underpins the productivity and resilience of the Northern European economies. We will ensure a right of access for trade union representatives to workplaces, including through constitutional change if required.

**Labour will raise the minimum wage to be a real living wage**, within three years. The Low Pay Commission will have the role of setting out how the minimum wage will remain above two-thirds of median income (as it was originally in 2000) and sufficient to provide a minimum essential standard of living.

**Labour will tackle the gig economy.** We will eliminate bogus self-employment and 'if and when' arrangements and we will enforce a right to certainty of working hours for people in precarious employment. We will introduce measures to protect against victimisation.

**Labour will maintain the State Pension age at 66**, as older workers and the economy are not yet ready for longer working lives. Many workers now reaching the age of 66 have already made 45 years of social insurance contributions, and many are affected by mandatory retirement at the age of 65. We are living longer, and we do need to prepare for longer working lives, but we have a sufficient surplus in the Social Insurance Fund that we can afford to continue to provide the State Pension from age 66 onwards, while we make preparations for population ageing that are sustainable and equitable.

### 4. A FAIR START FOR EVERY CHILD

It is expensive to raise a family in Ireland, but we can ensure no child is left behind. Ireland is now a diverse society, home to people from around the world. Labour has a zero-tolerance attitude to racism or any other form of discrimination, such as sexism, homophobia or religious prejudice. We must ensure that all of our children are treated equally and given the chance to fulfil their potential without harassment or abuse.

**Labour will make primary education genuinely free-of-charge**, to fulfil the guarantee in the Constitution, including free schoolbooks, a uniform grant and healthy school meals. Strong international evidence points to the success of school meals programmes in improving children's capacity to learn. They are also essential for the most vulnerable children who come to school without having eaten breakfast and with no school lunch.

**Labour will develop a high quality public Childcare Scheme for Working Parents**, because parents should never have to choose between their children and their job. The simple fact is the current model is not working. We need to try something new and bring Ireland into line with our European neighbours when it comes to childcare. The costs to parents would be moderate and set at the EU average level of childcare costs.

As it stands, parents in Ireland are paying three times the EU average cost. In the first phase, we will roll out the service in a number of areas around the country, targeting parents who cannot currently work because of the prohibitive cost of childcare.

The service will include early drop-off times and late collection to reflect modern work practices and commute times, and be based



on best practice education, play and early learning. Only appropriately regulated and inspected childminding services will be eligible to provide Government funded schemes, which will prioritise community-led, not-for-profit childcare models. This scheme is the first step towards Labour's vision of a universal public childcare service for all parents, which ultimately will replace other existing schemes and subsidies.

**Labour will introduce new safeguards to protect young people from abuse and discrimination**, including online. Labour will continue to press for its Harassment and Harmful Communications Bill 2017 ("Coco's Law") to be enacted, to update the law to include harassment and bullying on the Internet, mobile phones and social media. We will also introduce adequate regulation and enforcement of online platforms to ensure that harmful content intended to promote suicide, self-harm and eating-disorders, and other related material, is promptly removed.

**Labour will maintain a zero-tolerance stance on racism and xenophobia**, including anti-Traveller prejudice. All of our candidates and elected representatives will be required to uphold the highest standards, not just of respect for diversity but active anti-racism. Similar standards will apply with respect to all the grounds of equality.

**Labour will introduce a welcoming New Irish policy**, similar to Scotland's New Scots policy, which will formally recognise that being a member of Irish society is not about parentage or formal citizenship, but about being born in Ireland or choosing to make a long-term commitment to life in Ireland.

**Labour will deliver on child and adolescent mental health services.** Ireland has a very high suicide rate among teenagers. As a society, we must do everything in our power to prevent suicides. We must examine the root causes that lead so many young people to take their own lives or to engage in self-harm. One essential missing piece is the lack of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in so many parts of the country. Staffing these services is a challenge, but as part of Labour's wider commitment to staff local primary care centres, CAMHS can be properly staffed in every area to deal with the wide range of mental health issues presenting among children and young people.

## 5. CLIMATE JUSTICE

Time is running out, so we must invest in climate action now. Labour brought in Ireland's first climate change law and the city bike schemes, and we can be relied on to cut emissions and build a low carbon economy.

**Labour will provide funding for local government to deliver an ambitious home insulation scheme**, building up capacity to reach the target of 100,000 homes per year recommended by the Climate Change Advisory Council. This will be rolled out to all council-owned properties, and will be available on a street-by-street basis for home owners to avail of subsidised home insulation. Grants, low-cost credit and repayment as part of lower energy bills will also be available. All of this will give people warmer homes and lower energy bills, while reducing Ireland's carbon emissions. This will also create new apprenticeships and sustainable jobs.

**Labour will invest in the ESB, Coillte and Bord na Móna** to create new sustainable jobs in clean energy, recycling and land management. This will ensure a positive future for workers and regions of the country that are most at risk from the loss of polluting industries.

**Labour will support the trade union campaign for a Just Transition to a low carbon economy.** This includes setting up a Just Transition Fund and Task Force to invest in businesses that are helping workers and communities to make the transition to a low carbon economy.

**Labour will invest in public transport and cycling infrastructure**, to encourage people in cities and large towns to make the change to sustainable and healthier forms of transportation. This will also ease traffic congestion and improve air quality.

**Labour will target electric vehicle grants to those who need them**, especially in rural Ireland, where people may be car dependent. People with a disability who are also car dependent will be given an electric vehicle grant. However, the Fine Gael plan for everyone to buy an electric car is not realistic and would provide larger subsidies for wealthier households, with nothing for those who cannot afford car ownership.

**Labour will make the target of halving greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 a legal requirement**, and Labour will publish annual carbon budgets that set a ceiling on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions permitted annually in different sectors of the economy.



## STOP GOVERNMENT WASTING MONEY

The Irish people did not endure years of hardship and constraint just to allow this Fine Gael government to squander our economic recovery. But that is sadly what they have done. Fine Gael has overspent on the National Children's Hospital, which should never have cost as much as €2 billion. Fine Gael is giving away our €3 billion national broadband network free-of-charge, even though it doesn't know who will own the company in ten years' time. Major overspending in these areas means delays and cancellations of much-needed investment elsewhere in hospitals, schools and other services.

**Labour will stop the waste of public money**, through a programme of openness and transparency, as well as by reinforcing the bodies set up to monitor public spending. Our leader Brendan Howlin was Ireland's first Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Unlike Pascal Donohoe, Brendan did the job full-time, because safeguarding the people's money should be a full-time role, alongside a separate Minister for Finance. This was one of the first lessons of the 2008 economic crash, but Fine Gael ignored it as soon as they had power for themselves.

**Labour will appoint a separate Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform** and we will reinforce the Department's capacity to provide early warnings of spending misjudgements, which Fine Gael dismissed in relation to broadband. Fine Gael also ignored IMF warnings about the rising cost of the Childrens Hospital, which will be the most expensive hospital ever built in the world (but far from the largest).

**Labour will assess the competencies and skills of senior managers in the public service**, as part of a renewed reform agenda, and require continuing professional development to improve policy implementation. We will work with senior executives across the public sector to share best practice and to help them strengthen a culture of high performance and professional development throughout public service. We will strengthen best practice from within the public service, and draw on the expertise of independent organisations like the Centre for Effective Services about implementing efficient and effective public policies. Labour will encourage more movement of senior staff across different Departments and public agencies to develop their skills. Labour will not renew contracts for senior executives, or reappoint board members to public bodies, unless they have the required skills.

# OUR PROPOSALS IN DETAIL: POLICIES BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

Our manifesto is written to share Labour's vision and our ideas. We are offering Labour's vision of how government and public agencies can work harder and do more.

Every proposal here is what Labour will do if we have a Labour-led government or a government where Labour has decisive influence, but the extent to which we can implement our vision of an equal society depends on your support.<sup>1</sup>

Labour will publish a separate economic and fiscal policy to outline our spending plans in detail.

## WHERE DID THESE IDEAS COME FROM?

Labour is a democratic party. The content of the manifesto comes from Conference motions voted on by members as well as from individual suggestions by members via online surveys and email, proposals from Sections and Units within the Party, members' contributions at Party conferences and meetings, policies advocated by our spokespersons and Party Leader, and longstanding party policies.

The development of the Manifesto has been overseen by the Labour Policy Research Unit and the Manifesto is approved by the Party's elected Central Council, both of which are composed of party members.

Labour has always been a party of doers, with serious proposals for how the State and public agencies can work better and more fairly. Labour has a strong track record on delivering the best value for the people's money, while redirecting resources towards community concerns and those who are in greatest need of solidarity.

The Manifesto is organised according to the existing Departments. Areas of responsibility would move in some cases, where Labour would merge Departments or move functions between Departments.

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<sup>1</sup> Between 2011-2016, despite the economic collapse, Labour fully or partially fulfilled 62% of its pre-election pledges. This was considerably better than the 30-40% pledge fulfillment rate of the previous FF-GP Government. Costello, R, et al, *Fulfillment of Election Pledges by the Outgoing Government*, in Gallagher and Marsh (2016) *How Ireland Voted 2016*, pages 27-45.



## DEPARTMENT OF THE TAOISEACH

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of the Taoiseach will build a stronger relationship with Northern Ireland and the UK, will play an active role in EU policy making and will lead better cross-departmental policymaking.

Spending in 2019: €192 million

Employees in this group (early 2019): 2,237

Agencies under this group include:

- Central Statistics Office
- Chief State Solicitor's Office
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- President's Establishment

### GOVERNMENT COMPOSITION

**Labour will end the practice of the Taoiseach holding any other Ministerial role.** Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has been unable to fulfil the role of Minister for Defence satisfactorily. Defence forces personnel and their families have suffered government neglect as a result.

**Labour will limit the number of government departments to 15.** This is what the Constitution envisaged when it set the maximum size of government at 15 members. Fine Gael created 17 departments and only obeyed the Constitution by having members of government hold two ministerial roles.

**Labour will create a new merged Department of Climate Action** (to include Environment, Communications and Transport).

**Labour will create a new merged Department of Communities, Arts and Tourism** (to include Arts, Community Development, Culture, Gaeltacht, Heritage, Rural Development, Sport and Tourism).

15 Government Departments under Labour:

- Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Business, Enterprise and Innovation
- Children and Youth Affairs
- Climate Action
- Communities, Arts and Tourism
- Defence
- Education and Skills
- Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Finance
- Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Health
- Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Justice and Equality
- Public Expenditure and Reform
- Taoiseach

## GENUINE PROGRESS INDICATORS

**Labour will build the capacity of the Central Statistics Office to provide an Ireland Performs scorecard**, modelled on Scotland Performs, to ensure that we have sufficient capacity to measure Ireland's progress and to provide timely and accurate reports to inform government decision-making. The Ireland Performs scorecard will be based on a range of social and environmental measures, including unemployment, pay levels, homelessness, rent levels, hospital waiting lists, climate emissions, etc. These will be genuine progress indicators not just economic performance. As part of this, the CSO will publish an annual report on the distribution of income and wealth.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

**Labour will actively support the full implementation of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.**

The people of Northern Ireland were robbed of their democratic right to be represented for over three years. This meant that Northern Ireland's interests were not properly protected during the Brexit talks. Labour will encourage all parties to maintain the restored Stormont Assembly and Executive, and Labour will support getting all the North-South and East-West bodies fully operational again now that Stormont has reconvened.

**Labour will seek an inclusive, non-sectarian public conversation on the future of Ireland**, modelled on the New Ireland Forum of the 1980s, including discussion of a potential unitary Irish state while open to other political views including British Unionist perspectives.

**Labour will support the emergence of a new or enhanced non-sectarian labour/social democratic option on the ballot paper in Northern Ireland**, led by politicians from Northern Ireland.

## CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

**Labour will set up a new Convention on the Constitution, informed by citizens assemblies, to propose a modernised Constitution.** Rather than continue with piecemeal change to the Constitution, we will ask groups of citizens and experts to listen to the wider public and to write up recommendations for wholesale modernisation and reform of the Constitution. This modernised Constitution will include: recognition of the diversity of modern Ireland; full gender equality; permanent public ownership of utilities, including Irish Water; recognition of the right to housing and other socio-economic rights. We will put the revised Constitution to the people in an omnibus referendum.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Labour will play an active role in the Party of European Socialists at EU level, and among the family of social democratic parties.** As part of the second largest political family in Europe, Labour will push for reform of the European Union, greater transparency of EU decision-making and a greater emphasis by the EU on supporting social policy, housing, healthcare, job security, sustainability and quality of life.

**Labour will push for reform of the EU**, especially reform to its fiscal rules and monetary policy to allow greater levels of public investment in climate action, to build homes, to improve public services and to create sustainable jobs. Labour will seek to raise the ECB's inflation target to an average inflation of 3-4% and to give the ECB a dual mandate to seek full employment as well as price stability. We will ensure that Ireland takes an active part in the Conference on the Future Europe due to start in May 2020.

**Labour will organise future European elections using a single national constituency** rather than regions, to increase the level of proportional representation achieved in line with the EU target of 5% thresholds for election.



## AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND THE MARINE

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will develop and implement a plan to ensure that everyone can access healthy, nutritious food at an affordable price. It will create new opportunities for farmers and workers in these sectors to raise their incomes. The Department will take a lead role in the development of sustainable farming, fishing and forestry in Ireland, helping to create new jobs in all regions of the country.

Spending in 2019: €1.6 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 4,800

Agencies under this group include:

- Bord Bia
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara
- Coillte
- National Council for Forest Research and Development
- Teagasc
- The Marine Institute
- Veterinary Council of Ireland

**Labour will create a Brexit contingency fund** to support sectors of the economy facing negative consequences for jobs and livelihoods from Brexit, including a scheme to support the sector in the case of fluctuations in the value of the British Pound.

### AGRICULTURE

**Labour will demand a fairer distribution of income for small and disadvantaged farmers under the upcoming reform of CAP**, while also pushing for increased environmental incentives. Labour will create a Farm Income Diversification Scheme to help boost farm family incomes and to promote alternative, sustainable uses of farm land.

**Labour will provide a range of supports for farmers**, including by reintroducing the Early Retirement Scheme (ERS3), extending TAMS II beyond 2020 and implementing a standardised and simplified Hedge Cutting Grant scheme for farmers.

**Labour will support the growth of diverse and organic farming methods to enhance biodiversity outcomes** in the agricultural sector.

**Labour will enforce and enhance dog breeding law** (the Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010), to inspect establishments and enforce robust penalties to deter bad actors.

### FOOD

**Labour will develop and implement a national food strategy**, based on the principle that everyone should be able to afford a healthy, nutritious diet.

Labour will introduce stricter regulations for sale or marketing of high fat, sugar and salt foods to children, including on social media and in school.

**Labour will ban food waste by supermarkets and large retail chains**, learning the lessons from a similar policy implemented in France. Surplus food will be redistributed via charities, or else reused in animal feed or recycled into other products (e.g. compost), but not permitted in landfill or incineration where other options are available.

**Labour will require all food imported by airplane to be clearly labelled as such**, to give consumers transparency and choice. Reducing the consumption of food carried by air will reduce



greenhouse gas emissions and support native growers and seasonal produce. Labour will review this policy and consider further restrictions on importing food by air.

### MARINE

**Labour will set up maritime conservation zones** to allow Irish fish stocks to recover and also to protect Irish waters from overfishing post-Brexit. This will require enhanced Naval Service resources for enforcement.

### FORESTRY

**Labour will instruct the Department, along with Coillte and the National Council for Forest Research and Development, to develop and implement an ambitious national strategy for forestry and the "bio-economy"** of new products made from wood pulp, including biodegradable industrial foams and plastic substitutes, with an aim of further increasing the amount of land under forest cover, and striking the right balance between continuous cover, native species and commercial Sitka Spruce growing with the aim of maximising carbon capture, biodiversity and sustainable jobs.

Labour will implement the coming EU ban on single-use plastics, and promote the development of indigenous enterprises providing alternatives to plastics, including plastic substitutes made from Irish-grown wood.

## BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION

Spending in 2019: €950 million

Employees in this group (early 2019): 2,377

Agencies under this group include:

- Companies Registration Office
- Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
- Enterprise Ireland
- Health and Safety Authority
- IDA Ireland
- Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority
- Labour Court
- National Competitiveness Council
- Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement
- Personal Injuries Assessment Board
- Science Foundation Ireland
- Workplace Relations Commission

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation will foster the creation of new, sustainable jobs to replace any jobs lost to new technology or climate change. The Department will develop a strategy to grow and support Ireland's medium-sized enterprises (50+ employees). The Department will ensure workers' rights and protections are robust.



## CORE POLICIES

**Labour will guarantee everyone the right to be represented at work by a trade union (see above).**

**Labour will raise the minimum wage to be a real living wage (see above).**

**Labour will enforce a right to certainty of working hours (see above).**

**Labour will tackle the gig economy, bogus self-employment and uncertain hours (see above).**

## JOB CREATION

**Labour will initiate a Maximum Employment Strategy**, aimed to raise the employment rate from 69.3% of working age adults to closer to 75%. For example, employment rates are 78.2% in the Netherlands, 77.6% in Sweden and 76.5% in Denmark. Labour will learn from other countries about how they helped more people to enter the labour market, and implement best practice. Ultimately, the best route out of poverty is a good job, and Labour wants to give as many people as possible a real option to work and to improve their lives. Labour's Childcare Scheme for Working Parents will be part of this solution, as it is more often women who have parenting responsibilities and find it difficult to pursue full-time work (see above).

**Labour will create a Future Work Commission and implement a Future Jobs Strategy.** The Commission will provide applied research on the jobs that will be available in ten and twenty years from now, given the rapid changes in technology and the need to prevent further climate change. The Future Jobs Strategy will implement the findings of the Commission through upskilling and retraining initiatives, supports for sustainable enterprises and targeted support in regions most badly affected by job losses. This will include the circular economy of recycling and repair, to replace limitless consumption of resources. Labour will work with representatives of new industries, such as new technology start-ups, to enhance their ability to be successful and to scale up.

**Labour will concentrate on a strategy to develop indigenous medium-sized enterprises**, employing 50 to 250 people. The aim is to help smaller businesses to scale up to medium-size, to help medium-sized businesses to sustain their size (especially given the export challenges linked to Brexit), and

to over time help indigenous enterprises to sustainably employ over 250 workers. Even one medium-sized employer can transform work opportunities in a rural town, and several of them can provide a hub of economic activity. This strategy will involve local colleges and technological universities and it will draw on regional development expertise such as DKIT. The strategy will be driven by a new unit in an existing state agency like the IDA or Enterprise Ireland.

Labour will strengthen measures to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers.

**Labour will develop and implement a regional jobs strategy.** We want good careers in the towns, suburbs and rural areas that have been left behind. Labour will put more public jobs and direct more investment outside the big cities. Labour will give local authorities the power to introduce a "holiday rate" for new start-ups in less-developed regions to give owners breathing space when opening a new business.

**Labour will support the night-time economy** by expanding 24-hour public transport services on key routes to improve access to cultural and social spaces within cities and towns. We will review the current licensing system to allow pubs, night clubs and off-licenses to extend their licenses. We will ensure towns and cities retain enough venues for cultural activities.

**Labour will fully implement the employment strategy for people with disabilities**, and will develop incentives and supports so that more employers take on workers with disabilities. These measures will include grants for work space adjustments and training. Ireland lags behind many European countries in getting people with disabilities into employment. This policy has the potential to immensely improve people's quality of life and their financial independence, while also reducing poverty and the need for social protection payments. This strategy will include specific measures on neurodiversity.

**Labour will expand the number and types of apprenticeships and traineeships that are available.** These alternative forms of professional development should be as valued as going to college, which will never be



suitable for all young people. Labour will ensure decent pay and conditions for apprentices, and their inclusion in collective sectoral agreements. We will implement wages increments for apprentices and trainees to increase completion rates. For example, Labour will support new apprenticeships and continuous professional development to alleviate the skill shortages in the hospitality sector by creating a professional pathway for prospective apprentices with secure pay and conditions.

## FLEXIBILITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

**Labour will implement a National Flexible Working Strategy**, working with trade unions and employers at the National Economic and Social Council. The strategy will develop good practice standards for permitting people to work from home or from other locations. The strategy will pay particular attention to the gender dimension of work-life balance, given that women are still disproportionately the primary caregivers for children. Labour will give full effect to the new Work-Life Balance Directive.

**Labour will introduce a right to flexible working hours** where an employer only has to make a reasonable adjustment to allow for them, to reduce stress and wasted time from commuting, and to facilitate work-life balance for parents and carers in particular.

Labour will introduce two new public holidays, to bring Ireland up to the European average of 11 paid public holidays.

**Labour will review the evidence for a shorter working week without loss of pay**, including approaches such as the six-hour day and the four-day week, and we will implement findings that are consistent with good work-life balance, high productivity and safeguarding worker's pay levels.

**Labour will implement a right for employees to switch off from work email and phone calls** when outside of work hours and when not compensated for this extra activity.

**Labour will provide an incentive for employers to end compulsory retirement at 65 in employment contracts**, and allow people to work until the State Pension age or

longer. For the lifetime of the next government, employers will not have to pay employers' PRSI for workers aged 65 or over.

**Labour will oblige all public bodies and all organisations in receipt of public money to implement Labour Court recommendations.**

**Labour will ensure our industrial relations mechanisms are sufficiently resourced**, including the Labour Court and the Workplace Relations Commission. Labour will strengthen the systems by which work conditions are monitored and enforced, to root out bad employment practice and failure to comply with legal standards. Labour will enforce measures to prevent and stop workplace bullying.

Labour will restore tax relief for trade union membership on the same basis as professional association fees.

**Labour will implement a right to lifelong learning**, working with trade unions and employers at the National Economic and Social Council, and with public agencies like Solas. Employers will be given incentives to ensure that all employees have access to in-work training and learning opportunities. This policy is designed to offset Ireland's low uptake of in-work training and education. Labour will consult with organisations like the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE) to ensure training is aligned with people's needs.

**Labour will remove the ability of employers' groups or trade unions to block a decision on a sectoral wage agreement**, by changing the law on Joint Labour Committees so that they are not prevented from meeting if either party refuses to attend.

**Labour will provide protections for workers who miss work in extreme weather conditions.**

## INSURANCE

**Labour will promote Pooled Group Insurance schemes which will ensure significantly cheaper premiums for businesses, voluntary and community groups** who could act together to negotiate lower premiums. The Department of Enterprise will be tasked with supporting and facilitating sectors such as childcare operators or tourism businesses who wish to pool together to seek insurance.



## PROMOTING ETHICAL ENTERPRISE

**Labour will legislate to ensure that co-operatives, limited-profit companies and social enterprises can access all State supports and grants** on the same basis as limited companies.

**Labour will require businesses and public agencies above a certain size to publish their carbon footprints** in their annual reports.

**Labour will require businesses and public agencies with 50 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap** in their annual reports, as well as the remuneration of top executives and the gender breakdown of company directors.

**Labour will require transparency about the beneficial ownership of businesses**, along

the lines of reforms introduced in the UK. All businesses in Ireland will be obliged to publish Ireland-specific statements of profit, not joint reports with their UK operations.

**Labour will prevent a repeat of the situation that left the taxpayer to pay for Clerys workers redundancy payments, while the assets were stripped.** We will change the Companies Act to allow the debts of a company in liquidation, including unpaid wages, to be recovered from associated companies in a group. We will amend the legislation to cover informal or “deemed” insolvencies where the employer has ceased trading or where payments to employees have ceased for six weeks or more.

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Labour’s vision: Under Labour, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will concentrate on ensuring a fair start for every child, developing a plan to eliminate child poverty, and extend support to young people in care aged 18+, with a managed transition to adult services by the age of 25. The Department will also develop and implement Labour’s Childcare Scheme for Working Parents.

Spending in 2019: €1.5 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 4,521

Agencies under this group include:

- Centre for Young Offenders
- Child and Family Agency (Tusla)
- Office of the Ombudsman for Children
- The Adoption Authority

## CORE POLICIES

**Labour will develop a public Childcare Scheme for Working Parents (see above).**

## CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

**Labour will review all legislation to ensure that the 2012 referendum recognising children’s rights is fully implemented in law.**

**Labour will introduce a Statutory Child Maintenance Agency based on best international practice.**

## ENDING CHILD POVERTY

**Labour will develop and implement an ambitious strategy to eliminate child poverty.** Child poverty is 10% in Ireland compared to 3.7% in Denmark or 3.3% in Finland. Labour will strive to achieve similarly low levels of child poverty by learning from what worked in these countries. Labour agrees with the goals of the NoChild2020 campaign: making primary school genuinely free-of-charge; healthy school

meals; meeting children’s healthcare needs; access to arts and culture; more comprehensive childcare; and targeted payments to families at greatest risk of poverty. Labour will resource the CSO to publish reliable, frequent data on the detail of child poverty. The restored Combat Poverty Agency will have a central remit in developing a strategy to eliminate child poverty. Labour will also restore full social protection payments to under-25s and ensure the incomes of lone parents are sufficient.

**Labour will support the introduction of a European Child Guarantee** to help ensure that every child at risk of poverty or social exclusion has access to the most basic of rights like healthcare and education.

## CARE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

**Labour will extend state care for 18- to 24-year olds when it is needed.** A range of young adult supports will be developed, to support young people aged 18-24 to transition to fully independent living or to have proper continuity of care to adult services.



## EARLY INTERVENTION

**Labour will redirect resources towards early intervention with young children who have a disability and special needs**, including neurodiversity, to reduce waiting times and to improve outcomes. This has been shown internationally to be more cost effective, as well as much better for children and their families.

## CITIZENSHIP AND RESIDENCY

**Labour will restore the right to citizenship to children raised in Ireland** and whose primary affiliation is to Ireland. At present, many children brought up in Ireland do not have an automatic right to citizenship because their parents are not Irish citizens, even though they have never known another home. This can cause serious problems for them after school, such as an inability to go to college, to work or to travel. This legal change can be made under existing provisions in the Constitution, despite the 27th Amendment.

**Labour will regularise undocumented children, young people and adult workers**, including migrants fleeing domestic violence who are reliant on their partner's residency status. Labour will support those brought into Ireland by human traffickers, not least those traumatised by the experience of forced prostitution.

## ABUSIVE MATERIAL ONLINE

**Labour will review international attempts to control child and young people's access to inappropriate material on the Internet**, and we will introduce controls in Ireland that have been shown to work and to benefit children and young people.

## REDUCING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**Labour will implement new pilot programmes to prevent anti-social behaviour by young people**, drawing on best practice in the "Dundee Model" of wrap around care and the "Iceland Model" of providing constructive activities to deter substance misuse. The findings of these pilot programmes will be implemented more widely.

## CHILDCARE WORKERS

**Labour will raise the pay floor in childcare** to a higher minimum wage through a Sectoral Employment Order for that sector, while developing a professional career pathway in recognition of the number of graduates in the sector. Those working in the public scheme will be paid at the very least a Living Wage and Labour will implement a programme to raise qualifications of at least 60% of staff in the early years sector to degree level (Level 7 on the NFO) by 2025.

# COMMUNICATIONS, CLIMATE ACTION AND ENVIRONMENT

Spending in 2019: €665 million

Employees in this group (early 2019): 1,505

Agencies under this group include:

- Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
- Commission for Communication Regulation
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- Digital Hub Development Authority
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Oil Reserve Agency
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will develop a more ambitious climate change strategy, with clear evidence-led actions leading to Ireland achieving its climate targets in a socially just way that creates new jobs and reduces fuel poverty. The Department will oversee the delivery of broadband to all.

## CORE POLICIES

**Labour will invest in the ESB, Coillte and Bord na Móna to create new sustainable jobs (see above).**

**Labour will support the trade union campaign for a Just Transition to a low carbon economy (see above).**

**Labour will make the target of halving greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 a legal requirement (see above).**

## ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRALITY

**Labour will implement all the recommendations of the Oireachtas all-party report Climate Change: A Cross-Party Consensus for Action.**



**Labour will require local authorities and a wide range of public agencies to become carbon-neutral by 2030**, with an initial duty on them to publish a plan, within 12 months, showing how they will achieve this.

Labour will ban the importation of fracked gas.

**Labour will ban offshore drilling or any further extraction of fossil fuels** on Ireland's land or waters, with no renewal of existing licences when they expire.

**Labour will close down all coal, peat and oil burning power stations**, while using the existing subsidy to support Bord na Móna workers and other workers affected. We will provide a Decent Job Guarantee to any worker who loses their job due to Ireland's transition to a low carbon economy. This will mean re-employment in another state enterprise, with retraining and upskilling provided.

**Labour will provide new ways for farmers to raise their incomes through environmental initiatives.**

**Labour will fund the rewetting of industrial bogs and the restoration of peatlands.** These will provide an important carbon sink and reduce national greenhouse gas emissions.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Labour will facilitate the development of renewable electricity, especially off-shore wind generation.** Labour will seek changes to EU rules to define pumped hydroelectricity plants as energy storage, and part of grid operations, rather than as power stations. This will allow Eirgrid to invest in more of these facilities as a mechanism to manage variable electricity supply from wind.

**Labour will roll out a scheme to provide all schools and colleges with solar panels.** This will lower their energy bills and ultimately pay for itself.

**Labour will develop a national investment strategy for biomethane production** to cut our greenhouse gas emissions while also creating additional income streams for farmers.

## RECYCLING AND WASTE COLLECTION

**Labour will allow local government to return waste collection to direct local control**, in line with a broader re-municipalisation policy.

**Labour will trial a deposit return scheme for**

**glass and plastic bottles and containers**, using new technology to scan them at bring banks and immediately provide cash or credit, as has been done in supermarkets in some European countries.

## CLEANER AIR, WATER AND HABITATS

**Labour will implement a nationwide ban on cancer-causing smoky coal**, as part of a wider strategy to improve air quality, including phasing out diesel cars.

**Labour will reduce pollution in Ireland's rivers and coastal waters** through enhanced inspection and enforcement.

**Labour will require detailed annual reports to be published on Ireland's biodiversity and the status of habitats**, as part of a strengthened biodiversity strategy. We will invest more in protecting habitats to preserve biodiversity.

## NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

**Labour will seek legal advice on whether it is possible to reverse the decision to give away the national broadband network without prohibitive costs and to retain it in public ownership.**

We will make the necessary investment to ensure that high speed Internet is available across rural Ireland as quickly as possible, and we will ensure that access to the Internet is affordable, including for pensioners and other people on low fixed incomes.

## PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

**Labour will review public service broadcasting in the twenty-first century**, given the radical changes to print media as well as traditional broadcasting, due to Internet platforms and social media. Labour will ensure that public service media, for news and current affairs, and for non-profitable arts, culture and other material, will be financially supported. Labour will implement an alternative to the TV licence system.

# CULTURE, HERITAGE AND THE GAELTACHT

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht will publish Ireland's first comprehensive Irish language strategy covering all aspects of learning and use of the language, with an emphasis on spoken Irish. The Department will also enhance its work to ensure that everyone working in arts and culture can attain the equivalent of a living wage.

Spending in 2019: €339 million

Employees in this group (early 2019): 1,823

Agencies under this group include:

- Arts Council
- Foras na Gaeilge (An Foras Teanga)
- Heritage Council
- National museums and galleries, the National Library and the National Concert Hall
- Screen Ireland (Fís Éireann)
- Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Waterways Ireland
- Western Development Commission

## IRISH LANGUAGE

**Labour will launch an ambitious campaign to promote the spoken use of the Irish language.**

Despite the efforts of State agencies and grants, the large majority of people in Ireland do not speak Irish. While nearly 40% claim to be able to speak Irish, only 17% actually do so and only 1.8% speak it daily. In contrast, 11% of adults in Wales speak Welsh daily, with the same level of language use across all adult age groups. Labour will learn from best practice in Wales and elsewhere to launch a new effort to promote everyday use of spoken Irish, including more opportunities to stay in Gaeltacht areas and the creation of urban Gaeltachtaí where speaking Irish is prioritised.

Labour will develop a new Irish language education policy, from pre-school to third level, in line with the #Gaeilge4All campaign.

## INCLUSIVE ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMMES

**Labour will redirect arts funding towards outreach initiatives** that foster engagement by socially excluded groups in arts and cultural performances and activities. Labour will expand "Arts Guarantee" initiatives that give every schoolchild at least one cultural experience annually.

**Labour will encourage museums and galleries to engage with Ireland's new communities**, both to engage them with Ireland's history and culture, and also to put on exhibits that tell the story of Ireland's newly diverse society.

**Labour will require cultural institutions and libraries to be open some evenings and weekends.**

**Labour will create a fund which will support artists and makers**, which local government can draw on to create studio space for artists and creative workers, as secure and affordable spaces in which they can work.

## RELIGION

**Labour will facilitate the needs of religious groups**, including minorities, who wish to establish places of worship and burial grounds.



## DEFENCE

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Defence will renew and reinvigorate our tradition of military neutrality while continuing to support the institutions of the United Nations to promote peace and security around the world. The Department will review and implement improvements in the pay and allowances of service personnel. The Department will review Ireland's defence policy in the context of the UK leaving the EU, to ensure Ireland's capacity to patrol its own airspace and waters effectively.

### RENEWED DEFENCE POLICY

**Labour will maintain a stand-alone Minister for Defence**, with a seat in Government. Fine Gael has been unable to fulfil the role of Minister for Defence satisfactorily. Defence forces personnel and their families have suffered government neglect as a result.

**Labour will implement a Commission on the Future of Defence** that will include participation by Department of Defence, Defence Force Management and outside external expertise to carry out a review of how Defence should be structured, governed and managed in the 21st Century.

**Labour will develop a strategy to expand the Naval Service so that it can fully patrol all our waters**, for the regulation of fishing, to protect marine reserves, to improve our sub-surface detection/search capacity and to defeat drug smuggling operations.

Labour will roll out a programme to improve and upgrade barracks throughout the country.

**Labour will evaluate the role of the Air Corps in protecting Irish airspace in light of Brexit** by commissioning a feasibility study, with recommendations on Air Intercept/Defence Capability and a review of the agreement currently in place with the RAF. This study will include an estimate of the likely cost of such capabilities.

**Labour will establish a dedicated Cybersecurity Unit within the Defence Forces** that will develop technological capabilities for Cyber Defence of all operational systems and defence capabilities of the support systems (manpower, logistics) and create the necessary conditions to attract and retain people with exceptional ICT Skills.

Spending in 2019: €1 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 9,652

Agencies under this group include:

- Air Corps
- Army
- Naval Service

### RENEWED NEUTRALITY

**Labour will initiate an open debate on how to renew and reinvigorate Ireland's tradition of military neutrality**, including the future role of the Defence Forces in EU PESCO and the NATO-led Partnership for Peace.

**Labour will end the use of Shannon and Irish airspace by the US military while the US is involved in any warfare that does not have UN approval.**

### PAY AND CONDITIONS

**Labour will ensure all Defence Forces personnel have proper treatment in terms of pay, allowances and working conditions.** Labour will review pay and allowances and implement the findings to restore pay. Labour will recognise the anomalous treatment of Defence Forces in the public pay agreement and will seek an exemption to the agreement to rectify this.

**Labour will ensure trade union recognition for the Defence Forces**, and allow the union to affiliate with ICTU to access the industrial relations institutions of the state. The government will be able to regulate and control the right to strike on the grounds of national security.

### INCLUSION

**Labour will promote greater inclusivity in the Defence Forces**, including recruitment and retention of more women, members of minority communities and members of the LGBT+ community.

**Labour will work with veterans to create a National Veterans' Policy.** We will support veteran organisations in their provision of accommodation to homeless and other veterans, and in the provision of advice and support to veterans. Labour will support the implementation of the Veterans' Strategy submitted to the Department of Defence in December 2018 and the establishment of an Office for Veterans Affairs.



## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Education and Skills will make primary education genuinely free of charge, and will set out a strategy so that cost never stops a person fulfilling their potential through lifelong education. The Department will identify how to progressively and sustainably reduce third level fees. The Department will also work with the Department of Health on a strategy to increase the supply of trained medical personnel remaining in Ireland to work.

Spending in 2019: €10.8 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 109,401

Agencies under this group include:

- Commission into Child Abuse
- Dublin Dental Hospital
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
- National Council for Special Education
- Residential Institution Redress Board
- Royal Irish Academy
- Royal Irish Academy of Music
- State Exams Commission
- Universities, Institutes of Technology and HEA Institutions

### CORE POLICIES

**Labour will facilitate local remembrance ceremonies to publicly acknowledge and to socially include survivors of abuse in state and church institutions.**

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Labour will end the two-tier pay system for teachers and school secretaries.**

**Labour will reduce primary class sizes to the EU average by 2025 on a cost-neutral basis.** This is possible because a reducing population of children is lowering the demand for primary school places, creating the opportunity to move towards European norms on smaller class sizes. These are especially beneficial for children with special needs or who do not have English as a first language.

**Labour will strengthen supports for schoolchildren to learn European languages,** including opportunities for teachers to work abroad for a term to improve their own foreign language competence. The skill of languages is essential for Ireland as part of the EU and the world market.

**Labour will examine the introduction of local flexibility for school starting times** to better align the schedules of parents and students while also reducing the numbers commuting at peak-times

**Labour will require all schools to develop and enforce a policy on smartphone use by pupils.**

**Labour will require education on sex and relationships in all schools to be objective and inclusive.**

### INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Labour will continue to implement the programme for changing patronage of primary schools,** to provide parental choice and to recognise the growing diversity in the population.

Labour will ban state-funded schools from selling land or other school properties without the permission of the Minister.

**Labour will progressively remove state subsidies from the 7% of secondary schools that are private fee-paying.** At present, access to highly competitive university education is dominated by students from private schools who have an unfair advantage of having additional resources from fees combined with teachers whose salaries are paid by society as a whole. Labour wants all schools to foster excellence and to provide genuine equality of opportunity to access university courses, further education and apprenticeships.

**Labour will reduce DEIS class sizes in proportion to reductions in regular class sizes,** and increase capitation to DEIS schools.



**Labour will continue to expand the provision of Special Needs Assistants in schools.**

We will set continuously higher targets for school improvements in literacy and numeracy. These basic skills are the foundation for social inclusion and access to later opportunities, and Labour will push for every child to have a sufficient level of literacy and numeracy, regardless of their background.

**Labour will conduct a review, and implement its findings, to ensure that the teaching of history in secondary education is adequate,**

including the option of restoring history as a mandatory subject.

**Labour will require all schools to ensure children receive a minimum number of hours of physical activity every week.**

This will reduce obesity and improve physical and mental health. Physical activity can include formal PE but also initiatives like "Daily Mile" walks and runs, bike-to-school schemes and walking buses.

**REDUCING THE COST OF EDUCATION**

**Labour will progressively and sustainably reduce the cost of secondary and third level education.** Everyone should have the opportunity to learn and to develop, at any age and regardless of their background. Core education from pre-primary through to third level should be genuinely free of charge, and lifelong education should always be affordable.

**Labour will expand the non-adjacent rate of the SUSI grant to 24km,** up from 45km.

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Labour will support the development of Technological Universities and deliver the long-awaited Technological University of the South-East.** We will build on our work with stakeholders in the north-east to support DKIT to develop Technological University status with partner institutes.

**Labour will develop an implementation strategy to increase university funding,** for both teaching and research, building on the recommendations of the Cassells report. Third level research is part of the engine of long-term economic growth and it is essential for Ireland's future prosperity. Labour will investigate drawing on the National Training Fund and other sources of funding to find a sustainable way to end the current crisis of funding at third level, and to reduce casualisation of staff in this sector. This implementation strategy will include a review of the third-level grant system, including its assessment process, to ensure grants are better targeted at those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

**EMPLOYMENT AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Spending in 2019: €20.5 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 6,412

Agencies under this group include:

- Citizens Information Board
- Pensions Authority
- Low Pay Commission

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will operate according to revised principles, to maximise social protection and to promote a right to training, with the aim of achieving genuine full employment. The Department will also task the Low Pay Commission to raise the National Minimum Wage to a Living Wage within three years.

**CORE POLICIES**

**Labour will raise the minimum wage to be a real living wage (see above).**

**Labour will maintain the State Pension age at 66 (see above).**

**SOCIAL WELFARE**

**Labour will pass a Principles of Social Welfare Act,** along lines recently enacted in Scotland, that adopted a rights-based approach and requires social welfare officers to maximise the income of recipients and to simplify the range of forms used to apply for social protection payments. All forms and welfare information must pass a strict standard for Plain English.

**Labour will develop and implement a road map to ensure the long-term sustainability of the social insurance fund,** and will learn from international best practice on how to ensure the fund remains solvent as the population ages.

**Labour will speed up access to welfare payments,** including Working Family Payment.



**Labour will link social protection payments to the cost of living**, including pensions, based on a new national cost of living index, linked to the real cost of living on a modest but sufficient income. The level of increase should be recommended to the Minister by an independent group, to remove the politics from annual increases. We will address anomalies faced by pensioners who worked in commercial semi-states.

Labour will immediately restore full weekly social protection payments to those under the age of 25.

**Labour will take comprehensive steps to ensure that the incomes of lone parents are sufficient.**

**Labour will put social insurance benefits for the self-employed on a sustainable footing.** The Government has, rightly, extended more social protections to the self-employed, but it has not provided sustainable funding for this. Labour will review the projected costs and reform social insurance contributions so that people who are self-employed can have confidence that benefits will be there when they need them.

**Labour will initiate the process of aligning the tax and welfare systems.** This has the potential to allow innovative policies that will make it easier for people to return to work while still relying on some welfare payments. It will also assist those returning to work who may have a disability, large families or other ongoing need for social protection.

## LOCAL AND COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

**Labour will support Local Employment Services.** We will enhance their capacity to involve people not currently engaging with the labour market.

**Labour will improve Community Employment (CE) schemes**, including allowing for long-term CE schemes in non-profit organisations for people who have disabilities or who have been distant from the labour market for a long time. Labour will make provision for CE Supervisors who are without pensions. Labour will seek to involve people not currently engaging with the labour market in CE schemes.

## CARERS

**Labour will support carers and implement a Carers Strategy.** We will increase the Carer's Allowance income disregard and increase the Carer's Support Grant by €100. We will start the process of introducing paid Carers' Leave, in line with the new Work-Life Balance Directive.

## REDUCING POVERTY AND DISADVANTAGE

**Labour will restore the Combat Poverty Agency**, which was twice abolished by Fianna Fáil and previously restored by Labour. The remodelled agency will have a strong focus on research, and will help government to develop economic and social policies that reduce poverty and economic inequality. Ireland's market income inequality is the highest in the OECD before taxes and social welfare. The welfare system is under significant strain to correct this market inequality.

A major task of the agency will be to help design an economic model for Ireland that alleviates market inequality by ensuring higher pay for those currently underpaid in the economy, and to reduce the number of jobless households, while also seeking to develop a high productivity, high wage economy like small, open North European countries such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

**Labour will develop a coherent, cross-departmental Literacy Ireland Strategy** and combine the diverse budgets that exist across multiple departments and agencies into a single fund.



## FINANCE

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Finance will ensure that the country's tax base is robust and sustainable. The Department will introduce a minimum effective rate of Corporation Tax.

### TAXATION

**Labour will introduce a minimum effective rate of Corporation Tax of 12.5%**, which will be lower for companies that locate to disadvantaged regions of the country. Labour will conduct a major review of the sustainability of Ireland's Corporation Tax base.

**Labour will establish a Standing Commission on Taxation** to conduct ongoing review of the tax system and of all tax breaks. This Commission will have the mandate to ensure the sustainability of Ireland's tax revenue, and the fair distribution of all forms of taxation across the population.

**Labour will increase the penalties for tax evasion**, and increase resources for the Revenue Commissioners to robustly pursue tax evasion.

**Labour will adjust motor vehicle taxes to promote the uptake of low-emission vehicles** and introduce stricter environmental criteria for company cars on our roads.

**Labour will extend the sugar tax to more processed foods**, and will use the funds to supply healthy school meals in primary schools.

**Labour will extend the plastic bag levy to other single-use items**, including disposable coffee cups, but not including essential items like nappies or sanitary towels.

**Labour will extend excise to e-cigarette products.**

**Labour will reduce the VAT rate on food supplements from 13.5% to 9%**, which is the lowest possible under EU rules now that Fine Gael has removed them from the zero rate band.

**Labour will ring-fence all receipts from Carbon Tax** to fund warmer homes, public transport, new sustainable jobs and other measures to reduce hardship caused by the transition to a low carbon economy.

**Labour will increase Stamp Duty on Non-Residential Property and on shares.**

Spending in 2019: €505 million

Employees in this group (early 2019): 6,996

Agencies under this group include:

- Allied Irish Bank
- Comptroller and Auditor General
- Revenue Commissioners
- Tax Appeals Commission

**Labour will not raise taxes on ordinary workers' incomes and will widen Income Tax bands to prevent inflation.** Labour will not raise USC. We will progressively withdraw Income Tax credits on high earners with incomes over €100,000.

### BANKS

**Labour will seek for Ireland's bank lending rates to be similar to other European countries**, to ensure businesses and homeowners are offered comparable rates.

**Labour will ensure that a household's ability to pay rent is counted as part of their credit rating for mortgage loan calculations.**

**Labour will maintain the cap on bankers' pay.**

**Labour will double the bank levy.** This will provide some compensation to the public, as banks are profitable but able to offset Celtic Tiger losses against Corporation Tax for the foreseeable future. The bank levy ensures that they pay their fair share to the people who bailed them out.

**Labour will support the introduction of a community bank for business lending.** Based on the German Sparkassen model, a single national community bank will be established initially, working in partnership with the credit union movement. It is proposed that the bank will rent counter space and office space from individual credit unions, and provide business banking services aimed at small and medium enterprises. Initially a trial of this banking model will be rolled out across a number of different counties.

### INSURANCE

**Labour will review the cost of insurance and the profitability of insurance companies**, and will change incentives and disincentives for insurance companies to promote more competitive insurance rates. Labour will use the Irish Public Bodies (IPB) Insurance company, owned by local authorities and other public agencies, to offer affordable insurance to community organisations, markets and festivals.



# FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will develop Ireland's strategic relationships with EU member states post-Brexit, while also developing new formal and informal links between Ireland and the UK, for trade as well as political co-operation.

Spending in 2019: €802 million

Employees in this group (early 2019): 2,000

Agencies under this group include:

- Embassies and consulates serving over 200 countries as well as missions to the EU, UN and other international bodies

## IRISH AID

**Labour will set out a realistic strategy to increase Ireland's development aid so as to meet our longstanding commitment of investing 0.7% of economic output,** and will continue to direct that aid to the world's poorest regions.

## A POSITIVE INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD

**Labour will pursue a distinctive foreign policy for Ireland that promotes peace, human rights, equality and respect for international law.** If Ireland is successful in gaining membership of the UN Security Council, Labour will seek to offer a distinctive Irish contribution rather than to take sides with any of the traditional divisions in international affairs. Labour will strongly promote adherence to human rights, democratic freedoms and international law among EU member states and in countries on Europe's borders.

**Labour will support the cause of the people of Palestine and will recognise Palestine as a state.**

## BREXIT AND IRELAND-UK RELATIONS

Labour will seek to ensure no hardening of the border due to Brexit, and to minimise border infrastructure and checks between Ireland and Britain. Labour will support the full implementation of agreements to maintain the Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK.

Labour will strongly advocate for the rights of Irish citizens in the UK and the maintenance of the Common Travel Area, including the rights to reside, work, vote and access public services in the UK, working with the Irish embassy and consulates, trade unions, civil society groups, business associations and the UK Labour Party.

**Labour will seek to expand and enhance the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.** We will ensure frequent contact by ministers and officials with their counterparts to replace the loss of contact at EU level post-Brexit, and we'll ensure strong bilateral co-operation on common interests.

**Labour will enhance Ireland's capacity to respond to the needs of the Irish community in the UK, and the wider Irish diaspora.** This will be achieved through enhancing the capacity of the British-Irish Council to interact with British-Irish trade organisations, community groups, trade unions, etc., with an annual British-Irish Community Conference to bring together all those interested in building and maintaining a positive bilateral relationship between the two jurisdictions.

**Labour will expand bilateral co-operation with the Scottish Government and the Welsh Executive.**



# HEALTH

Spending in 2019: €17.1 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 121,173

Agencies under this group include:

- Blood Transfusion Service
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland
- Food Safety Promotion Board
- Health Information and Quality Authority
- Health Insurance Authority
- Health Products Regulatory Authority
- Health Research Board
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Medical Council
- Mental Health Commission
- National Cancer Registry Board
- National Paediatric Hospital Development Board
- National Treatment Purchase Fund
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
- Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
- Voluntary Agencies
- Voluntary Hospitals

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Health will allocate funding based on medical need across the population and it will allocate a greater proportion of funding to staff Primary Care Centres to reduce overcrowding and waiting lists for hospital services. This investment will allow people to access medical tests and treatments such as 24/7 cardiac care in the South-East, as well as support for long-term illnesses in a local Primary Care Centre, taking pressure off hospitals. Working with the Department of Education, the Department will develop a strategy to increase the availability of medical personnel in Ireland.

## CORE POLICIES

**Labour will end the de facto HSE recruitment embargo and the over-reliance on agency staff (see above).**

**Labour will implement an investment plan to deliver more hospital beds, and the staff required (see above).**

**Labour will redirect health funding so that it is aligned to population medical need (see above).**

**Labour will redirect funding to local primary care centres (see above).**

**Labour will increase funding for home help and respite care (see above).**

**Labour will extend free-of-charge GP care to all under-18s (see above).**

**Labour will deliver on child and adolescent mental health services (see above).**

## SERVING WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE NEEDS

Labour will fully implement the recommendations of the comprehensive Scally report in response to the Cervical Check scandal.

**Labour will implement all of the recommendations made in the Scally, MacCraith, and RCOG Reports,** with oversight from the CervicalCheck Steering Committee. We will invest in specialist after-care clinics for women who are living with the life long after effects of gynaecological cancers.

**Labour will ensure that the proposed Assisted Human Reproduction Legislation is amended** in line with the recommendations made by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health, giving particular attention to the inclusion of international surrogacy that meets the relevant criteria and standards, and changing the designation of a surrogate as the legal mother of a child born via surrogacy.



**Labour will ensure patients have access to their hospital medical records** in a timely and respectful way, and oblige the HSE's to revise its open disclosure policy and guidelines as a matter of urgency.

**Labour will ensure comprehensive free-of-charge reproductive healthcare is available for all**, including long-term contraceptive options. The current proposal from Fine Gael is too restrictive, both by age and contraceptive option. We will expand the definition of medical leave to include time off work for fertility treatment. We will ensure every woman has access to period products to end "period poverty", for example expanding Labour-led initiatives at local government level.

**Labour will ensure the implementation of the National Maternity Strategy** and ensure that the new National Maternity Hospital remains under State ownership and control.

**Labour will ensure all maternity services in Ireland are safe, well-resourced and sensitive to the varied needs of women.** This will facilitate families to make informed choices about their birth options, whether at home, in the community or in a hospital setting.

**Labour will implement Exclusion Zones** to ensure that women have safe access to abortion services, and we will ensure the widespread provision of abortion services around the country.

**Labour will support the development of services for breastfeeding mothers** to both encourage and support mothers to breastfeed, with the aim of increasing the currently low rate of breastfeeding in Ireland.

**Labour will end the common practice of reallocating funds for obstetric and gynaecological services** to compensate for overspend in other areas of hospital groups.

## STRENGTHENING THE PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

**Labour will fully implement all of the recommendations of the Report of the Independent Review Group established to examine private activity in public hospitals.** Among its benefits, this will free up publicly-owned hospital equipment to reduce waiting times for public patients.

Labour will end the two-tier pay system for nurses and other medical professionals.

**Labour will extend BreastCheck to women aged**

**65-69 and bowel screening to 55-74 in order to enhance early detection**, save lives and ensure cost-effective treatment. We will expand ovarian and uterine screening for early detection of cancer.

**Labour will improve services for people suffering from ME**, myalgic encephalomyelitis, also known as chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS).

**Labour will review the benefits of social prescribing** (linking patients to non-medical sources of support within the community via primary care) and implement the findings.

**Labour will strengthen the HSE's role in providing public information on illnesses and injuries**, and we will examine introducing a 24-hour phonenumber for minor health queries, modelled on the NHS 111 phonenumber.

## LOWERING HEALTHCARE COSTS

**Labour will promote greater use of generic medicines and biosimilars**, by implementing the National Biosimilar Policy and modernising the National Medicines Supply and Pricing Agreement.

Labour will reduce hospital inpatient and outpatient charges by 50%.

**Labour will give a parking waiver to all patients attending hospital for continuous treatments**, such as cancer patients.

**Labour will ensure that high fees for non-EU visitors or workers do not deter people from availing of essential medical assistance.**

**Labour will ensure that no one with a serious disability or long-term illness is without at least a GP Visit Card if not a Medical Card.**

## HOME CARE

**Labour will provide a home care package to every identified case, and we will increase funding for dementia supports**, with a minimum standard of community services for people affected by dementia in each county. Labour will improve pay and conditions for those working in home help.

## ELDER CARE

**Labour will develop an elder care strategy**, building on existing knowledge in gerontology. This will include making available new technology medical devices and remote access to medical consultation for people living in isolated areas.

## DISABILITY

**Labour will further develop individualised**



**budgeting for care services to give recipients more autonomy and choice**, and we will increase funding for personal assistance services (including in educational settings) and housing adaptation grants. Labour's vision is to build an Ireland where people with disabilities are empowered to live independent lives with control, choice and options.

**Labour will increase investment in services that help prevent blindness or loss of hearing.**

**Labour will improve services for people with neurodiversity**, including breaking down barriers to social inclusion and employment, as well as providing healthcare services.

## SEXUAL HEALTH

**Labour will improve contraceptive consultations and screening for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**, particularly for at-risk groups, and pilot a scheme of mobile screenings in rural areas. We will make Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) more widely available to reverse the rise of HIV/AIDS.

## TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE

**Labour will improve access to healthcare for people who are transgender**, to speed up access to treatments such as hormone replacement therapy.

## ADDICTION

**Labour will increase funding to the Drug and Alcohol Task Forces**, as part of a process to strengthen their community development role to address the root causes of substance misuse.

**Labour will ensure that Ireland's first overdose prevention centre operates successfully**, and this model will be rolled out to other areas and to cover a wider range of substances of addiction. We will expand the availability of addiction treatment services across the country, recognising that substance misuse is now prevalent in every part of the country. We will expand public access to anti-overdose drugs such as Naloxone, for example so that first responders can carry it.

**Labour will review the health and addiction problems associated with e-cigarettes** and implement measures to discourage young people from taking up vaping.

## INSURANCE FOR HEALTHCARE BODIES

**Labour will extend State Claims Agency cover to Section 38 and 39 bodies**, to ensure that health and social care service providers who are mostly or fully funded by the HSE have their public liability insurance costs met by the State Claims Agency. This will significantly reduce their insurance premiums and free up more resources for frontline healthcare and disability services.

# HOUSING, PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Spending in 2019: €4 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 30,653

Agencies under this group include:

- An Bord Pleanála
- City, County and Combined Local Authorities
- Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency
- Housing Finance Agency
- Local Government Management Agency
- Ordnance Survey Ireland
- Property Registration Authority
- Regional Assemblies
- Residential Tenancies Board
- Valuation Office

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government will create a €16 billion fund to build 80,000 homes in five years. The Department will also publish and implement a strategy for local government to be directly and independently funded through taxation and other sources, allowing the development of greater local control over local issues, including community-level direct control of funds for their areas.



## CORE POLICIES

**Labour will introduce stronger rent control and will build 80,000 homes (see detail above).**

**Labour will allow public bodies to compulsory purchase land at current use value (see above).**

**Labour will review and change the incentives and tax treatment of property development (see above).**

**Labour will reinvigorate the national homeless strategy and homeless youth strategy (see above).**

**Labour will provide funding for local government to deliver an ambitious home insulation scheme (see above).**

## ENDING LONG-TERM HOMELESSNESS

**Labour will require local authorities to have regard to the needs of children and families who are homeless**, by enacting Labour's Housing (Homeless Families) Bill.

**Labour will implement a housing first approach to long-term homelessness**, giving people places to live, and then wrapping supports and services around them.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORTS

Labour will seek the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.

**Labour will ensure that victims of domestic abuse are given access to accommodation and housing supports**, regardless of their tenure status or home ownership status, in situations where the abuser is a joint tenant or co-owner of the property, until such a time as the victim's tenancy or ownership is resolved.

## SUPPORTING RENTERS

**Labour will ban the practice of landlords asking for more than one month's rent as a deposit.**

We will also implement the legislation on a deposit protection scheme.

**Labour will introduce a rent-to-buy scheme.**

**Labour will strengthen the powers of the**

**Rental Tenancies Board and increase its staff so that it has the capacity to fulfil its mandate.**

**Labour will regulate short-term letting.**

**Labour will oblige local authorities to publish annual statistics into inspections of private rental accommodation** to ensure regulations are correctly and effectively enforced.

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN MORTGAGE DISTRESS

**Labour will expand successful mortgage to rent schemes**, which allow people to sell their home but remain as tenants on a long-term affordable leasing arrangement with approved housing bodies.

## SUPPORTING APARTMENT OWNERS

**Labour will introduce a package of measures to assist owners of apartments that were built deficiently, including low-cost loans.** Extra assistance will be given in cases where fire safety is inadequate.

## HOMEBUILDING

**Labour will increase property taxes on vacant homes and implement a vacant homes strategy.**

**Labour will fundamentally change the role of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government**, through much greater emphasis on its planning role (including transport, schools, health facilities) and major delegation of executive housing functions and local administration in general to local government. We will restore strong rules on building heights so that developers have medium-term certainty, to encourage them to get on with developments rather than holding out for higher building heights.

**Labour will require local councils to achieve evidence-based targets for specialised forms of housing**, including accessible social housing for people with a disability and Traveller-specific housing, and will require the full use of grants for Traveller accommodation.

**Labour will require local councils to build or acquire two homes for every one that they sell**, so that the stock of public housing rises over time. We will also require local authorities to keep the same volume and quality of land in public ownership.



## PLANNING FOR A CHANGED CLIMATE

**Labour will design and implement a new process of Climate Proofing within planning**, where every planning decision will have to consider the impact upon Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions and how best to minimise these. Labour will invest in flood defences.

## STRONGER LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Labour will create a Commission on Local Government and will implement its recommendations.** The Commission will be tasked to identify government functions that would be better delivered at local level rather than centrally, and to identify how local government can be independently financed with its own earmarked streams of tax revenue to cover all of its core functions. The Commission will also consider directly-elected mayors. Ireland is effectively the most centralised country in the EU, with the weakest system of local government. European norms provide real decision making and control over money closer to the people, and this is Labour's vision for stronger local government in Ireland too. Services delivered at local level are often better value for money and can be adapted to different circumstances, compared to one-size-fits-all national policies.

**Labour will implement a strategy to strengthen communities that have been effectively abandoned by successive governments**, including deeply disadvantaged urban areas and rural towns and villages where most commercial activity has ceased. Labour will fund urban regeneration and development projects, and foster community bodies and social enterprises focused on community development work.

**Labour will legislate to create a clear division of powers between local and central government**, such as for local development plans, informed by the principle that decisions should always be taken as close as possible to the people affected by those decisions ("subsidiarity"). This will provide for elected local councils to make certain categories of decisions that cannot be over-ridden by central government without the express agreement of the Dáil.

**Labour will re-establish town councils for all towns with a population of 5,000 or more, and give them strong powers to bring decision-making to local level.** Labour will encourage the roll out of more participatory budgeting by Town Councils. Labour will create a legal definition of town to underpin this approach and to promote

better urban planning. Labour will recognise rural districts as part of the county council structure.

**Labour will provide a pathway to city status for large towns like Drogheda, Dundalk and Swords**, so that each has a development strategy to grow coherently towards a population of 50,000 or more at which point city status will be granted. The development plans will include ensuring transport infrastructure, schools and other public services, and avoiding excessive urban sprawl.

**Labour will demand that a larger portion of your local council budget is allocated to the basics**, and ensure local councils are meeting key targets.

**Labour will insist that local councils provide services such as waste collection and road repairs directly rather than contracting them out to private operators.** We will replace the practice of side-by-side waste services with tendering for market access to localities.

**Labour will maintain the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) of the Dublin Fire Brigade.**

## VOTING RIGHTS

**Labour will confer voting rights for Dáil elections on all long-term residents, living in Ireland for over five years**, regardless of citizenship.

Labour will extend voting rights to Irish citizens who move abroad, for a period of time following their departure.

**Labour will establish a powerful and independent Electoral Commission, charged with independent management of elections and electoral and political finances.** It will take over responsibility for the electoral register and encourage voter registration and turnout, including consideration of automatic voter registration. It will also consider how greater proportionality of political representation can be achieved in line with the Council of Europe recommendation of a maximum threshold of 3% for parliamentary elections, compared to Ireland's current effective threshold of 16-25%. It will take over the legal responsibility of local authorities to register all eligible voters on the electoral register and to ensure that its register of voters is complete and accurate. The Commission will prepare a strategy for lowering the voting age

to 16 and review the arguments for mandatory voting. It will also prepare public information on how voting works, aimed in particular at citizens with poor literacy or low participation rates in elections and new citizens, to encourage full democratic participation. The Commission will revise the terms of reference for constituencies to ensure the fairest and most proportionate distribution of seats possible and will abolish three-seat constituencies.

### ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

**Labour will implement a range of measures to ensure people around the country have a "right to roam" and access the countryside,** including rights of way across private property, especially around coasts and other areas where access is often restricted.

## JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Spending in 2019: €2.8 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 24,275

Agencies under this group include:

- Commissions and Special Inquiries
- Courts Service
- Data Protection Commissioner
- Forensic Science Ireland
- Garda Complaints Board
- Garda Ombudsman
- Garda Síochána
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
- Irish Prison Service
- Irish Youth Justice Service
- Legal Aid Board
- National Disability Authority
- Policing Authority
- Private Security Authority
- Probation and Welfare Service
- Reception and Integration Agency

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Justice and Equality will enhance the national response to racism and other forms of discrimination and hate crime. The Department will refocus criminal law to ensure robust policing to stop violent crime and intimidation, while providing more options for non-violent offenders to access non-custodial sentences and rehabilitation programmes.



## CORE POLICIES

**Labour will introduce new safeguards to protect young people from abuse and discrimination (see above).**

**Labour will maintain a zero-tolerance stance on racism and xenophobia (see above).**

**Labour will introduce a welcoming New Irish policy (see above).**

## POLICING

**Labour will establish local commissions to deal with violent drug gangs**, which are now operating across the whole country, to ensure violent criminals and gang leaders are brought to justice. Labour will develop supports to counter-act social and economic marginalisation that often underlies the involvement of young people in the drug trade. Labour will provide the Gardaí with all the resources they need to bring violent gang leaders to justice.

**Labour will expand the role of the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB)**, so that a unit of the CAB targets and takes away the criminal assets of lower-level criminals to deter younger people from being attracted to gang activity.

**Labour will establish a Gun Crime Commission**, to learn from other jurisdictions the best way to eliminate gun crime and other violent crime, which have escalated in recent years. This will also examine why options like the Special Criminal Court have not been used to target violent drug gangs, despite this being permitted in law.

**Labour will work to promote local policing forums and a community policing model**, with a concentration of resources in the most deprived areas. We will increase the number of civilians working within the Garda administration.

Labour will ensure that white-collar crime and corporate fraud are adequately defined and criminalised in law, with stiff penalties for offences.

**Labour will enhance training to ensure best practice for handling sexual assault and rape cases** by Gardaí and the Courts.

**Labour will commission a new report on Sexual Assault and Violence in Ireland**, building on the original SAVI report.

**Labour will increase funding to rape crisis centres.**

**Labour will give the Gardaí the power to seize and retain vehicles that are posing a public danger**, such as scrambler motorcycles.

## REGULATING GAMBLING

**Labour will implement a strategy to tighten the regulation of gambling and to reduce problem gambling in society.** We will close down illegal casinos and illegal forms of gaming.

**Labour will ban the use of credit cards for gambling.**

**Labour will change betting duty to apply to individual bets as a surcharge rather than being a tax on turnover as at present.** This will support small scale and independent bookmakers.

## LOWER CITIZENSHIP FEES

**Labour will introduce a single system of fees for citizenship**, ending the higher fees charged to those without Irish ancestors.

## ENDING THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF DIRECT PROVISION

**Labour will progressively abolish the current system of Direct Provision and move responsibility for accommodating asylum seekers to the Department of Rural and Community Affairs.** We will phase out for-profit provision of accommodation. Smaller scale tenders will be issued to approved housing bodies, and community consultation and support will be improved. Working rights for asylum seekers will be improved.

## BAN HATE CRIME

**Labour will make hate crime illegal, such as racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia.** The Gardaí will be tasked with keeping accurate statistics on hate crime, as is done in Northern Ireland.

## LGBT+ EQUALITY

**Labour will develop a stronger national LGBT+ strategy**, to focus on tackling hate crimes, discrimination in schools and workplaces and improving the mental and sexual health of LGBT+ people.

**Labour will commence all sections of the Children and Family Relationships Act.**

**Labour will amend the Gender Recognition Act 2015 to address shortcomings**, such as lack of recognition of non-binary, identified in the 2018 report on the operation of the Act.



## ADDICTION

**Labour will formally recognise that addiction to drugs is a health problem, and will not penalise minor possession of drugs by people who are addicted.** However, drug trafficking will remain illegal, and Garda resources will be focused on serious traffickers, drug-related intimidation and violent drug gangs.

## PRISON REFORM AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Labour will institute a process to improve prison conditions,** and to address the disproportionate number of people in prison with mental illness, learning disabilities and brain injuries.

**Labour will ensure that non-custodial sentences will be presumed for those convicted of minor non-violent offences.** We will provide more non-custodial sentences and rehabilitation programmes. We will tighten probation structures. For example, we will reduce the incidence of people, especially women, in prison for women in prison for minor offences such as debt, to end the harm that custodial sentences do to their children and others who rely on them for care.

## GARDA INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

**Labour will ensure trade union recognition for the Gardaí,** and allow the union to affiliate with the ICTU and to access the industrial relations institutions of the state. The government will be able to regulate and control their right to strike on the grounds of national security and preserving law and order.

## REDUCING TRIBUNAL COSTS

**Labour will conduct a cost-benefit review of commissions of investigations and special inquiries,** and we will wind down those that are unlikely to justify the legal cost.

**Labour will introduce legislation allowing for the appointment of a parliamentary inspector to avoid costly tribunals and commissions of inquiry.** The investigator would provide a mechanism for the timely and cost-effective investigation of issues giving rise to significant public concern.

## REDUCING INSURANCE COSTS

**Labour will introduce a National Claims information database** to provide transparency on claim costs and awards for injuries. We will also ensure that the Personal Injuries Commission engage in stronger scrutiny of claims and reduce the claims period for minor soft injury tissue injuries.

Labour will establish an independent Insurance Fraud Unit to be funded by insurance companies who would be obliged to automatically refer exaggerated and misleading claims to the Gardaí.

**Labour will require lawyers to comply with the duties of candour,** to ensure they do not to seek to win litigation by any improper means. We will also seek stronger enforcement of legislation surrounding advertising of “no win, no fee” legal services.

## PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND REFORM

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will enhance protections so that the people's money is not wasted, especially on major capital projects like the National Children's Hospital. The Department will renew Labour's campaign for greater openness and transparency across all public agencies and private agencies in receipt of significant levels of public money. The Department will oversee the development of a robust system of independent funding for local government and the transfer of more powers to local government and to communities, so that more decisions are made closer to the people affected by those decisions and by people themselves.

Spending in 2019: €1.2 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 3,674

Agencies under this group include:

- National Shared Services Office
- Office of Government Procurement
- Office of Public Works (OPW)
- Office of the Ombudsman
- Public Appointments Service
- State Laboratory

### CORE POLICIES

**Labour will stop the waste of public money through a programme of openness and transparency (see above).**

**Labour will appoint a separate Minister for Public Expenditure (see above).**

**Labour will assess the competencies and skills of senior managers in the public service (see above).**

### REDUCING THE WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY

**Labour will introduce a comprehensive annual Spending Review and Waste Audit** that will examine all areas of public expenditure. The purpose of this strategic budgeting approach will be to find the most cost-effective ways to provide services to the public and to improve future growth and productivity.

### NATIONAL PAY AGREEMENT

**Labour will negotiate with public service unions to reach a pay agreement to succeed the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA)**, which expires at the end of 2020, including establishing a structured, fair and sustainable funding model for Section 39 agencies, to underpin services and ensure fair pay.

**Labour will end the pay gap between new entrants to teaching and nursing and their peers doing the same work.**

**Labour will end the two-tier pay system for school secretaries** and seek a resolution of the pensions issue for CE supervisors as per the 2008 Labour Court recommendations.

**Labour will instruct all public bodies to offer flexible working times within six months to all employees where feasible**, to immediately improve work-life balance, especially for parents, and to reduce traffic congestion at peak times.

**Labour will pilot a voluntary redeployment scheme for public servants** to enable them to work closer to their local communities.

### PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

**Labour will insist that all public procurement uses social and environmental clauses to full effect**, as permitted under EU rules, in order to encourage local employment, good labour standards, environmental protection, etc. Procurement will include minimum requirements for industrial relations standards.

**Labour will ban the resale of state contracts to other providers by successful bidders** unless they have Ministerial permission, and will tighten up other aspects of procurement to ensure value for public money.

## RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Rural and Community Development will publish and implement a strategy to regenerate Ireland's towns and rural areas. The Department will also implement a new relationship between the state and the community and voluntary sector, which provides many important public services and community facilities.

### RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Labour will rebuild economic activity in every region by investing in every one of Ireland's 80 largest towns, including investment to develop their town centres.** Larger towns act as hubs for smaller towns and villages, and in turn for the surrounding townlands and rural areas. Labour's strategy is to ensure that each town has more medium-sized employers (50-250 jobs each). Incentives and grants will be created to assist towns that lack larger employers, including infrastructure grants and temporary rebates on commercial rates.

**Labour will expand the role of Post Offices to increase their viability,** by using them as a point of access for the services of a range of other public bodies. Labour will also trial using Post Office counters to provide services from community and voluntary bodies.

### TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

**Labour will develop a holistic strategy to improve the conditions of the Traveller Community** and to eliminate prejudice against Travellers, with a focus on creating economic opportunities.

Spending in 2019: €291 million

Employees in this group (early 2019): 211

Agencies under this group include:

- Charities Regulator
- Pobal
- Water Safety Ireland
- Western Development Commission

### AGE-FRIENDLY VILLAGES

**Labour will develop and implement a national strategy for age-friendly villages, and bespoke retirement villages in larger towns and suburbs,** so that older people can enjoy independent living in close proximity to all the shops and services they might require.

### COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

**Labour will develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for the relationship between the community and voluntary sector and the state,** including the development of sustainable funding models based on full-cost recovery for services commissioned by the state.

**Labour will streamline, reduce and rationalise the compliance and reporting requirements for voluntary and community groups,** so that they can spend more time and resource on providing essential frontline services.

### DORMANT ACCOUNTS FUND

**Labour will increase transparency in how the Dormant Accounts Funds are allocated,** and we will add climate action as a ground under which the funds can be allocated.



# TRANSPORT, TOURISM AND SPORT

**Labour's vision:** Under Labour, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will focus on policies to improve public transport and to reduce congestion and commuting times. The Labour Party will increase the current transport budget funding for walking and cycling. The Department will roll out an enhanced programme to encourage British tourists to continue to visit Ireland post-Brexit. The Department will ensure greater transparency in the funding of sporting organisations in wake of the FAI scandal.

## CORE POLICIES

**Labour will invest in public transport and cycling infrastructure (see above).**

**Labour will target electric vehicle grants to those who need them, especially in rural Ireland (see above).**

## BETTER, CLEAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Labour will establish a structured procurement plan for public transport infrastructure** (i.e. Luas and rail carriages, and buses) to replace, modernise and ensure capacity will meet future demand.

**Labour will reverse the privatisation of public transport.**

**Labour will vigorously enforce clearways during peak commuting hours to reduce congestion and to ensure bus lanes are kept clear.** We will trial the use of cameras in bus lanes. Deliveries will be permitted for 18 to 20 hours a day, but not at peak times.

Labour will expand the Local Links scheme to include peak-time shuttles to inter-city commuter services.

**Labour will ensure that every schoolchild in**

Spending in 2019: €2.3 billion

Employees in this group (early 2019): 1,872

Agencies under this group include:

- Commission for Aviation Regulation
- Commission for Railway Regulation
- Fáilte Ireland
- Medical Bureau of Road Safety
- National Transport Authority
- Road Safety Authority
- Sport Ireland
- Tourism Ireland
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland

**rural areas has access to a place on a school bus**, and we will examine the potential for short-distance school buses to ease congestion in towns and cities.

## RURAL TRANSPORT

**Labour will re-launch a simplified version of the Rural Hackney Scheme** and provide subsidies for operators in rural areas, including local publicans. We will also promote a Pooled Group Insurance scheme for hackney drivers, to lower their premiums.

## CYCLING AND WALKING

**Labour will dedicate 10% of the national transport budget to the development of cycling and walking infrastructure**, and will prioritise public transport infrastructure such as rail, light rail and bus infrastructure.

**Labour will expand the Public Bikes schemes** to large towns and introduce a subvention to local authorities for maintaining bikes. We will also prioritise delivery of a network of fast, safe and segregated off-road Cycling Highways.

**Labour will promote a bike-to-school scheme**, with incentives for the purchase of bicycles by schoolchildren along the same lines as the bike-to-work scheme.

**Labour will regulate e-scooters to ensure safe usage for all road users.**



## TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Labour will retain passenger charges at Dublin Airport**, overturning the proposed 20% reduction, in order to ensure the airport's continuing viability.

**Labour will prioritise infrastructure projects needed for the economic development of cities and large towns outside of Dublin**, such as the North Ring Road in Cork, raising Rosslare Europort to Tier 1 status and the Metro to Dublin Airport/Swords/Fingal.

## TAXIS

**Labour will seek a higher and equal standard of vetting for taxis drivers before licences are issued** and deter illegal activities through adequate enforcement of the sector.

**Labour will review the commissioning of taxis by public agencies**, such as the school transport system and use by the HSE, to make sure that commissioning processes are open and competitive.

## ARTS AND CULTURE

**Labour will continue to fund, support and develop Ireland's art, music and cultural heritage.** Labour will support the creative industries sector, including film and audiovisual, games, animation and digital screen content.

## TOURISM

**Labour will seek to develop a fully integrated and sustainable marine coastal tourism policy**, to enhance both the economic growth and environmental preservation of our coastal communities.

## SPORT

**Labour will require at least 40% representation of women in sport governing bodies**, and will push for greater participation in sport by women and girls.

Labour will ring-fence part of the Betting Levy to fund animal welfare inspectors to ensure only the highest practice is permitted in any sports or pursuits involving animals (such as greyhound racing and horseracing) and to reform the situation of unwanted dogs.

**Labour will implement an ambitious strategy to save community grassroots football and to strengthen football's role in social inclusion**, following the serious financial problems in the Football Association of Ireland (FAI). One eighth of the Betting Duty receipts will be allocated to a new Football Fund. This would go some way to recognising that the majority of bets placed are on football. (Based on an estimated total revenue of €100 million from Betting Duty in 2020, this would be roughly €12.5 million).

This funding would be a lifeline to the game of football and to the many communities who have been failed by the FAI. And it would give a reformed FAI the opportunity to get its finances in order. Labour will support splitting Irish football into two entities, with the state taking responsibility for funding the grassroots underage game.

Funding would focus on social inclusion, gender equality, anti-racism and integration. The state's role will be to support the model emerging from the football community, rather than initiate and develop it. Part of the goal of the new grassroots underage football organisation would be to tackle low education levels within the domestic game and to encourage school completion.

A pilot programme would involve five DEIS secondary schools to provide football academies, along the lines of Stephen Elliot academies in the UK, where schools provide intensive football coaching in tandem with regular schoolwork and progress towards qualifications. The new funding would allow for an increase in the number of Football Development Officers co-funded with local authorities.









# LABOUR

BUILDING AN EQUAL SOCIETY

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