

# A SOCIETY FOR THE MANY

POLICIES FOR  
A NEW REPUBLIC



PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

SOCIALISM FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



# A MESSAGE TO OUR CONSTITUENTS

Policy making in any civilised society must start with the essential needs of the majority. Housing, healthcare and education must be properly resourced in order to give people the basis upon which to build happy, healthy and fulfilling lives for themselves and their communities. Fine Gael are not short on the rhetoric of inclusivity, but even a casual look at their priorities reveals the elitism at the heart of their politics. Take housing as perhaps the most obvious example. As part of his Rebuilding Ireland launch in 2016, the Minister for Housing, Simon Coveney, promised there would be no homeless people living in hotel accommodation by the middle of 2017. This deadline then promptly came and went with the numbers in homelessness continuing to rise while the Minister himself moved off to Foreign Affairs. Coveney's successor in the role, Eoghan Murphy has also made a virtue of big announcements that fail to materialise, at the same time as his Department massages the homelessness figures to keep the number below 10,000. The real figures are closer to 13,000 but even this doesn't capture the deeper hurt or the wider issue.

Fine Gael Ministers routinely profess their concern for those in need of public housing but their real priority has consistently been to reflate the property market. In the last six years the value of property in the state has once again skyrocketed thanks in large part to the government's refusal to build anything like the required levels of public and affordable housing. If the government built on the scale required it would end the homelessness crisis and clear the social housing waiting lists. But it would also reduce private sector rents, property prices and the cost of mortgages. This would hurt the bankers, developers and vulture funds that currently benefit from housing policy and the people at the top of society that support Fine Gael. Our alternative in this, and in every area, is to develop policies for the clear majority.

*Society for the Many* is an example of what could be done with the right vision coupled with people power pressure from below. In areas from housing and healthcare, to the environment and the border, People Before Profit have ideas that would lift people in almost every income bracket and begin to create a more cohesive society free from the scapegoating and stigmatising of Fine Gael and their coalition partners - Fianna Fail.

A hundred years of failed establishment politics and broken promises is more than enough. People Before Profit are proud to provide a socialist alternative fit for our lives in the 21st century.



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# INTRODUCTION

Conservative politicians consistently put the interests of the 1% ahead of the rest of society. When the banks collapsed in 2008 for example, Fianna Fail had no hesitation in using billions of taxpayers' money to bail them out. This fed into a doubling of deprivation in the country, but it was deemed a price worth paying for a return to financial stability. Similar considerations dominate taxation policy with corporations paying lower rates in Ireland than the cleaners in their headquarters. During the crisis, workers were asked to pay higher taxes, but this never applied to the profits of the corporate sector.

When pressed on this support for the wealthy, right-wing commentators invariably use the same tired mantra- that without a healthy economy there would be no resources for the rest of society. The implication is that strong economic growth makes life better for everyone, but is this really the case?

Over the last five years Ireland has had the fastest growing economy in the European Union. Figures compiled by the European Commission confirm that Irish growth is three times the European average, with a headline rate of 7.3% for 2017 and 8.9% for 2018. <sup>1</sup> If conservatives were to be believed, this would be the perfect time to finally put the economy in the service of the people.

Irish GDP per capita is now the fifth highest in the world and the country has never had more accumulated wealth.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, however, Ireland languishes near the bottom of the league tables on key social services and living conditions. Historic crises in housing and healthcare rightly claim the bulk of our attention, but there are also major problems with the costs of childcare, congestion in our cities, broadband in our rural communities, Co2 emissions and low pay for our youth. Despite record levels of economic resources there are also one million people living in consistent deprivation – 800,000 of these in ongoing poverty.<sup>3</sup>

Any recovery worth the name would have lifted those on middle incomes and the poor, but instead, workers have delivered an economic recovery without any significant improvements in their quality of life. The recent nurses and midwife's strike shows this particularly clearly. Over the last 10 years nurses have taken pay cuts between 20-30%. They are also overworked and understaffed with nurse to patient ratios double what are considered safe levels. People Before Profit want a recovery that is shared by nurses, midwives and the wider working class. In this document we look at some of the key policies aimed at improving living standards for the majority - a goal that must inform decision making in a modern republic.





# HOUSING FOR ALL

There used to be a certain level of decency in Ireland. Even in its poorest decades, the state provided homes for its citizens and the sight of a homeless person was both rare and shocking. Today, homelessness and housing poverty are all around us. Fine Gael have been in office for eight years, but instead of meeting people's fundamental need for a home, they have relied overwhelmingly on market forces. This turns houses into commodities rather than seeing them as essential services – a policy that suits the top 20% of Irish society.

One of Fine Gael's key objectives was to reflate the property market so that banks, speculators, developers and landlords would increase their wealth. This has been incredibly successful, as the value of accumulated assets in the state has risen by €300 billion since 2012. The human costs have been tremendous however, with large sections of Irish society now living in housing poverty. Lets look at the winners and the losers of FG's policy.

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

- Two thirds of all wealth in the state is in property.
- Household wealth was increased by €300 billion in the last five years.
- The top 20% of Irish households own 75% of the wealth.

# WINNERS

**Vulture Funds** – Fine Gael (FG) met with the private funds industry on 65 occasions between 2012 and 2014. They subsequently introduced special tax breaks for international investors and facilitated their purchase of between €200-€300 billion of distressed assets. <sup>4</sup>

**Landlords** – By refusing to build adequate public and affordable housing, FG has facilitated a major spike in rents and house prices in the state. By co-incidence one in three TDs from Fine Gael and Fianna Fail are registered as landlords.

**Banks** – The state bailed out the Irish banks and failed to protect customers who were overcharged or had their loans transferred to vulture funds.

**Developers** - The National Assets Management Agency (NAMA) took over loans from the top developers in the state, hired many of them to work for a salary of €100,000 a year and often gave them credit to continue their projects.

# LOSERS

**Homeless People** - The high cost of renting coupled with a severe lack of public housing has left more than 10,000 people homeless – 3,600 of them children. <sup>6</sup>

**Renters** - Rents are now at an all-time high. The average cost of renting in Ireland is now €1,304 a month, making it 75% more expensive than the bottom of the market and 26% higher than the previous peak during the Celtic Tiger. <sup>7</sup>

**People on Housing Lists** - There are roughly 87,000 people languishing on social housing waiting lists despite there being zoned land to accommodate more than 100,000 houses. <sup>8</sup>

**Mortgage Holders** - Irish mortgage holders are forced to pay the highest rate in the European Union. Figures from the Irish Central Bank reveal that banks here charge on average 3.2% compared with 1.8% on the continent working out at an extra €65,000 on a €300,000 mortgage over a 25 year term. <sup>9</sup>

**People in Mortgage Arrears** - Irish people paid over the odds for property during the bubble and faced higher than average mortgage rates on their loans. This coupled with the unemployment crisis has left 72,000 families in mortgage arrears.

Like education and healthcare, People Before Profit regard a family home as a fundamental human right. To vindicate this right, we would hold a referendum to insert a 'right to housing' into the constitution.

Beyond this, we would call a national housing emergency, create a national construction company and use publicly zoned land to build and acquire one hundred thousand public and affordable houses.

According to the Residential Land Availability Survey published by the Department of Finance in 2015, there was zoned land for 414,712 residential properties across the country - with 116,705 in Dublin.<sup>10</sup> Of this just over 100,000 units could be built on land owned by local authorities and the National Assets Management Agency. Instead of selling this land to the private sector at knock down prices, we would build on it, ensuring a proper social mix by scrapping the threshold for getting a local authority house. If necessary we would also use the state to engage in compulsory purchase on the rest of this zoned land in much the same way as the Irish Development Agency does for big business.

Building public and affordable housing on public land would end the homelessness crisis and clear the social housing waiting lists within five years. But it would also create a number of positive spill-over effects for other people in the housing market.

Increasing supply in a significant way, would relieve the cost of private rent and put pressure on the banks to reduce their mortgage rates. It would also reduce the cost of buying, further reducing the borrowing costs of families trying to get into the property market.

A major housebuilding program could also reduce the stigma associated with council housing by providing it to people on every level of income.

## *HOUSING ACTIVITY IN THE DAIL*

In October 2018 we put forward a motion to declare a housing emergency, end evictions into homelessness and increase spending on public and affordable housing. The motion passed by 83 votes to 42, but the government have refused to implement it.





# OUR SOLUTION

**Homelessness** – We would build 10,000 homes in year one to get people out of homelessness.

**Waiting Lists** – We would build 100,000 public houses over the course of a decade and task NAMA with providing 25,000 affordable houses in the next five years.

**Renters** - People Before Profit would set up a Rental Board with the express aim of cutting rents by linking them to the Consumer Price Index and introduce legal measures to stop landlords refusing state payments like HAP and RAS.

**Affordable Homes** - People Before Profit would end speculation on land prices and insist that land surrounding cities be sold at lower rates to facilitate cheap house building. We would reduce the cost of homes through state building projects and look to offer alternative sources of credit through the network of credit unions. We would also forbid the scandal of building self-certification to make sure all properties are safe to live in.

**Mortgage Arrears** – We would ban evictions for those in genuine mortgage distress.

**Minorities** - People Before Profit would establish an agency to oversee the delivery of culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation and increase supply for people with disabilities and special needs.

**Students** – Many students are struggling to go to university due to the high cost of renting. To tackle this PBP would spend €500 million annually to provide suitable student accommodation.

## 2019 POLICY INTERVENTIONS<sup>11</sup>

Acquire 2,500 vacant units in Dublin  
Acquire 2,500 vacant units outside Dublin  
Build 10,000 council homes as part of a 100,000 Public Housing Programme  
Increase the public allocation on private land from 10-20%.  
Task the National Assets Management Agency with delivering 5,000 social and affordable units in 2019.



# HEALTHY SOCIETY HEALTHY LIVES

Fine Gael are obsessed with economic growth, but for most voters housing and healthcare are the most important issues facing the country. This is borne out by a recent survey in the Sunday Times and a host of previous studies into voter intentions.<sup>12</sup> How we treat the sick and vulnerable is an important measure of any civilised society.

Mental and physical wellbeing are essential for happy and fulfilled lives, but in our two-tier system, the size of your wallet often plays a crucial role in the level of your healthcare. Take waiting lists in public hospitals as an example.

The National Treatment Purchase Fund keeps definitive figures on the numbers waiting for medical procedures. In June 2018, they revealed that 707,000 people are now waiting for some form of medical intervention – the highest number in the history of the state. Meanwhile, the influential Euro-Health Consumer Index has consistently ranked Ireland as having among the worst hospital outcomes as measured by 48 indicators including, waiting times, patient information, treatment and results.<sup>13</sup> Tellingly, Ireland ranked 14th in the 2013 ECHI index but has since fallen to 24th despite the extra resources available to the government.<sup>14</sup>

## COMBINED INPATIENT AND OUTPATIENT NUMBERS (NATIONAL TREATMENT PURCHASE FUND)<sup>15</sup>

YEAR	PATIENT NUMBERS
2014	448,886
2015	518,573
2016	588,774

# WAITING LISTS AND OVERCROWDING KILLS

## 350 PEOPLE ANNUALLY

(IRISH ASSOCIATION OF  
EMERGENCY MEDICINE)

This is quite literally a matter of life and death. Responding to the crisis of overcrowding that grips Irish hospitals every winter, the Irish Association of Emergency Medicine stated that leaving patients on hospital trolleys accounts for roughly 350 needless deaths every year. These figures have been corroborated by the General Secretary of the INMO, Phil Ní Sheaghdha, who has confirmed that 50% more patients die in Irish hospitals than those with safe staffing levels. People Before Profit support nurses claims for a pay rise to bring them in line with other healthcare professionals. We would end all forms of pay apartheid to retain proper staffing levels to make our hospitals safer.

Being poor is also really bad for your health. On average, wealthier people live seven years more than those stuck in consistent disadvantage. Poorer women are also eight times more likely to smoke than their wealthier counterparts with all of the health problems that go along with this.<sup>16</sup> But even if we control for these lifestyle issues, poorer people still die younger.

Reflecting on the growing health divide, Dr Marian O' Reilly, chief nutritionist for Safefood Ireland noted that "People on low incomes eat less well and are at higher risk of certain diseases such as heart disease and certain cancers, and diet is part of the situation....it costs extra to eat a healthy balanced diet rather than a diet that's very highly processed with low levels of variety and low in fruit and vegetables. For those on low incomes, in particular families with kids, it can take up to a third of their total income to buy a healthy week's food." Our mental health services are also in crisis.

## MENTAL HEALTH IN CRISIS

In 2018, the Chairman of the Mental Health Commission, John Saunders, denounced the government for its funding of mental health services in Ireland. According to a report by his Agency the problems in the area include:

- A lack of funding for counselling and family services
- Staff shortages at the Central Mental Hospital
- The use of prisons as dumping grounds for mentally ill patients
- The seclusion of adults with severe mental health problems in dirty – community based residences.
- There are also more than 7,000 children with mental health issues waiting on community and psychological supports.

This is as callous as it is short sighted. Funding children and adults with mental health difficulties is not only the right thing to do – it also provides the best chance of saving money in the longer term as people get the support they need to integrate into society and build their own lives. People Before Profit would increase the mental health budget by €307 million to bring spending in line with Vision for Change. We would also increase the health and wellbeing budget by €275 million in 2019 including €40 million for children's health and wellbeing.

# OUR SOLUTION

People Before Profit believe that healthcare is a human right that must be funded from general taxation. We believe that everyone should have equal access to this system based on their medical needs not their ability to pay. To achieve this we advocate moving towards a National Healthcare Service that is universal, comprehensive, democratically planned, funded by progressive taxation and free at the point of use.

## FIVE KEY ASPECTS OF A NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

- Universal
- Comprehensive
- Democratically Planned and led by Workers
- Funded through general taxation
- Free at the Point of Use

Beyond this we would abolish all GP charges, prescription charges, and other out-of-pocket charges by reducing the drug payment scheme threshold to zero.

## *OUR PROMISE*

Cutting waiting lists through healthier lifestyles and increasing the number of hospital beds to 21,000 in line with European norms would allow us to offer the following promise to all patients:

- Guaranteed access to healthcare within 18 weeks
- Guaranteed access to emergency care 4 hours after presenting
- Elective in-patient care with 12 weeks of referral
- Outpatient care within 10 weeks and diagnostic procedures within 10 days
- Increase ambulances and air ambulances to meet 8 minute response times



# SLÁINTE CARE

Britain created its National Health Service in the wake of the devastation created by the Second World War - proving that resources are not the issue. The key problem is ideology, as successive governments have allowed private profit making into public healthcare. This is out of step with the recent Slainte Care Report – nominally backed by most parties in the Dail – which advocates “a healthcare system where the majority of services are delivered in the community, where care is safe, timely, and accessible, and access is based on need not ability to pay”.<sup>18</sup> If implemented, Slainte Care would move healthcare in a progressive direction but the government have yet to financially back the plan put forward in 2017. We support key aspects of this model, but we would go much further in preventing profit making from people’s healthcare.

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Irish people take 40% more prescription drugs than the European Average. This is partly due to having the longest waiting lists for medical treatment in Europe.*

## PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE

If one strand of our policy is equal access to medical treatment, another is the need for a more healthy society. Ireland is completely overmedicated with people taking €500 worth of prescription drugs annually. One reason for this is the massive waiting lists in Irish hospitals which have coincided with a rise in the use of powerful pain medication of 1,000% over the last decade.<sup>19</sup> The pharmaceutical industry have a strong profit motive in keeping people on medication, but this is both expensive and often comes with damaging side effects.

**People Before Profit believes in a different model of health and wellbeing. Our goal is to reduce dependency on medication through tackling waiting lists, investing in primary health care centers and promoting healthier lifestyles. In particular, we would:**

- Replace the Health Service Executive with democratically elected Health Councils and an Independent Health Promotion Agency.
- Create a network of 500 Primary Care Teams working from Community Primary Health Care Centres and aligned with a community based system of social care.
- Increase funding for early intervention and increase personal assistants payments to give everyone the chance to live independently.
- Prioritise mental health spending by moving to 12% of the overall health budget.
- Use public facilities to create cheap gyms and community fitness programmes (Operation Transformation in the community for example).
- Create Fruit and Veg Clubs in all schools to make sure children get their five a day.
- Create a country wide system of cycle lanes to incentivise people to cycle to work and around their communities.



## 2019 POLICY INTERVENTIONS

Create 1,000 new beds  
Employ 4,000 extra nurses  
Universal free GP care  
Universal Primary Care



# CARE AND EDUCATION

People Before Profit is motivated by a central ambition – to help each individual to reach their full potential in a society geared towards human flourishing. Education and care are essential to this project, as they equip people with the social, emotional and critical faculties necessary for productive and fulfilling lives.

An educated society is reflexive, balanced and critically aware. This will make those living in it more able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

There are some positives in our education system in terms of overall participation rates, but the inequality of the wider society infects education along with everything else. This starts at the pre-school level.

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

The government currently gives €700 million to corporations in tax breaks for research and development. We would redirect this money to our universities.

# PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Children have the right to education from birth under Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is linked to the maximum development of their capacities under Article 6 (2) of the same Convention. The Irish state therefore has an obligation to provide universal childcare support, but as in so many other areas, this is not happening at present. The OECD's 'Education at a Glance 2017' report found that Irish expenditure on early years education amounts to only 0.1% of GDP, significantly below the OECD average spend of 0.8% of GDP.<sup>20</sup> The highest levels of expenditure were recorded in the Nordic Countries which invest between 1.3% and 1.9% of GDP in early year's education annually. This inevitably puts pressure on parents who often turn to private operators to meet their childcare needs. Irish childcare costs are currently the second most expensive in Europe after Switzerland. Consider the following information from the OECD.

## THE COST OF CHILDCARE IN THE OECD<sup>21</sup>

	OECD	Ireland
Net cost of childcare as a percentage of average wage	18.4%	45.2%
Cost as a percentage of net family income	11.8%	25.6%

According to Eurostat, 37.7% of parents identified financial concerns as a major impediment to accessing childcare facilities compared with just 0.7% in Sweden and Denmark. Meanwhile, a survey of 3,000 childcare workers found the average hourly wage is a little over €10 an hour.

The net result is an expensive system that puts pressure on families and childcare professionals alike.



Our alternative is to move towards Scandinavian levels of funding via a state run model of childcare. Initially this would involve enhanced provision and affordability of available services by:

- Increasing the current allocation of 3 hours a day 15 hours a week to 30 hours a week available all year round to children from the age of two.
- Increasing capitation grants to make sure that parents only pay a maximum of 30% of the total cost.
- Conducting a quality audit to provide baseline data for the implementation of a National Early Years Strategy.
- Overtime, we would move to a National Childcare Service funded by moving expenditure to 1% of GDP. This public childcare system should guarantee access to childcare, initially, at an affordable cost and, eventually, for free. People Before Profit would pay particular attention to single parents and migrant women who are currently at much higher risk of poverty and social marginalisation. In Budget 2019, PBP ring-fenced €450 million to employ 25,000 childcare professionals and €550 million to transition towards a National Child Care Service.

## BETTER REGULATION, PAY AND CONDITIONS

Childcare workers are overworked and underpaid. They also do extremely important work that should be recognised through proper regulation. To make this happen PBP would:

- Establish a National Regulatory Body to ensure the provision of quality services.
- Improve qualifications, skills and training for childcare professionals.
- Unionise the industry and move pay towards the average industrial wage.

## PARENTAL PARTICIPATION, STAY AT HOME PARENTS AND PARENTAL LEAVE

Parents are vital stakeholders who must be consulted and fully included in the care and development of their children. Ireland currently only offers mothers six months paid maternity leave. People Before Profit would extend this to 12 months to be used by either of the parents. Maternity leave should also be paid at the full wage rate by private employers.

# PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY

Ireland does not have a publicly owned primary school system. Instead 95% of primary schools are owned and managed by the Catholic Church – and funded mainly from the public purse. One result is an excessive amount of time spent on religious instruction, particularly in First Class, which coincides with Holy Communion.

Primary schools are also under-funded. Classrooms are not equipped to modern standards and most schools do not have science laboratories. This is felt more keenly in poorer areas where children often leave school earlier with less qualifications.

There is a greater diversity in second level education but there is still a high degree of church control and significant underfunding.



## To make education work for everyone we would:

- Establish a maximum class size of 22 (in Budget 2019) and eventually move to 18.
- Increase the number of teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNA) in line with a maximum class size of 18 students and on each individual student's need for an SNA.
- Autism proof all secondary schools to give every pupil the chance to develop.
- Employ more support staff including lab assistants to cater for Science and ICT classes and guidance counselors to help young people find the right path for them.
- Move away from rote learning and exam focused education towards critical awareness and higher order thinking skills.
- Reduce core costs by providing school transport, uniforms, meals, educational materials and play and PE facilities free in all schools.
- Introduce modules on philosophy, political economy, arts and media studies in second level to promote creativity and civic awareness.
- Ensure that an annual ring-fenced library grant to all schools is available to enhance pupil centred learning and the latest IT facilities.

## To create equal access to secular education we would:

- Take schools into public ownership and put them under local democratic control. This would involve removing section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act and Rule 68 from National Schools to make school hiring policies secular and universal.
- Abolish all requirements for compulsory religious instruction – allow religious groups (and non-religious groups) access to school facilities after school hours.
- Protect Small Schools in line with the wishes of local communities and parents, particularly in rural areas.

# HIGHER EDUCATION

There are three major problems with our higher education sector – access, funding and an increasingly corporatized agenda in terms of curricula and university structures. A study by the Higher Education Authority for the academic year 2015-16 showed that teenagers from the wealthiest parts of Dublin have a 95% chance of making it to third level whilst in Dublin 17 this falls to less than 20%.<sup>22</sup> This effects life chances in a decisive way and makes a mockery of the idea that Ireland values equality of opportunity.

## To make sure everyone has access to life-long learning we would:


- Abolish all fees including the 'registration fee' which has been used to introduce charges through the back door.
- Guarantee access to students from low income backgrounds by restoring proper maintenance grants.
- Extend the back to education scheme and increase investment in third level education to allow people to retrain.
- Subsidise accommodation for students who have to travel to go to university.
- Re-coup some of the costs by insisting that students in key areas such as medicine, engineering and science who work for the public sector do not expect salaries of more than €80,000.

## To reduce the corporate influence we would:

- Challenge the move away from general academic studies to modular programmes which deliver specific skills and learning outcomes, devised to enhance 'human capital' for employers.
- Direct funding towards a more critical university and information technology system with collaboration between students, lectures and other members of staff.
- Give employees more autonomy, reduce the bureaucratization of the university system and increase the role of lecturing and non-lecturing staff in managing the university.
- A one year sabbatical scheme to be made available to teachers to engage in upskilling/professional development/education.
- Reduce corporate influence on research by redirecting money from R&D tax credits corporations receive to the university sector in order to do blue sky research.

## 2019 POLICY INTERVENTIONS

Invest in a National Childcare Service  
Hire 25,000 Childcare Professionals  
Reduce Pupil Teacher Ratio from 1:27 to 1:22  
Increase funding for Special Education Provision in 2016 by 15%  
Abolish fees for third level students – both capitation and tuition  
Abolish fees for all EU postgraduate students  
Increase student grants to their highest historical levels  
Build affordable student accommodation



# SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

In October the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirmed that we have just 12 years to limit catastrophic climate change. The report sets out this timeframe to hold global temperature rises to 1.5% or risk extreme drought, flooding and poverty in the global south. Climate change is now the greatest threat to people on the planet but Ireland is completely failing in its duty of care for current and future generations.

## ***CONSIDER SOME OF THE FACTS:***

- Due to their lack of proper insulation, carbon emissions from Irish households are the highest in Europe – nearly 60% higher than the EU average.<sup>23</sup>
- Ireland has committed to a legally binding EU target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% (on 2005 levels) but will only reach a 1% reduction.<sup>24</sup>
- Ireland is forecasted to miss vital EU targets by 47-52 million tonnes with fines of anywhere from €600 million to €3 billion imposed as a result.<sup>25</sup>
- Agriculture accounts for a third of all emissions. Despite this, the dairy herd has been increased by 26% over the last 5 years, increasing emissions by 10%.<sup>26</sup>
- Ireland's performance on tackling climate change is the worst in Europe as ranked by the Climate Change Performance Index.



Despite a lot of high minded rhetoric, successive Irish governments have pursued fossil fuel led growth without any large scale investment in renewable energy. The state has also failed to invest sufficiently in public transport, making Ireland one of the most car dependent countries in the EU. Meanwhile, oil and gas exploration are due to increase over the next two years with €500 million earmarked by petroleum companies according to a recent industry report.<sup>27</sup> None of this is remotely acceptable.

Having been a laggard for over two decades, the Irish establishment now want to impose carbon taxes as a way of moving responsibility on to consumers. On the one hand the state supports investment to find more oil and gas in Irish waters. On the other hand, they pursue a moralistic discourse that blames ordinary people for climate change and makes them pay more to heat their homes and drive their cars.

## **CARBON TAXES ARE SUPPORTED BY THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY PROVING THEY ARE SOCIALLY REGRESSIVE AND INEFFECTIVE.**

### **Carbon taxes don't challenge the economic system.**

Capitalism requires endless growth and expansion powered by an ever expanding use of energy – most of which comes from burning fossil fuels. Capitalism is the major driver of climate change, but this is never mentioned in the debate about carbon taxes.

### **Carbon taxes are not effective.**

Carbon taxes are meant to encourage people to move away from fossil fuels by making them more expensive, but most people can't afford to switch without major new investment. Installing alternative energy (solar panels etc.) and buying electric cars are expensive projects beyond the reach of many working people. The state would need a massive investment programme - including grants worth thousands of euro- to shift people's behaviour, but this is not part of the government's current plan.

### **Carbon taxes target the wrong people.**

Big corporations are responsible for our current reliance on fossil fuels, but carbon taxes let these primary polluters completely off the hook. Instead, carbon taxes focus on consumers who often have no other option but to burn oil and gas to fuel their cars and heat their homes.

### **Carbon taxes are regressive.**

Taxes on consumption hit the poorest people hardest. The government have said they will have some form of rebate system but no-one believes this will make carbon taxes fair or equitable.

Exxonmobil estimates that an effective carbon tax would increase the cost of petrol to €460 a litre - far too high for any government to accept.

People Before Profit would do things very differently. Our commitment to this generation and the next is to move to a carbon neutral economy by 2035. This is a massive undertaking which will need decisive action led by government and the corporate sector. To demonstrate our commitment to this process, People Before Profit recently proposed a bill to leave all remaining fossil fuels in the ground. This was initially passed by a majority of TD's but right wing politicians have now blocked it at committee stage.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JOBS AND ENERGY GENERATION

Ireland's geography makes it an ideal candidate for wind and wave energy. Research by the ESRI has outlined that investment in wind energy capacity of 4000 megawatts would create between 17,000 and 36,000 jobs.<sup>28</sup> This shows the real potential for a government willing to invest in future generations. With the right vision the Irish state could facilitate a transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy. In Budget 2019, People Before Profit ring-fenced €250 million to create 5,000 renewable energy jobs as part of a five year investment programme. We also earmarked €250 million to invest in renewable energy projects, €400 million on updating our water infrastructure and €100 million towards reforestation. Ireland currently has only 11% forest cover but this could be pushed to 25% with the right investment over the coming decade. We would also democratise the energy grid as a spur to community and micro-energy generation projects that focus on renewables.

### PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT CLIMATE EMERGENCY BILL

*"When making a decision on an application for a license, undertaking or lease... the Minister shall have regard to national and global climate and environmental conditions, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Minister shall have regard to— (a) the annual average global temperature, including annual rates of change thereof, (b) the monthly mean level of atmospheric carbon dioxide measured at the Mauna Loa Observatory, (c) the national transition objective, (d) an approved national mitigation plan, and (e) any national adaptation framework. (2) The Minister shall not grant a license, undertaking or lease under this Part, if on the date of the application for the license, undertaking or lease, the monthly mean level of atmospheric carbon dioxide measured at Mauna Loa Observatory exceeds 350 parts per million."*

## DID YOU KNOW?

People Before Profit would make all journeys on public transport free to the user.

# A PUBLIC TRANSPORT REVOLUTION

Public transport links communities together, reduces congestion and helps to control carbon emissions. For these reasons People Before Profit propose a transport revolution. We would increase the bus fleet and then make all journeys on public transport free in a bid to reduce Ireland's carbon footprint. We would also increase capacity in the public system including the Western rail corridor, create world class cycling infrastructure and democratise the planning process so that commuters feed into a sustainable transport system for the 21st century.



# BUILDING SUSTAINABLE HOMES AND TOWNS

PBP would set up a state construction company to build social and affordable housing and work with local authorities to oversee the retrofitting of older buildings. Unlike market based mechanisms - such as carbon taxes - we would use state funds to cover the initial cost of energy saving retro-fitting and then claim the money back from savings flowing directly from the retrofit. This method supports the public by creating the infrastructure needed to have more energy efficient homes, making it viable to have passive energy efficiency in all homes in the next decade. PBP would take all waste services back into local authorities to stop fly tipping and illegal dumping. We also oppose single use plastics to protect birds and our seas.



# TAKING ON THE CORPORATIONS

Any serious strategy will have to take on the power of the oil and gas corporations. We would nationalise the state's existing oil and gas reserves so that the revenue coming in could be used for a radical shift to renewable energy. We would also tax the profits of oil and gas companies operating in the state and reinforce the ban all forms of fracking and shale gas extraction. We also need environmental protection and sustainable energy associations that do not rely on any funding from the fossil fuel industry.

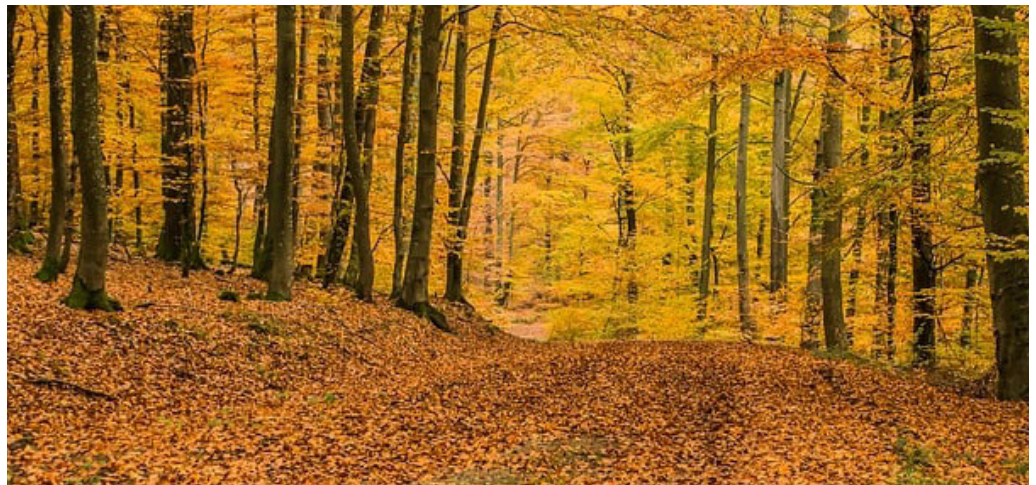




# THE IMPORTANCE OF FORESTRY

Our forests are a huge economic asset for the state, generating thousands of jobs and sequestering high levels of Co2. Despite ideal growing conditions, Ireland only currently has 11% forestry cover – one of the lowest levels in the EU. The government has also been selling harvesting rights to private operators instead of investing in this industry with public money. Our policy in this crucial area would include:

- A major increase in afforestation, including the greater use of native Irish species.
- An end to the selloff of harvesting rights to large private firms.
- Development of Coillte as a proper public company and removal of a management that encourages its privatisation.
- Build up downstream industry based on spins off from an expanded forestry sector.
- Diversify the species to maximize environmental benefits.



## 2019 POLICY INTERVENTIONS

Invest in an expansion of the bus fleet and move to make public transport free  
Bring public transport Subvention to 2008 level then increase by 33%  
5,000 renewable energy jobs as part of a five-year investment plan  
Reforestation Programme to move away from overreliance on Spruce  
Investment in water Infrastructure  
Invest heavily on cycling infrastructure to make this form of transport more accessible.

# DEEPER DEMOCRACY = BETTER LIVES

We are meant to live in a democracy, but we only vote every couple of years and have little control over our economic resources. At the political level, decision making has increasingly been centralised, with little scope for local people making local decisions. For all of their limitations, local councils used to provide important services, but successive governments have stripped them of responsibility for refuse collection, driver licensing, education grants, direct responsibility for water provision, and other services.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, funding was cut significantly for remaining services, including road sweeping, housing maintenance, park maintenance, road and path repairs, libraries, playgrounds and other basic services for communities. Data produced separately by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that Ireland had the biggest cut to local government spending in the EU 28 from 2008-2015.<sup>30</sup>

The Local Property Tax was meant to improve local services but it merely replaced a portion of the Local Government Fund in 2016, meaning there was no substantial increase in services to match the extra tax on households. People Before Profit would reverse this trend and reinvigorate local democracy. Real democracy can only develop when there is a tradition of 'people power' – when people empower themselves by mobilising to achieve what they want.

## EU CROSS-COUNTRY CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE, 2008–15

	IMF	OECD
IRELAND	-32.6%	-56.9%
EU AVERAGE	+11.8%	+6.8%





## ***PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT WOULD EXTEND DEMOCRATIC DECISION MAKING BY:***

**Abolishing control by unelected CEOs of local councils.** At the moment elected councillors have little control. In Dublin City Council, for example, 50 of the 52 councillors voted against an incinerator. But the unelected management ignored them and commissioned one. We would change the laws to take away this power from unelected management.

**Introduce a recall procedure for all public representatives who vote against items they favoured in their manifestos.** Where it can be shown that a public rep voted in the opposite way to their election literature, there must be a mechanism to allow votes to recall them.

**Extend the Freedom of Information Act to cover private firms that receive contracts to run public services.** Abolish fees for Freedom of Information requests.

**Introduce citizens' assemblies, based on town hall meetings, which can choose delegates for national assemblies on a rotating basis.**

**Reinstate article 48 of the original Irish constitution.** Give citizens a right to referenda on receipt of 50,000 signatories.

**Reduce the voting age to 16.** Young people are affected by political decisions as much as older people.

### To improve people's lives at a local level we would:

- Scrap the Local Property Tax (LPT). The LPT is a tax on people's family home. We would scrap this austerity tax and replace it with higher rates of tax on corporations.
- Increase funding to local Community Centers to make sure they have modern facilities for art, sports and other recreational activities. They should also engage in community initiatives such as Operation Transformation to make it easier to maintain a healthy weight and healthy lifestyle.
- Provide free Wi-Fi in built up areas to turn Ireland into a hot spot of the digital age.
- Revitalise our libraries to make them store houses for all sort of mediums, places of learning and a hub where children meet.
- The privatisation of waste collection has been a disaster. Illegal dumping has spread and waste collection prices have risen. We would take the waste collection system back into municipal control paid for through taxes and rates.
- Develop proper re-cycling facilities at local level. In many EU countries there are free –recycling facilities in many estates.
- Planning to revitalise communities. We would give local people a greater democratic input into planning. We would not allow green spaces to be sold off for huge profits.
- Cut the rates for small business – increase them for the big chains. Social activity in smaller towns and suburban centers is diminishing as we move to US style shopping in big out of town centers. We will seek to reverse this trend by relating business rates to turnover. Smaller shops in city centers will pay less – big supermarkets will pay more.

**IN BUDGET 2019 PBP EARMARKED AN EXTRA €591 MILLION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING. THIS REPRESENTS A 25% INCREASE ON CURRENT GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE AND THE EQUIVALENT OF THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX KEPT LOCALLY.**



# REBUILDING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Fine Gael and Fianna Fail view rural voters as their social base, but successive governments have repeatedly let these people down. Over the last 12 months, rural communities have lost 160 post offices despite the relatively low cost (€8 million) of keeping them open.<sup>31</sup> Nearly a million rural families are also waiting on decent broadband, 20 years after the first plans were made to roll it out. Over the last decade rural schools, Garda stations and libraries have also been in the front line of so-called government rationalization. The decline in rural Ireland is ultimately characterised by a vicious cycle as employment stalls, relative populations decline and services are stripped from those remaining.

One of the major problems facing the regions is the model of development favoured by the Irish elites. The low tax, foreign direct investment (FDI) model, relies on a small non-interventionist state geared to supporting the interests of foreign multinationals. In the wave of FDI up to the early 1980's, rural Ireland was at least partly serviced by the creation of manufacturing employment and construction, but increasingly FDI is locating in the greater Dublin area, Cork and Galway. This is for two key reasons – agglomeration effects which mean that FDI tends to cluster and the increasing importance of financial services centred on the Irish Financial Services Centre in Dublin's Docklands. The result has been unbalanced growth and employment opportunities with young people leaving rural Ireland for a capital city that is now sprawling into neighbouring counties.<sup>33</sup>

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

From 2012-2017, employment growth has been skewed towards urban centers with a 16% increase in Dublin versus 9.3% in the mid-west, 10.4% in the west and 7% in the southwest. When added to decline in agricultural employment, the future of rural Ireland looks quite uncertain.<sup>32</sup>



## ***CREATING EMPLOYMENT***

People Before Profit would look to reinvigorate rural Ireland with a massive jobs and investment programme.

- Renewable energy is ideally suited to the west of Ireland, which could become a hub for wind and wave technology. This would need support from local communities, however, achieved through proper consultation and economic benefits flowing to the local community.
- Tourism can be another significant employer with increased investment in culture and heritage facilities.
- A generic pharmaceutical industry is also a possibility given the expertise that has already been developed in this area.
- We would increase the forestry cover from 11-25% creating much needed employment in less dense population centers and explore the possibility of hemp production - provided it had no significant negative effects for the soil etc.

Alongside this, PBP would invest heavily in infrastructure such as a western rail corridor to improve the possibility of attracting investment into the regions. A high speed rail service joining cities and towns from Cork to Donegal would create a major spurt of initial employment and make it more likely that industries that rely on exports could be developed in the BME region – particularly if Knock Airport is developed to carry freight.



# ***REINVIGORATE LOCAL SERVICES***

If people feel secure in their access to basic services and decent welfare they are more likely to take risks that could create new forms of employment. Instead of closing hospital A&E services, rural schools and libraries, PBP would make a social commitment to rebuild social infrastructure in anticipation of creating new forms of employment. This would include things like a mobile doctor's service to ensure that rural people can be seen in an emergency; a rural bus company that would do school runs and act as a taxi service for rural people without cars; making all current buses wheelchair friendly; cameras on motorways to allow for better surveillance of criminal gangs moving into rural areas.

## ***A SOCIAL HUB IN EVERY TOWN***

Libraries are closing in rural Ireland as are rural post offices. PBP would create a local social center in every town that would house a combination of citizen's advice, post office, library, tourist information, sports facilities, and arts and crafts. This would make the center more viable and provide a space for people in rural communities to come together. We would also look at new forms of micro credit such as the Spakasse model in Germany.

## ***ROLLOUT RURAL BROADBAND***

The selloff of Eircom has been a disaster for Irish broadband services. Instead of the state developing a proper infrastructure for the whole of the country, it has ceded this task to the private sector. Profit driven companies will not make the kinds of investment needed to bring broadband beyond housing estates in rural Ireland. PBP proposes a major state led investment programme to bring broadband into every home. This will then provide the connectivity needed to carry out productive activity in the area. In our pre-budget submission for 2019 PBP ring-fenced €500 million for this project.



# ***A NATIONAL FLOODING AUTHORITY***

Currently there are too many agencies involved in managing flooding in Ireland. A National Authority could provide a holistic strategy for managing flooding including, (1) forcing insurance companies to insure people caught in areas of potential flooding, (2) working with the relevant planning authorities to refuse all planning permission on flood plains, (3) A major reforestation drive on flood plains.



# ***A NEW DEAL FOR FARMERS***

Farmers need a new deal in Ireland to take on two big challenges – climate change and the big corporations. Unlike other developed countries, agriculture is responsible for 33% of all Co2 Emissions in the Republic making it the worst sector for climate damage overall. Employment in the sector is also declining, as big business increasingly controls the production cycle. In meat processing for example, three companies – ABP, Dawn Meats and Kepak - dominate the industry. Meat and dairy are currently the most viable sectors economically, but they are also the most damaging to health and the natural environment.

## To enable farmers to make a living through sustainable farming, People Before Profit would:

- Redirect CAP payments so that 80% of them no longer go to the wealthiest 20% of farmers. The average payment in Ireland is only around €3,000 per annum, but the biggest farmers get many multiples of this. We would bring all farmers up to an average payment of €10,000 per annum and cap direct payments at €30,000 annually.
- Introduce a special levy on the profits of the major processors, the major supermarkets and the biggest farmers. This would bring in €1.3 billion annually to give farmers a further €10,000 on average each.
- Support co-operative farming run with credit from the state. This would help to generate efficiencies of scale, promote employment and enhance rural life more generally.
- Promote small local processors to service co-operatives in Ireland.
- Shift the focus away from beef and dairy through the development of organic farming for direct farmer markets.
- Incentivise an increase in tillage farming from 10% -40%. At present Irish farmers only supply 1% of all fruit and vegetables consumed in the country. A major drive to service the domestic market would be good for the environment and provide new sources of income for many farmers in rural Ireland.
- Support a major increase in afforestation to create tens of thousands of new jobs. Afforestation is an enormously important source of carbon sequestration, but we need to diversify the forestry model from an overreliance on a narrow range of species to avail of this fully.
- Look at the viability of creating a domestic hemp industry. Hemp is purported to be an excellent building material. Added to this, it can sequester major amounts of CO2 making it a potentially useful crop to grow for environmental purposes.
- Protect farmers from the damaging effects of Brexit. Currently, 40% of our agricultural exports end up in the UK market. To guard against the negative impacts of Brexit, PBP would use some of the government's Rainy Day Fund to compensate farmers.

## 2019 POLICY INTERVENTIONS

Invest €500m in Rural Broadband  
Increase capital expenditure including a major Western Rail Corridor from Letterkenny to Cork City.  
Reopen rural post offices  
Invest in agri-environmental initiatives



At its heart, People Before Profit is a 32 county socialist organisation. We oppose borders that prevent working people from coming together – particularly the border on the island of Ireland. Like James Connolly, we see the Irish border as the source of sectarian divisions leading to a carnival of reaction. Historically, the border has divided working people on this island, holding back their economic development and helping to bolster a conservative unionism in the north and a conservative Catholicism in the south. For these reasons we have never recognised the border in our political activity. People Before Profit are a proud 32 county organisation with political representation and vibrant grassroots networks north and south.

## ***NO HARD BORDER***

Since 2016, Brexit has become a messy divorce between two warring imperial blocks. Neither London nor Brussels has any real interest in the Irish people, so they use the Irish border as political leverage in their battle with each other. Both sides say they are against any hardening of the border – but neither will rule it out categorically. Meanwhile, the Irish establishment have spent nearly three years promising us there won't be a border without guaranteeing that they won't enforce one.

In the event of a hardening of the border by the EU the Irish government will have a choice to make – do they support European market rules or do they support the democratic wishes of people on the island and thereby reduce the conditions for sectarian violence. Fine Gael will likely put money and markets above peace and democracy, but for People Before Profit the choice is clear. No one on this island wants a hardening of the border so we won't accept one imposed from abroad or by FG.

If Leo Varadkar's government attempt to impose a border on this island we will:

- Establish a campaign of civil disobedience alongside trade unionists, grassroots activists and others to stop a border in its tracks. People power can stop a border imposed from abroad.
- Campaign for a border poll to give people north and south the chance to unite the island.
- Argue that the governments Rainy Day Fund be deployed to keep workers and poorer people protected from the effects of Brexit.

## ***TIME FOR A BORDER POLL***

Mainstream politicians have had nearly three years to resolve the issue of a hard border without getting anywhere. Instead they have turned the border into a political football and ramped up project fear around potential shortages in food and medical supplies. No one here wants a hard border – so the best way to respect the democratic wishes of the people is to give them a vote on uniting the island.

This means holding a vote in the north to respect the wishes of those who want to avoid a border and in the south with a view to setting up a constituent assembly for a new 32 county Ireland. In any border poll we will campaign for a yes vote to end the sectarian carnival of reaction. But to win a border poll it will take more than the sectarian headcount proposed by Sinn Fein and the various other nationalist groupings.

Northern Protestants are rightly sceptical of a southern state that has denied its citizens basic rights and thrown its lot in with the Catholic Hierarchy. They see a failed health care system a housing crisis and an education system dominated by the church and ask themselves – why would we want to unite with the south.

To win a border poll we will need to build working class solidarity across the island on the basis of a new vision for a new society.

As socialists we want to root out rotten political structures on both sides of the border through people power movements. Recent cross border solidarity on the Belfast Rape Trial, abortion rights and housing shows the potential for cross border people power movements that can challenge the status quo on all parts of this island. It is to further a socialist society that we want a border poll to end the rule of the 1% and give people the kind of society that allows them to flourish.





# A FAIR DEAL AT WORK

Work should be a source of satisfaction and meaning. For too many, however, it has become insecure, stressful and underpaid. Recent analysis by the Nevin Economic Research Institute found that 20% of workers under 30 are now on temporary contracts – a rise of almost 40% since 2004. Part time work has also risen by more than a quarter, with 51% of this cohort unable to find full time employment.<sup>35</sup>

A report by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) details similar findings, with 7% of the workforce in temporary employment, 8% working different hours every week and 10% defined as self-employed without employees. This latter category is code for bogus self-employment contracts that shift workers off traditional contracts that guarantee better terms and conditions.<sup>36</sup>

This level of precariousness makes it hard to plan for the future. It is also linked to falling wages and worsening conditions as workers find it more difficult to organise and resist. In 1960, two thirds of all output went to workers in the form of wages, but by 2015 this had fallen to just 44%.<sup>37</sup>

The fall in the Irish wage share over a 20-year period from 1995-2015 was the second highest from 37 countries surveyed with only Romania recording a greater decline.<sup>38</sup> Some of this is driven by tax dodging corporations, but neoliberal market reforms have also helped to hold down wages.



# SHARES OF INCOME IN THE ECONOMY (GDP)

	Wage Share (Republic of Ireland)	Profits
1960	66%	33%
2015	44%	56%

The wage share fell from 64 to 57% in the UK while in the USA it fell from 63 to 57%.

## ***STRONGER UNIONS***

People Before Profit wants to arrest this decline. As socialists, we support strong trade unions and worker's organisations fighting to deliver well paid and secure employment. Whether you are working part-time or full time, temporary or permanent, you should have the same legal rights – so that working conditions are not driven down. Unions also need to modernize, becoming more democratic and more combative to arrest the worrying decline in union density. Workers should have a guaranteed right to be represented by any union of their choosing and union officials should be able to enter a workplace at least once a year to put the case for why people should join. When 20 percent of the workers join a union, they should have a right to collectively bargain with their employer through their chosen union. Finally we would restore tax relief for trade union subs.

## ***PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS***

Public sector workers suffered several pay cuts and reductions in their terms and conditions during the economic crisis. Since 2013, Ireland has been in recovery, but emergency legislation is still being used to hold down public sector pay. In office, People Before Profit would immediately end pay apartheid which sees new entrants paid less than their more experienced counterparts. We would also repeal the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) legislation.

# Stronger Legislation

For too long the law has been on the side on employers. Trade union laws have been watered down resulting in stagnant wages and increased employee insecurity.

## In office PBP would pass legislation to:

- **End the gender pay gap.** It is completely unacceptable that women are paid less than men for doing the same work. This in-built sexism needs to be weeded out through legislation and cultural changes.
- **Reinforce the ban on zero hour contracts.** Workers should have the right to a guaranteed number of hours per week.
- **Legislate for four extra holidays a year.** With an annual right to 29 days holidays, workers in Ireland have one of the lowest entitlements in Europe. We would increase the legal right to holidays and give workers a statutory right to bereavement leave.
- **Raise the minimum wage to the living wage.** A living wage is calculated on what one needs for a socially acceptable standard of living. It amounts to €11.70 an hour.
- **Ban unpaid internships.** These are used to exploit and dash the hopes of the young. They are also a free subsidy to businesses who get cheap labour.
- **Bring labour agencies back into the public sector.** End the practice of giving a bounty to private companies who force social welfare recipients to take up unsuitable jobs.
- **Reform the Insolvency Act and Companies Act.** Workers should not be at the back of the queue. They should get the payments they are entitled to in redundancy situations.
- **Introduce maximum 8:1 pay ratios in the public sector.** Only award state contracts to private firms who adhere to this.
- **Change Industrial Relations Legislation.** Stop companies taking out injunctions against workers and give workers a right to express solidarity.
- **End Jobpath and stop Seetec and Turas Nua profiting from the unemployed.**

## DID YOU KNOW?

People Before Profit believe in a minimum living wage and a maximum wage for higher earners. This would increase social solidarity and reduce inequality in the economy.

## Self-Employment

One response to the economic crisis was to set up your own business. Self-employment can bring many satisfactions as 'you are your own boss', but it can also lead to a pattern of insecurity and stress.

Some employers are forcing workers into a bogus self-employed status so that they do not have to pay holiday entitlements or make a pension contribution.

### Here is what we want to do:

- *End bogus Self-employment.* There should be a change in the law to favour workers who want to stop bogus self-employment. Employers who try to avoid their legal obligation should be heavily fined to discourage others.
- *A new social insurance contract for the self-employed.* Instead of paying the same social insurance rate as employed workers and getting virtually no benefits, there should be a special self-employed rate which is higher than the PAYE rate – but guarantees access to key benefits in return. Payment of this new rate would entitle the self-employed to Family Income Supplement, Illness benefit, and unemployment benefit should the business fail. Currently, the self-employed are not entitled to any holidays. The new social contract with the self-employed would guarantee a minimum social welfare payment (€188 a week) for holidays.

## 2019 POLICY INTERVENTIONS

End Pay Apartheid  
Repeal FEMPI Legislation  
Restore tax relief for Trade Union subs  
Scrap the Universal Social Charge

# CONCLUSION

*A Society for the Many* lays out our vision for Irish society, along with a roadmap that would start to achieve it. We are nearly at the centenary of a Republic that promised to cherish all of its citizens equally but has failed repeatedly to live up to this promise. Policy making in the Irish state has instead been geared towards a corporate and political elite who monopolize resources for themselves. They have also debased the public discourse through a series of dogmas that blame poverty on the poor, inequality on the marginalized and climate change on consumers. None of this stands up to scrutiny, however. The failings of Irish society rest squarely on the shoulders of the privileged and the powerful. Poverty, inequality, corruption and oppression are the necessary outcomes of a capitalist economy that funnels resources to the top of society and stigma towards those who lose out.

People Before Profit was set up to fight for a more enlightened society –one that cherishes the hopes and aspirations of everyone who lives here and creates policies that give people the best opportunity to realise their talents.

This document challenges the orthodoxy of the neoliberals in Fine Gael and Fianna Fail by showing the real opportunities we have to make life better for the clear majority. But it also challenges the orthodoxy of the Social Democrats, Labour and the Greens who rest their vision for a better society on tweaking capitalism at the edges.

Instead of this, we put our faith in people power movements such as those witnessed around water charges, marriage equality and women's rights to their bodily autonomy. This is because the most significant social change has always come from people becoming aware of their interests and fighting for them collectively. *A Society for the Many* asks its readers to expect more from policy makers in the coming century through a combination of people power and progressive ideas. We hope you will join with us in fighting to make this vision a reality in the coming months and years.

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# NOTES





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