

# PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## Where do candidates stand on investment in Housing?

### Key issues

Housing is a human right, but the Government has abandoned the construction of public housing on a sufficient scale and handed over responsibility for housing provision to private developers and the market, whose only interest is profit. This marketisation of housing is failing to deliver homes to hundreds of thousands of people around the country.

Locked out of homeownership, many struggle to find and hold on to private rented accommodation and cover soaring rents.

Young workers are remaining living in their parent's home, delaying adulthood, to secure a roof over their head.

The number of people who are homeless has now officially surpassed 10,000, including 4,000 children - a record high that is a source of deep shame and anger for all.

### Key questions for candidates

If elected to the Dáil will you support measures to:

- invest in a major local authority-led public housing programme on public land?
- deliver housing that is genuinely affordable to buyers earning an ordinary wage?
- ensure progress towards a cost-rental model that provides stable, affordable tenure for renters?
- end evictions into homelessness?
- enhance homeless services and supports?
- create a legal right to housing?

# ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC SERVICES

## Where do candidates stand on accessible PUBLIC SERVICES?

### Key issues

Public services extend opportunities, protect the vulnerable, and improve everyone's quality of life. They are essential to economic development and strengthening our communities.

Over the term of the next Government, we need to invest more in our public services including in healthcare, in childcare and eldercare, in education, in public infrastructure.

Achieving these goals means abandoning populist promises to cut taxes. Indeed, we need new taxes on capital, particularly wealth, in order to raise money for social investment and ensure workers receive a fairer share of the economic growth now taking place.

### Key questions to candidates

If elected to the Dáil will you support measures to:

- deliver an adequately-funded and universally-accessible single-tier health service, as set out in the Sláintecare programme?
- keep people out of hospital and long-term care, whenever possible, by investing in quality community health care, health education and early diagnosis?
- expand public provision of high quality, subsidised early years care and education?
- provide additional resources for education, particularly to reduce class sizes, the early school leaving rate for young people with disabilities and to improve basic digital skills and lifelong learning?
- close the funding deficit in the third-level sector?
- hold a constitutional referendum on public ownership of water services?
- invest in public transport?

# A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR WORKERS

## Where do all candidates stand?

### Before you vote in the General Election 2020, do you know where your candidates stand on issues affecting workers and their families?

When candidates are canvassing for your vote it's important to ask what they will do in the next Dáil to deliver a **LIVING WAGE** and **PENSION**, strong **WORKERS' RIGHTS**, a **JUST TRANSITION** that protects and supports workers and communities as we act on climate change, access to quality **PUBLIC SERVICES**, and investment in public and genuinely affordable **HOUSING**.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has prepared this leaflet setting out key questions on these priorities which you can ask General Election candidates when they come looking for your vote.

When you vote on 8th February, make sure you do so fully aware of the position that your candidates would take, whether in government or in opposition, on the issues that can help build **A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR WORKERS**.

# STRONG WORKERS RIGHTS

## Where do candidates stand on Workers' Rights?

### Key issues

The challenges we now face as a country in terms of wages, conditions of employment, and inequality will not be resolved without fundamental reform of labour law.

While the Constitution guarantees the right to form/ join a trade union, there is no legal entitlement to be collectively represented by a trade union nor is an employer obliged to engage in collective bargaining negotiations.

In the absence of trade union legislation many workers are denied the right to come together and collectively bargain their wages, benefits and working conditions.

Until meaningful action is taken to guarantee bargaining power to all workers and a right to organise, we will continue to fail to tackle inequality, poverty pay and insecure work.

### Key questions to candidates

If elected to the Dáil will you support a series of additional rights for trade union members to be put on a legal footing through a new Trade Union Rights Act, including the right to:

- collective bargaining for all workers?
- organise within the workplace?
- access for trade union officials to workplaces for the purpose of communicating with members?
- reasonable time off to engage in union activities?
- protection against penalisation on the grounds of trade union membership or activities?

# A LIVING WAGE AND PENSION

## Where do candidates stand on a Living Wage and Pension?

### Key issues

The number of people in work today is at an all-time record high. But, against this backdrop the economy is not working for far too many working people.

Low-pay is all too common. For example, 7 in 10 workers in the Accommodation and Food sector earn below €400 per week. Were it not for the half a billion euros spent annually on welfare top-ups to the poverty wages of working families, the rates of in-work poverty would be considerably higher.

Decent jobs are fast becoming a relic of the past in certain trades and professions due to the practice of some employers misclassifying their workers as self-employed. This results in workers being denied the full range of social welfare benefits, along with access to employment rights and protections.

The gender pay gap still persists, with women's pay rates 13.9% behind those of men.

The planned increase in the pension age from 66 to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028 is an attack on the living standards of workers in their old age, which will push many into poverty.

### Key questions for candidates

If elected to the Dáil will you support measures to:

- reverse the decision to increase the pension age?
- align the €10.10 National Minimum Wage to a Living Wage of €12.30 per hour?
- end bogus self-employment?
- pass into law the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill?

# CLIMATE ACTION AND A JUST TRANSITION

## Where do candidates stand on a JUST TRANSITION?

### Key issues

Congress welcomes the national conversation that is now taking place on the transition to a low carbon economy.

We are confronted with an existential threat to our planet that is on a scale that we have never faced before.

But, workers and communities are expected to bear the burden of the adjustment to a sustainable economy.

They are being asked to make a major sacrifice for the wider common good - to surrender jobs, opportunities and livelihoods in the battle against climate change.

Policy must be shaped by the principles of a Just Transition.

A Just Transition is one that secures the future livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a low carbon economy. It is based on social dialogue between workers and their unions, employers and government.

### Key questions to candidates

If elected to the Dáil will you support measures to:

- establish a national Just Transition Taskforce, which will include all stakeholders, to ensure the workers and communities do not bear the brunt of a move to reduce carbon emissions?
- commit appropriate investment to develop quality green employment?
- counter-balance the regressive nature of a carbon tax – a public programme of deep retrofitting, new infrastructure to reduce energy consumption and better public transport?