



**MOVING FORWARD. TOGETHER.**

**AG BOGADH AR AGHAIDH. LE CHÉILE.**

General Election Manifesto 2024

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# Fianna Fáil

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Over the course of the last four and a half years, I've had the great honour of leading our country as Taoiseach and as Tánaiste. I and the Fianna Fáil party as a whole, worked every day to help overcome some of the biggest challenges in our country's history.

We worked to lead our country through a terrible pandemic, to overcome a rapidly hitting recession and to tackle the impact of war and disruption in Europe.

We would never claim to have got everything right, but we did secure real progress for our country. The fact is that there are now over half a million more people at work than there were four and a half years ago. Public finances are strong, public services have expanded, and major investments are underway. In order to secure services and investments into the future, we have also created the largest ever reserve funds.

This is a record of real achievement, but we know that we must go further.

That is why we are setting out an **ambitious and comprehensive plan of action** for the next five years. It addresses all major areas of public policy but sets clear priority actions in a number of areas including:

- **Helping families and businesses** cope with high prices.
- A major programme of **investment and reform in health services.**
- Further **expanding homebuilding** and support for first-time buyers and renters.
- Support for safe, clean and successful **communities.**
- Protecting **Ireland's economy** and its **voice in Europe and the wider world.**
- **Investment in schools** and all levels of education.

This document is the blueprint for how Fianna Fáil in Government will protect the progress we all value and how we will deliver sustained action on the most important issues for Ireland's future.

***This is our plan for moving Ireland forward, together.***



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**Micheál Martin TD**

*Uachtarán Fianna Fáil*



# Fianna Fáil General Election Manifesto 2024 *Summary*

This manifesto sets out proposals which Fianna Fáil wishes to implement over the next five years. While it addresses most major areas of public policy the emphasis is placed on **six priority areas:**

# 1

## COST OF LIVING

**We will help families and business coping with high prices through:**

- **Lowering energy prices** achieved by accelerated investment in low-cost renewable energy and cheaper distribution as well as a reform of how energy prices are set.
- **Protecting family incomes** through making sure that tax changes and social welfare benefit increases match, at a minimum, rising prices.
- **Increasing the State pension** to at least €350 per week to ensure a better quality of life in older age.
- Investing in projects vital to **reducing the costs of getting most goods into shops.**
- **Tackling insurance costs** through reform and ensuring fair competition in all sectors.
- Continuing to **decrease the cost of public services.**
- Reducing **childcare fees** to €200 per month.

# 2

## HEALTH

**We will deliver an investment and reform programme in health services - cutting waiting times for patients. We will do this through:**

- A significant further expansion in **hospital beds, consultants and GPs** in the community.
- Establishing new **Rapid Access Outpatient Clinics** to treat patients, as an alternative to them having to attend Emergency Departments.
- Expanding access to **vital diagnostics.**
- Reforms to ensure that the level and **quality of care** in all parts of the health system are transparent and available for public scrutiny.
- Further reducing **health charges** and extending **free GP cards** to all under-12s.
- Development of new **specialist care services** in particular for cancer care and women's health.

# 3

## HOUSING

**We will accelerate the momentum in home building and directly aid those who want to buy or rent a home through:**

- Further **expanding the rate of homebuilding to 60,000 homes** per year in 2030 and thereafter.
- **Removing major delays** through implementing our planning legislation.
- **Speeding up construction** through investment in water, roads and other essential infrastructure.
- Reducing the cost and accelerating the delivery of homebuilding through investing in **new construction methods**.
- Prioritising **first time buyers** and **affordable housing** with direct supports.
- Continuing the largest modern programme of **social house building**.
- Increasing **direct support for renters** and for greater security in the rental sector.

# 4

## COMMUNITIES

**We will support safe, clean and successful communities through:**

- **Further expanding Garda numbers**, prioritising community and town centre policing.
- Introducing a new **transport police unit** to focus on tackling anti-social behaviour.
- A radical **reform of government departments** to ensure greater focus on urgent problems and the more effective management of migration pressures.
- A separate **Department of Domestic Affairs** similar to most European countries, to take the lead on national security issues, migration and other key areas.
- Funding for **cleaning up town and city centres**.
- Introducing a range of new programmes focused on **urban and rural community-level development**.
- A **Rural Communities Initiative** to bring together all State agencies to implement community development, town-centre rejuvenation and a small schools' support programme benefitting 1,300 schools.
- An **Urban Communities Initiative**, focused on city centres and the areas of highest disadvantage, which would bring together all State agencies to implement community development planning, schemes for disadvantaged youth and expanded education programmes.

# 5

## ECONOMY

### Protect and grow Ireland's economy and secure its voice in international affairs by:

- A fiscal policy which **expands investments and services**, while reducing the level of debt.
- Protecting Ireland in the event of an economic downturn through **building significant contingency funding** into our plans and guaranteeing the funding of important investments through major reserve funds.
- Implementing a **pro-enterprise tax policy**, supporting long-term investments in high-quality jobs.
- Supporting **international trade**, reducing costs of exporting and securing access to international markets for Irish businesses.
- **Investing in research** to create products, services and jobs to compete internationally.
- Ensuring that Ireland take **a positive approach to the European Union**, supporting measures to strengthen and reform its ability to develop and grow the European single market and economy.
- **Standing with other democratic countries** and supporting basic principles of democracy and human rights.

# 6

## EDUCATION

### Implement a programme of investment and reform in education through:

- Reducing school **class sizes**.
- Further **reforming the school curriculum** to take account of modern challenges.
- Funding a range of **therapies for special needs children** to be delivered in schools.
- **A DEIS Plus initiative** targeting additional aid and support to schools serving communities experiencing the highest concentrations of disadvantage.
- A national **Small Schools Initiative** focused on expanding educational opportunities in all communities.
- Promoting **safe and supportive schools** through tackling bullying and smartphone use.
- Expanding support for **apprenticeships** through the country.
- Improving the **funding of higher education** and significantly expanding student accommodation while limiting rents.
- Driving excellence in **research and innovation** through increased funding and expansion of all-Island and EU partnerships.

*\*In some areas further individual initiatives will be detailed during the campaign, though they will be contained within the fiscal parameters outlined in this document.*

# Protecting and growing our economy



# Economic and Budgetary Background

In order to achieve sustained social and environmental progress it is essential to have a strong economy. Building and protecting economic prosperity is central to achieving social cohesion, good public services and environmental objectives. **Since Fianna Fáil entered Government in 2020**, we have worked to help our country successfully overcome a series of major international economic shocks. We have succeeded in protecting our economy and rapidly returning it to sustained growth.

Since we took office **586,000 jobs** have been created. There are now **2.75 million people at work** – the highest level in our country’s history. Public finances have been restored and strengthened after the pandemic, with debt falling and major reserves created, which will enable us to deliver key projects and protect public services.

## Strong Public Finances and Helping People

During Covid-19 we provided unprecedented cost of living supports to people and businesses across the country. The strength of the recovery post Covid-19 resulted in strong public finances, that allowed us to invest in public services. We also continued to invest in the core infrastructure of the economy. Income inequality has declined, and poverty rates have fallen to the lowest levels on record. Fianna Fáil in Government has made a real difference.

We lowered the cost of public services – in health, education, transport and other areas - and boosted social protection payments. We cut income taxes and the USC to put money back in peoples’ pockets. Crucially,

Irish inflation was held well below the European average and has today fallen to the lowest rate in the EU. However, we know and understand that many families are still feeling squeezed by the high cost of living. We will continue tackling the high cost of living through specific and targeted measures.

## Securing Ireland’s Future

Fianna Fáil’s Ministers for Finance created the Future Ireland Fund and the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund to ensure that essential financial supports for public services and investments in infrastructure and climate protection are maintained even during a downturn. These funds are vital to secure economic and social progress in the decades ahead, for all our people across the country.

# Protecting Ireland's Economy & Enterprise

**Since 2020**, Fianna Fáil has delivered record employment, strong economic growth, sustained investment in services and infrastructure, and a progressive taxation system. We have maintained and improved the enterprise environment for small, medium and large businesses.

Fianna Fáil is committed to building a fair and equitable taxation system by reducing the tax burden on families, entrepreneurs, and businesses in a sustainable and progressive way.

**This is what we want to do over the next five years.**

## Progressive tax system

Fianna Fáil has reduced the tax burden on families. We reduced the USC and increased the standard rate cut off point and personal tax credits. All our changes to the tax system have been progressive.

Our overall income tax strategy over the lifetime of a future Government will ensure that workers do not find themselves in a position where they pay higher levels of income tax solely because of basic growth in their income. In addition, we want to give workers a break and keep Ireland's income tax position competitive and sustainable for the long-term.

Three key pillars will underpin the design of this tax strategy through changes to (1) the standard rate, (2) reductions in the USC and (3) expansion of tax credits to support low- and middle-income workers in the Irish economy to reward work.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Give workers a break and keep Ireland's income tax position competitive and sustainable for the long-term.
- Increase the entry point to the higher rate of income tax to at least €50,000.
- Continue progressive reductions in USC by building on the last two budgets, by cutting the lower rate from 3% to 1.5% at a minimum over the lifetime of the Government.
- Abolish the USC surcharge of 3% on non-PAYE income of more than €100,000 a year to support the self-employed in our economy.
- Increase income tax credits annually by at least €100 to reduce the income tax burden on workers particularly focused on low- and middle-income workers.
- Examine reducing Capital Gains Tax to encourage innovation and productivity and attract foreign investors into Irish indigenous business.
- Annually increase the specific and targeted personal tax credits as advanced in Budget 2025 to support families, carers, blind people, dependent relatives, and those with additional needs.
- Widen eligibility for tax credits to provide additional supports to those with caring responsibilities and citizens with additional needs and their families. We will also examine the possibility of introducing a deaf tax credit for congenital hearing loss.
- Increase and adjust the inheritance tax Category A, B and C thresholds in each budget to reflect the wider increase in property prices in the Irish economy in recent years.
- Review the inheritance tax thresholds applicable when the deceased does not have children.
- Adjust the means test for entitlements for those with a disability if inheritance is received to ensure we protect the baseline social protection and medical supports.
- Introduce a tax credit on gym membership and explore other options to encourage active participation in sport and exercise.

## Support all enterprises for sustainable economic growth

Fianna Fáil believes that to allow our business sector to continue to compete and grow, we need new policy initiatives on cost competitiveness, regulation, infrastructure, skills, R&D, innovation, and international trade.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Launch a new €250 million Seed and Venture Capital Scheme.
- Establish a Cost of Business Advisory Forum to facilitate consultation and dialogue with business on the current cost environment including a review of all business costs and taxes. This Forum will be consulted before introducing new legislation or policies that affect small businesses.
- Set aside €300m for a Business Support Fund to ensure we enhance the viability of businesses in villages and towns.
- Review the Business and Enterprise Tax system to ensure simplification is prioritised to better support indigenous business and FDI.
- Support family-owned businesses through the taxation system and through training and skills supports.
- Increase the maximum limit allowable under the science test under the R&D tax credit.
- Expand and broaden the R&D tax credit to include innovation and digitalisation, building on the review announced in Budget 2025. This will also ensure that Ireland has the global best in class incentive to encourage innovation by domestic and international companies.
- Progress and publish an implementation plan for consideration in Budget 2026 taking into consideration the Funds Review recommendations to unlock retail investment and opportunities to grow this sector in Ireland.
- Set up a task force on productivity in the Domestic Sector.
- Target the doubling of new exporters by 2030.
- Expand Enterprise Ireland staff and offices across the globe.
- Reduce the working time requirement that an individual is required to claim Entrepreneurs Relief.
- Continue the reforms to expand Angel Investment and support for scale ups in the economy.
- Review the frequency of SME reporting and paperwork requirements.
- Expand the National Enterprise Hub and ensure that they are accessible to SMEs.

## Tackling energy costs

Irish business electricity prices are amongst the highest in Europe. The huge investment in the electricity grid needed to facilitate more renewables on the system could lead to substantial increases in electricity customer's bills through higher network charges. This risk must be addressed if our businesses are to remain competitive.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Through investment and reform aim to bring Ireland's electricity costs closer to the European average.
- Keep VAT on gas and electricity bills at 9% for the next five years.
- Fund the upgrading of the national electricity grid using State subventions of network charges so businesses will not have to pay for the upgrades through their electricity bills.
- Switch to direct State funding of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme, reducing the Public Service Obligation (PSO) levy on businesses' electricity bills.
- Reform the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), by introducing new corporate governance structures, updating network funding charges and changing the current legislation.
- Accelerate the transition to the use of lower-cost, more sustainable renewables in electricity generation and away from expensive imported fossil fuels.

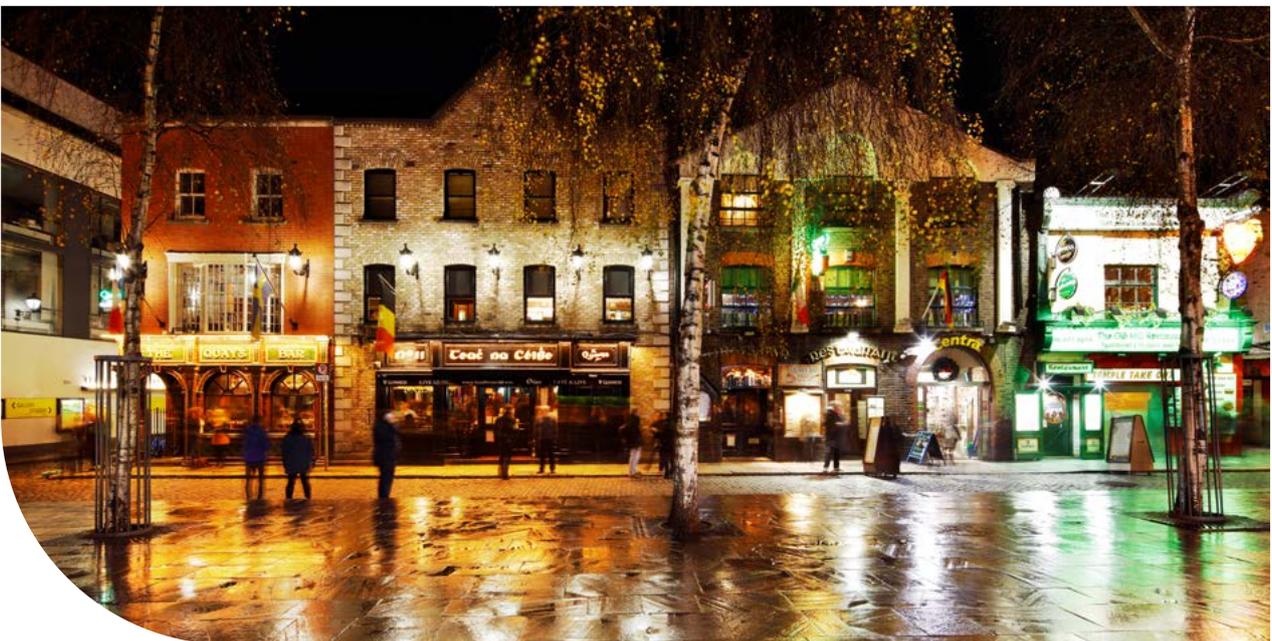


# Hospitality and retail sectors

Fianna Fáil is acutely aware of the cost pressures on small businesses, especially in the hospitality and retail sectors.

## *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Establish a Cost of Business Advisory Forum to facilitate consultation and dialogue with business on the current cost environment including a review of all business costs and taxes. This Forum will be consulted before introducing new legislation or policies that affect small businesses.
- Set aside €300m for a Business Support Fund to ensure we enhance the viability of business in villages and towns.
- Reduce by 1.5% the rate of employers' PRSI on minimum wage workers.
- While implementing measures to reduce energy prices in the medium and long-term, introduce a successor to the ICOB/Power Up grants to help hospitality and retail businesses with high energy costs.
- Publish a detailed study of the present and future skill needs of the hospitality industry.
- Fund a wage subsidy for employees attending training using the National Training Fund.
- Expand the direct supports from Fáilte Ireland to restaurants, cafes and hotels in low performing visitor areas.
- Continue policies that promote revitalisation and attractiveness of town centres to benefit retailers in our towns and villages.
- Address shoplifting, by providing retailers with a statutory defence in cases where shoppers claim they have been defamed when asked whether they have paid for a product and/or for proof of purchase.



## Driving regional enterprise growth and innovation

We have provided €145 million to support projects to enhance regional enterprise initiatives, including publishing nine Regional Enterprise Plans, outlining strategic objectives for regional enterprise development.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Ensure that a minimum of 60% of IDA Foreign Direct Investment goes to regional locations.
- Introduce a modern legal framework for the co-operative model to make it an attractive option for entrepreneurs.
- Revise and strengthen all existing regional enterprise plans.
- Reform the Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme to ensure it is responsive and effective to local needs.
- Support the further development of Strategic Development Zones across the regions.
- Support and fund the Social Enterprise sector to create more than 50,000 jobs in the regions over ten years.

## Social Partnership

Fianna Fáil created Social Partnership as a working principle in Ireland, and we acknowledge the importance of public sector workers who provide essential services across the country on a 24/7 basis.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Continue to strengthen the Social Partnership model.
- Seek to negotiate a new national wage deal following the completion of the Public Services Agreement in 2026.
- Ensure that the new national wage deal strengthens public services, drives public service reform and recognises the central contribution of workers in the delivery of better public services.
- Ensure employment law is upheld.

## Digitisation and Artificial Intelligence

Advancements in robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital technologies are driving digitalisation and automation. Fianna Fáil believes that all businesses should be supported to meet the challenges and reap the benefits of these new technologies.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

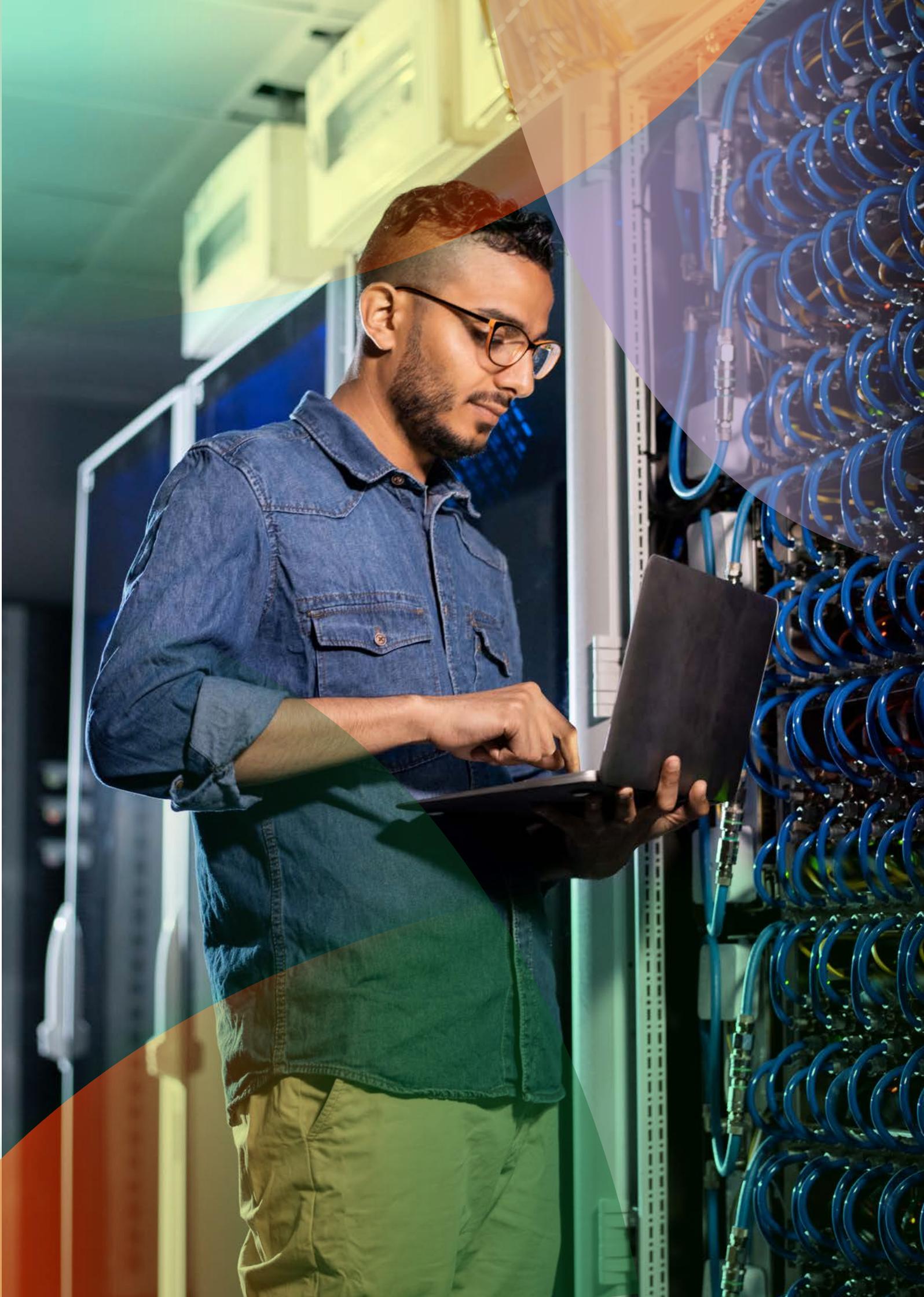
- Ensure that small businesses are helped to achieve basic digital intensity, towards the target of 90% by 2030.
- Reform funding eligibility for digital grants and consultancy to ensure it is simplified and accessible.
- Promote the new Grow Digital Portal, which will help businesses self-assess their digital needs.
- Ensure that the skills necessary for AI deployment, AI innovation and AI support are provided through our colleges, our schools and through professional learning networks.
- Ensure adaptation of guidelines for use of AI in the public service.

## Data Centres

Ireland is home to a number of world leading data centres and technology companies. We will continue to work with the sector towards a secure and decarbonised energy future.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase investment in critical infrastructure and the electricity grid which will benefit all customers and, where appropriate, facilitate increased data centres.
- Roll out nationwide 5G for high-speed, low-latency connectivity vital to data centres and tech industries.
- Increase incentives for data centres to use energy efficient technologies, renewable energy sources and innovative solutions like heat reuse to significantly lower their carbon footprint.



# Action on the Cost of Living



**Fianna Fáil understands the need to address the impact that rising prices are having on families.**

Consumer prices for essentials like home energy, groceries and insurance are still too high. The war on Ukraine and supply chain disruption has driven many increased costs. In response, Fianna Fáil worked to ensure that recent budget included energy grants and one-off payments to ease the burden on families.

Although inflation has now fallen from a peak of nearly 10% in 2022 to below 1%, many families and small businesses are still feeling squeezed. While prices are rising more slowly than previously, and real incomes are rising again, action is required to limit future inflation and, where possible, to reduce prices. Energy costs in particular remain too high.

*We believe that significant, sustained action can be taken to address these high costs*



## Reduce energy costs

Household electricity prices in Ireland are the second highest in the EU. Network charges are more than 40% above the EU average. We urgently need to modernise the national grid. The scale of investment required to expand and upgrade the grid is too large to be funded directly by consumers. Fianna Fáil will ensure that these costs are met by State investment. We will also reform the existing regulatory environment, modernising legislation which has been in place for over two decades.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Keep VAT on gas and electricity bills at 9% for the next five years.
- Switch to direct State funding of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme, reducing Public Service Obligation (PSO) levy on households' electricity bills by an average of €40.
- Fund the upgrading of the national electricity grid using State subventions so that domestic electricity customers will not have to pay for the upgrades through their electricity bills.
- Reform the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), introducing new corporate governance structures, updating network funding charges and changing the current legislation.
- Ensure that achieving low costs for customers is emphasised in the reformed mandate of the CRU and referenced to the EU standards.
- Accelerate the transition to the use of sustainable and lower-cost renewables in electricity generation, moving away from expensive imported fossil fuels.
- Continuously monitor network costs by utilising the OECD and benchmarking against other countries.
- Publish an independent investigation into the speed and extent that consumers feel the benefit of reduction in wholesale prices.
- Increase State support to homeowners to upgrade their home energy systems and retrofit their homes.



## Strengthen consumer rights

Given the ongoing rapid change in consumer markets, Fianna Fáil believes there is a need for a new approach to empower and protect consumers and to consistently argue the consumer's case across a broad range of areas. The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission's (CCPC) dual mandate for competition and consumer protection is not adequate to meet the current challenges faced by consumers.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Establish a new and separate statutory body, the Consumer Protection Agency, with a mandate to protect consumers from dubious business practices including those that inflate prices for consumers.
- Empower the new agency in areas such as consumer advocacy, information and advice.
- Ensure that the new agency adopts an open approach to exposing price gouging.
- Enhance competition by promoting price transparency in more sectors.
- Make the Small Claims Court more effective, accessible and affordable by raising the limit of the small claims' procedure from €2,000 to €10,000.
- Ensure continued sufficient and effective access to cash throughout the country by passing and implementing the Access to Cash Bill.
- Introduce a compensation scheme for consumers who hold a policy of motor insurance with a motor insurer that becomes insolvent.

## Reducing the cost of the weekly shop

Grocery prices have risen sharply over the past two years. While there are many costs that no government can influence, we believe that certain investment will help to reduce costs of importing and distributing groceries.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Ensure that the investment in infrastructure in roads, rail and ports translates into lower shipping and transportation costs of goods and ultimately to lower costs for consumers.
- Invest in improved efficiency in logistics chains to reduce costs of moving products.
- Support policies that drive retail digitalisation for more businesses with a view to bringing down groceries prices.
- Through the reform of the competition and consumer protection structures and legislation, maximise price transparency and competition in an effort to put downward pressure on prices.

## Driving down insurance costs

Fianna Fáil has delivered a series of reforms under the Action Plan for Insurance Reform. Insurance premiums in some sectors of the market, (e.g. motor insurance) have fallen since 2020, but more needs to be done to secure larger reductions in premiums across a broader range of areas. Having demonstrated how reforms can deliver reduced insurance prices, Fianna Fáil believes that a further series of steps should be implemented.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Publish a new Action Plan for Insurance Reform with a focus on encouraging further competition in the market.
- Ensure adequate competition and a fair market in respect of underwriters and brokers.
- Expand the Office for the Promotion of Competition in the Insurance Market.
- Legislate for 'Right to be Forgotten' for cancer survivors, requiring insurers to disregard a cancer diagnosis where treatment ended more than 7 years prior to application (or more than 5 years if the applicant was under 18 at the time of diagnosis).
- Introduce tougher penalties for those who commit insurance fraud.
- Maintain a Cabinet Subgroup on Insurance Reform to continue to drive action.





# The Homes and Infrastructure Our Country Needs



## Using once-off receipts to transform strategic investments

Over the course of the next government €17.1 billion in once-off receipts are available from the sale of AIB shares and the Apple revenues following the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union. Of this, €3 billion has already been allocated towards critical capital spending over the coming years.

As these are one-off revenues, we believe that it would be irresponsible to use them to fund permanent expenditure or narrowing the tax base.

**As explained through this manifesto,** Fianna Fáil believes that Ireland continues to face an infrastructure deficit. We propose to use this once-off revenue to make strategic investments, raising the productive capacity of our country and addressing structural challenges like high energy prices and the environmental and digital transformation of our economy and public services.

**By focussing on five key areas of investment** – in housing, the electricity grid, water infrastructure, transport and health digitalisation - we will benefit all citizens by building new homes, supporting the green and digital transitions and underpinning our future economic development.

- **Housing.** An allocation of €4 billion will be made available to the Land Development Agency to boost the delivery of social and affordable homes, and €2 billion will be allocated to a new Towns Investment Fund.
- **Electricity grid.** €2.5 billion will be provided in the form of direct equity injections to support capital spending on the further development of our electricity grid infrastructure, both on-shore and off-shore.
- **Water infrastructure.** €3 billion will be provided to Irish Water for capital investment to upgrade the water infrastructure, including connections for new housing and urban wastewater projects.
- **Transport.** €3.6 billion will be provided for the improvement of transport networks countrywide to promote increased business investment in the economy and the supply of new housing.
- **Digitalisation of health** will raise productivity and achieve greater efficiencies to ensure safety, quality and sustainability in delivering health services.

*This expenditure is in addition to funds contained in the published NDP.*

# Infrastructure delivery

**Housing, water infrastructure, health capital projects, electricity grid, transport, and renewable energy - will be a key priority focus for Fianna Fáil if elected to the next Government.**

We are determined to unlock future economic and community development across Ireland.

**Delivery and ensuring value for money** is essential so we will widen the remit of the National Treasury Management Agency to include infrastructure oversight and delivery. This new unit within the NTMA will recruit world-class talent with proven experience in large-scale project delivery. It will oversee all major national infrastructure projects as directed by the Government. It will also ensure best in class processes and procedures are implemented by the sponsoring Department or body. We will also ensure that there will be transparent accountability for project delivery, ensuring best outcomes for society and the taxpayer.



## Ramping up housing supply

**Since entering Government in 2020, Fianna Fáil has introduced a step-change in the pace of home building in Ireland** and is determined to build on this momentum. Today there are over 125,000 more homes than in 2020. That's more than the previous two governments combined despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic shutdowns. We have made progress and want and need to do much more. Our plans are now focussed on ramping up house building significantly to reach 60,000 homes per year by 2030.

Record levels of commencements and planning permissions confirm that there is a strong pipeline in place for the next five years. While the rest of Europe has seen building decline, ours has grown to new record levels.

Central to our approach has been radical reform of planning laws and giving active priority to first time buyers and those seeking social and affordable housing. We enhanced the Help to Buy scheme, established the First Home "Bridge the Gap" scheme, the Croí Conaithe scheme, and introduced the Vacant and Derelict Refurbishment grants.

We know that much more needs to be done and with the new planning law and investment in place, we are ready to ramp up home building to the next level.



## More Homes

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Ramp up construction capacity to 60,000 homes per year by 2030 to meet both existing and future demands.
- Immediately implement our landmark Planning and Development Act, including recruitment of 400 additional planning staff to deliver homes faster.
- Create a €250m Modern Methods of Construction innovation fund to accelerate home building.
- Fully capitalise the Land Development Agency out to 2030, and increase its target, enabling it to accelerate home delivery.
- Establish a new Towns Investment Fund of €2bn to build and upgrade infrastructure to open up more serviced sites for building homes.
- Invest a minimum additional €3bn in Irish Water to provide for water and wastewater facilities in villages, towns and cities and to allow more local homes to be built.
- Prioritise Housing infrastructure in Commission of Regulation of Utilities operational practices.
- Introduce a National Housing Procurement Strategy to support housing standardisation and to reduce costs and delays.
- Establish a Central Construction Supply Unit to coordinate, monitor and track all major public sector construction projects to ensure accelerated delivery.
- Establish Land Activation Units in each Local Authority.
- Create a Land Price Register.
- Implement statutory measures to penalise land hoarding.
- Work with the EU Housing Commissioner to revise State aid rules and to provide a new investment platform for affordable and sustainable housing.
- Work with Ireland's credit union sector to develop a structure to allow the sector to fund Approved Housing Bodies.

## More Homeowners

Home ownership has always been a core value for Fianna Fáil. Where people cannot afford to buy their own homes, we will continue to give as much support as possible by continuing the Help to Buy and “Bridge the Gap” schemes.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Protect and extend the Help to Buy scheme out to 2030 and include a ‘Rent Back Boost’ in assessing the payment level.
- Protect and extend the First Home “Bridge the Gap” Scheme to 2030 and expand it to support purchasing second-hand homes.
- Protect and extend the Vacancy Refurbishment Grants to 2030 and increase the grant levels by €10,000.
- Create an ‘Above the Shop living refurbishment grant of €100,000 by topping up the vacant and derelict refurbishment grant. This will help make spaces above retail premises liveable.
- Build an average of 10,000 affordable units every year.
- Continue to disincentivise investment funds from buying family homes.
- Continue the Croí Cónaithe scheme to support homebuyers to purchase new apartments.
- Maintain the Tenant Purchase scheme.
- Uphold the “Fresh Start” principle to allow separated people apply for first time buying supports and expand the Local Authority Home Loan to allow separated couples to buy the other person out.
- Use the Local Authority Home Loan to support distressed mortgage holders and review and reform the Mortgage to Rent scheme.
- Continue to grow the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Housing Scheme.
- Transfer responsibility for Owner Management Companies from the Department of Justice to the Department of Housing.



## A new Home Buyer Help package

The process of buying a new or second-hand home can be very difficult, stressful and time consuming. We will make the process easier, quicker and cheaper for homebuyers.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Introduce a €2,500 tax credit for legal, surveying and valuation fees for first time buyers.
- Set an 8-week conveyancing target for the legal profession.
- Dramatically reduce the time taken for the Probate Office to process applications to extract grants of probate.
- Reform outdated legal practices like wet signature requirements.
- Fully implement e-conveyancing by 2027.
- Accelerate registration of land titles.

## Reduce homelessness and protect vulnerable households

There are many reasons why people enter emergency accommodation, and the scale of population increases, and social changes have unfortunately limited the ability to make sustained progress. Tackling homelessness is the most pressing issue facing our country and Fianna Fáil is committed to further ramping-up the delivery of all types of homes to address homelessness.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Continue to roll out the largest social housing programme in the history of the State, directly-building at least 12,000 per year.
- Empower Local Authorities to undergo single stage approval processes for new projects up to €30m.
- Work with AHBs to achieve economies of scale and expand delivery expertise.
- Create 2,000 Housing First tenancies to help eliminate long term homelessness.
- Continue the 'Tenant in Situ' Scheme.
- Increase the Housing Adaptation Grant.
- Ensure full draw down of Traveller accommodation funds.

## Helping Renters

Fianna Fáil is very aware of the need to develop a more sustainable and affordable rental market. We introduced the Rent Tax Credit which helped 350,000 renters and also capped rent increases in Rent Pressure Zones (RPZs). We firmly believe that the key to helping renters is to increase supply by building more affordable houses.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Progressively double the rent tax credit.
- Build more cost rental units through the LDA and Cost Rental Equity Loan funding to AHBs, embedding cost rental as a category of tenure on a permanent basis.
- Help renters seeking to become home buyers with a Buyers Tax Credit, First Refusal rights, Capital Gains Tax exemptions for landlords who sell to their tenants, "Bridge the Gap" equity for tenants, and an increased Rent Tax credit.
- Roll out the Secure Tenancy Affordable Rental investment (STAR) scheme to increase low-cost affordable rental units.
- Protect Renters from abusive practices by:
  - Establishing a Deposit Protection scheme.
  - Establishing a Rent Price register.
  - Enhancing the enforcement powers of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)
- Continue to review the effectiveness of the Rent Pressure Zones.
- Create more rental opportunities through the 'Above the Shop' and Vacancy Refurbishment Grants.



## Tackle vacancy & dereliction

Since 2020 Fianna Fáil has introduced attractive schemes to allow people to modernise and refurbish old houses in cities, towns and across rural Ireland. Over 6,700 approvals for the vacant and derelict property grant have been issued already.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Protect and extend the Vacancy Refurbishment Grants to 2030 and increase the grant levels by €10,000.
- Ensure that every Local Authority has an expanded vacant property team in place to help bring vacant properties back into use.
- Streamline and update legislation governing CPO powers and derelict sites, targeting enactment within 12 months.
- Roll out the new special Local Authority Mortgage for Vacant Properties.
- Create an 'Above the Shop living refurbishment grant of €100,000 by topping up the vacant and derelict refurbishment grant. This will help make spaces above retail premises liveable.
- Introduce further 'Above the Shop' living incentives through a commercial rates reduction pilot scheme.



## Help owners of defective houses and apartments

Fianna Fáil committed in 2020 to help the people that had defective apartments and homes due to faulty construction materials. We introduced comprehensive schemes that will now help families revamp their apartments and rebuild their homes to make them safe.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Establish a Buildings Standards Regulatory Authority to strengthen the oversight role of the State in respect of the design and construction of buildings.

#### **Defective Apartments**

- Continue to implement an interim remediation scheme for defective apartments.
- Roll out Retrospective Payment pathfinders to ensure no owner is left financially disadvantaged.
- Legislate and implement a full remediation scheme including retrospective payments for defective apartments.

#### **Defective Concrete Block Scheme**

- Accelerate and implement the Defective Concrete Block Scheme to allow affected homeowners move on with their lives.
- Undertake annual reviews of the scheme.
- Expand the scheme to all counties impacted by the issue.
- Resource and reform the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) to ensure evidence is given in a timely manner.

## Protect home building in rural communities

Fianna Fáil has always supported people to allow them to live in rural Ireland whether this is part of a village, town or in a stand-alone home. While larger projects attached to major urban centres are essential, the potential and demand for housing in rural areas requires greater support.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Allow people to build their own homes where there is a clear social or economic need.
- Ensure that Local Authorities have serviced sites available for sale to local people for house building through the Ready to Build Scheme.
- Support group water schemes and private well grants.
- Implement the special rural water investment scheme.
- Maintain access to the Help to Buy and First Home scheme for self-build homes.
- Protect and expand the Vacant and Derelict refurbishment grant scheme.

# A Fully Connected Island





**As an island nation with a dispersed population** and an open economy, strong and sustainable connectivity both within the country and with the rest of the world is absolutely essential to our economic and social progress.

Throughout our history, Fianna Fáil has embraced and delivered the game-changing transport projects that underpinned our economic transformation. That spirit will continue to inform our approach.

Since 2020, we have helped deliver 100 new or enhanced public transport services, adding almost 2.5 million km to the network. We have also dramatically reduced the cost for citizens accessing public transport. Over the coming years, we want to make significant progress in delivering the big, strategically important rail and light rail public transport projects to support future growth.

Fianna Fáil is committed to improving and expanding our national roads network. This is necessary not only for connectivity and sustainable growth, but also to improve road safety for our road users. Since 2020, we have invested close to €6bn in regional and national roads.

Removing the self-defeating cap on flights at Dublin Airport is a priority for Fianna Fáil. So too is increasing the capacity and improving the connectivity of our regional airports in a sustainable way. Similarly, further sustained investment in our seaports is critical to our connectivity and to our plans for the development of Ireland's offshore energy infrastructure. Fianna Fáil is determined to make sure that Irish ports benefit from the growth of this sector.

Since 2020, we have also transformed the national walking and cycling infrastructure with the addition of hundreds of kilometres of Greenways and Blueways. We want to do more.

## Developing a strategic public transport network

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has expanded bus and rail services, and overseen a huge increase in the Local Link service. Work has progressed on key public transport infrastructure projects.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Progress key public infrastructure projects.
- Publish an evaluation of BusConnects to ensure promised benefits are achieved.
- Invest in new carriages to increase train capacity.
- Expand local link services.
- Invest in light rail for our cities.
- Develop sustainable transport options in the growing commuter belt.

## An improved and safer national road network

Fianna Fáil is committed to improving our road network – both the maintenance of our existing roads and building essential new roads. Maintaining a high-quality road network improves the quality of life of our citizens, improves the natural environment of towns and saves lives. We have introduced important road safety measures, including drug testing at accident scenes and regulating e-scooters and e-bikes. We will build on this work.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase funding for both essential new road construction and road maintenance.
- Ensure Local Authorities develop a Ring Roads and Relief Road Strategy to alleviate urban traffic.
- Create a new Pothole Action Fund for Local Authorities and utilise advanced imaging technology to expedite repairs.
- Fund a matching road maintenance catch up programme for local authorities with poor pavement surface conditions.
- Triple the number of average speed camera systems throughout the country.
- Review the graduated penalty points system to align points with the level of speeding.
- Ensure local authorities have access to all information in relation to road collisions to inform road improvements.

## Accelerate the transition to electric and sustainable transport

Fianna Fáil has promoted sustainable transport through grants of up to €4,000, VRT relief of up to €5,000 and benefit-in-kind tax relief for electric vehicles and chargers. We have introduced grants of €25,000 for taxi drivers switching to wheelchair-accessible EVs.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Review how the Government can assist with the faster roll out of EVs, by increasing the grant levels and linking the grant to income earnings.
- Reduce the average distance between EV recharging points.
- Ensure Local Authorities allocate space for EV chargers in town plans and mandate new commercial carparks to provide EV chargers.
- Launch a Government of Ireland EV Charger App showing all EV charger locations and availability.
- Support decarbonisation of road freight and commercial coach with green fuels like HVO, hydrogen, and biomethane.

## Stronger Airport connectivity and capacity

Fianna Fáil has provided €138m to regional airports over the past four years - boosting passenger traffic by 9% above 2019 levels. Support for State airports included a new runway at Dublin Airport.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Recognising the importance of Dublin airport for our economic growth and development, we will remove the passenger cap as soon as possible.
- Continue to invest in our Regional State Airports, Cork and Shannon, with a view to significantly expanding the throughput of passengers.
- Continue to invest in the Regional Airports Programme, supporting Donegal, Kerry and Ireland West (Knock) airports.
- Introduce a PSO to support Derry to Dublin flights.
- Continue to engage with stakeholders in relation to the expansion of Waterford Regional Airport.
- Update the National Aviation Policy to incorporate the goals of Project Ireland 2040.

## Stronger Seaport connectivity and capacity

Since entering Government Fianna Fáil has doubled sailings to mainland Europe, secured significant EU funding for our port network and protected maritime supply lines in the post-Brexit landscape.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Support investment in our commercial and passenger port infrastructure through a new National Ports Policy.
- Work with ports to support their infrastructure investments to facilitate offshore renewable energy development.

## Amplify active travel

In 2019 Ireland spent €45m annually on active travel initiatives. Over the last four years, we increased this spending to €280m annually.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Reallocate funding for smaller local active travel projects to Local Authorities.
- Increase investment in greenways, blueways and develop urban trailways.
- Expand the Support the Safe Routes to School programme.



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# Action to Ensure a Sustainable Environment





**Climate change and biodiversity loss** are among the most urgent threats we face. We are all aware of the extreme weather events that are happening at home and abroad on a far more frequent basis. Fianna Fáil brought forward the historic 2021 Climate Act which outlines and binds Ireland to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. We have prioritised both direct State investment and supporting private sector investment to reach these targets. We have also established the long-term, multi-billion-euro Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund.

Climate Action is not just about meeting targets. Greener systems mean warmer, more comfortable homes; safer and healthier communities; and better protection for our stunning scenery and natural environment.

We firmly believe in a just transition and will work with the public, stakeholders and industry leaders to introduce the change needed to meet this target. Ireland is an island nation, with an open, global economy so it is essential that we work on multiple routes towards reaching essential climate targets.

Despite our growing population, the progress is clear: greenhouse gas emissions are at their lowest in 30 years, down nearly 7% last year. The carbon intensity of our economy is falling.

We believe that with the right investment and innovations, we can meet our environmental objectives and guarantee a secure economic future for all sectors of Irish society. There should be no conflict between achieving environmental and economic objectives.

## Warmer homes, lower bills

Greener homes are not only better for the environment; they are more comfortable for their inhabitants and cheaper to heat. We need to make retrofitting a reality for every home in Ireland. Since 2020, we have completed 10,000 deep retrofits of Local Authority homes and funded nearly 152,000 home energy upgrades. We have created a new Home Energy Upgrade Loan Scheme to make it easier and cheaper to access finance for retrofitting purposes and significantly increased the capacity of the sector to deliver.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Increase the affordability of retrofitting for households, particularly for lower and middle-income families by introducing a new scheme based on income tax paid over the last three years.
- Scale up retrofitting of Local Authority homes, prioritising the least energy efficient homes first.
- Establish a new Energy Advice Service in every local authority to give independent and individual advice to households on improving their own energy efficiency.
- Expand retrofitting training and apprenticeship places to meet demand.
- Introduce a Boiler Scrappage Pilot to encourage households to switch to more renewable sources of home energy.
- Accelerate the phase-out fossil fuel boilers in new builds.
- Increase SEAI grants for heat pumps and develop stronger pathways for households to work towards better energy efficiency.
- Promote HVO and BIOLPG as alternative fuels homes.
- Pilot a dedicated rural retrofitting programme for homes currently using solid fuel or oil heating systems.
- Encourage data centres and other industries to supply waste heat for community projects.
- Support the development of Local District Heating Networks, warming multiple of homes from excess industrial energy sources.

## Ensuring a just transition

Action on Climate must not fall disproportionately on any particular group, particularly those already at risk of marginalisation. That is why we have established a Just Transition Commission to ensure that Ireland's energy transition does not disadvantage low to medium earning workers or rural communities.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Enact the Energy Poverty Reduction Bill, requiring energy companies to divert surplus renewable energy which would otherwise be wasted to homes in fuel poverty.
- Work at EU level to secure maximum funding for Irish communities under future rounds of Just Transition funding.
- Continue to support existing Just Transition programmes in the Midlands, identifying best practices for other regions in Ireland.
- Extend the Fuel Allowance to additional households to ensure that these homes are not impacted by fuel poverty.
- Ensure that Irish farming families are not scapegoated by climate action and support the Irish agricultural sector to continue to be a world leader in carbon-efficient food production through targeted environmental schemes.
- Continue to resource and promote schemes to help businesses retrofit their premises, such as the Business Energy Upgrade Scheme.



## Delivering Leadership and Accountability

Driving decarbonisation requires co-operation across both the private and public sectors, and government must lead the charge in making this happen. The Climate Change Act sets out a clear mandate to reduce our emissions. We will build on this, by building new structures to plan for and implement green practices across every element of the Irish economy.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Create a Minister of State for Energy to lead our ambitious energy transition.
- Support the European Commission proposal for a 90% reduction in EU emissions by 2040 and adopt 2035 and 2040 national carbon budgets in line with that.
- Increase state capacity to lead the way in short- and long-term climate action.
- Ensure that Solas will train the skilled workers we need to deliver retrofiting.
- Ensure that at least €225m per annum of climate finance is delivered through Ireland's Overseas Development Aid programme.
- Follow through on our commitments regarding carbon tax to ensure that carbon efficient practices are rewarded and to fund continued investment in environmental practices.

## Healthier, happier communities

Greener energy systems brings with it better air quality, preventing chronic health issues and premature deaths; more public transport reduces congestion and stress for workers; and safe active transport and parks allow us to lead healthier, more active lives. We have already introduced Ireland's first Clean Air Strategy to reduce air pollution and invested in Ireland's active and public transport infrastructure.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Invest in the roll-out of charging stations around the national road network.
- Increase investment in the Local Link Services to build upon our already significantly enhanced services.
- Invest in our transport infrastructure, delivering additional capacity across rail, light rail and bus networks.
- Launch an EV Charger App showing EV charger locations and availability
- Expand the Support the Safe Routes to School programme.

## Clean, affordable Irish energy

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has overseen the installation of over 5GW of renewable electricity capacity, placing Ireland among the top five countries globally for wind power capacity per capita. In 2023 alone, solar capacity increased by 76%.

By 2023, over 40% of Ireland's energy came from renewable sources, marking a significant shift towards a cleaner energy future. We want to do far more so that Ireland can guarantee this lower-cost and secure energy source.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Expedite delivery of wind energy by building more onshore and offshore wind farms.
- Select and complete a west coast floating offshore wind test site by 2026.
- Deliver 9GW of onshore wind, 8GW of solar and at least 5GW of offshore wind by 2030.
- Repower the 76 windfarms reaching the end of life in 2030.
- Publish the Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines.
- Complete vital energy connectivity projects, including the Celtic Interconnector.
- Upgrade the national grid to make it more resilient, more reliable, capable of transmitting offshore energy and ultimately to reduce costs for the consumer.
- Support hybrid connections to share grid access between multiple renewable sources.
- Fund solar panels for every school.
- Explore alternative energy storage models, such as grid-to-vehicle/ vehicle-to-grid systems.
- Hold two Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) auctions annually.



## Enhancing waste and water management

Fianna Fáil's commitment to invest €1bn in Uisce Éireann will drive major improvements in public water and wastewater services. This will enhance water quality in rivers, lakes, and marine areas, contributing to the protection and restoration of our environment.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Allocate additional funding to water and wastewater improvements and new infrastructure.
- Upgrade sewerage systems across the country.
- Accelerate the implementation of flood protection schemes including tidal barriers and early warning systems.

## Strengthening biodiversity and environmental protection

Since 2020, Ireland's first Marine National Park, Páirc Náisiúnta na Mara, was established, the level of funding to the National Parks and Wildlife Service has been transformed, and we have rehabilitated over 16,000 hectares of peatlands across 40 bogs. We encouraged and incentivised farmers to join agri-environmental schemes like GLAS and ACRES; promoting sustainable practices that enhance biodiversity across the country.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Fund the National Parks and Wildlife Service to purchase land for the establishment of new National Parks.
- Continue to increase funding to the National Parks and Wildlife Service to enhance and protect biodiversity.
- Mandate Local Authorities to minimise pesticide use in public spaces.
- Implement a range of schemes and supports with farmers to enable significant progress on meeting water quality targets.
- Implement the EU Nature Restoration Law (NRL) to meet rewetting targets on State-owned lands by the 2040s, while also facilitating voluntary restoration for farmers.



# A Healthy, Caring and Supportive Society



# Investing in and Reforming our Health Services

**Developing high-quality, accessible health services for all is a fundamental objective for Fianna Fáil.** That is why we insisted on taking responsibility for Health following the last election. We have allocated an additional 40% funding (from €18.4bn in 2020 to €25.8bn in 2025) to our public health service, delivering record increases in staffing and hospital beds, reducing costs to all patients and expanding access to existing and new services. We are committed to really reforming our health service, cutting the cost of accessing care as well as delivering more for patients.

Our management of the response to the Covid pandemic ensured that Ireland saved many lives and livelihoods. We delivered one of the most successful vaccine programmes in the world which made a real difference.

Investment and reform in healthcare in our country has worked. Lifespan and quality of life has improved, while the provision of treatments for cancer, cardiovascular disease and stroke are unrecognisable from a generation ago. Specialist services for women's healthcare have been transformed over the course of the last four years – existing services expanded, and new areas covered for the first time.

We have removed in-patient charges in public hospitals, expanded the eligibility for GP visit cards, reduced the threshold for the Drug Payment Scheme, and introduced a range of new free schemes.

Fianna Fáil's leadership and investment in the last four years have delivered shorter

waiting times for patients, reduced costs to patients, and expanded the care and services available to patients.

***This is what we want to do next.***



## Urgent and Emergency Care

The progress in reducing trolley numbers since 2020 is due to the significant increase in capacity of our health service, delivered by Fianna Fáil. There are now more beds, and 28,000 more people employed to deliver frontline health services than when we came into Government. There has been a marked increase in weekend discharges and improved patient management. We know more must be done.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Reduce Emergency Department overcrowding further by building on the strong record of investment and reform over the last four years.
- Increase the number of Consultants in Emergency Medicine by a further 50%.
- Ensure patients have more access to diagnostics after hours and at weekends.
- Expand trauma services, including facilities in Dublin, Cork and Galway.
- Open an additional 12 Injury Units to provide patients with an alternative to Emergency Departments.
- Develop a network of Rapid Access Outpatient Clinics, so patients can get urgent access to a specialist and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions via Emergency Departments.
- Introduce Virtual Urgent Care, based on the model successfully introduced in Australia.
- Ensure full national coverage for GP On Call.
- Invest in our ambulance service and paramedics to further improve response times and enable them to treat more patients in their own homes.
- Continue the development of new ambulance stations, paramedic education and training facilities.
- Open more beds at University Hospital Limerick and across the Midwest.
- Implement in full the HIQA recommendations from the Midwest capacity review.
- Implement the Clarke Report recommendations on Septicaemia, Safety and Escalation protocols in all hospitals.

## Waiting Times and Access to Care

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has cut the length of time patients are waiting for hospital care. We halved the average length of time people are waiting to see a consultant, transformed patients' access to diagnostics and commenced construction on six new surgical hubs across the country.

Fianna Fáil has delivered record increases in staffing and hospital beds. We delivered a transformative public-only consultant contract and increased access to college places by up to 40% in some healthcare disciplines.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Further reduce waiting times, targeting all patients to be seen within the agreed 10 to 12 week targets.
- Fund a new targeted waiting list plan to further reduce waiting times for patients, and to speed up access to therapies.
- Utilise new funding and contracts to deliver more surgeries and care at weekends to ensure patients get faster access to treatments.
- Further progress the work to remove routine private care from public hospitals.
- Allow more health professionals to make direct referrals to specialist services or tests.
- Double the number of Advanced Nurse Practitioners.
- Increase the number of GPs by 1,500 through a combination of international recruitment and increased training places.
- Recruit additional health and social care professionals.
- Increase the number of healthcare college places in nursing, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and Health & Social Care Professions.
- Increase the number of public-only consultants working in our health service.
- Open 4,000 more hospital beds, making sure that patients have faster access to care.
- Open a further 100 ICU beds.
- Continue to increase funding to the National Treatment Purchase Fund.
- Build four new large elective hospitals to reduce waiting times for patients.
- Build a new surgical hub for the North-West and open the six hubs that are being completed.
- Staff the new National Children's Hospital as soon as it is completed so that children can be treated there as early as possible.
- Ensure our children's hospitals have enough capacity to quickly and safely treat children with scoliosis and spina bifida.
- Ensure a gender healthcare service that is based on clinical evidence, respect, inclusiveness and compassion.
- Establish an All-Island Institute of Rehabilitation.

## Cancer Care

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil built on our strong record in transforming cancer care in Ireland, with new therapies being approved, survival rates continuing to rise, and a new National Cervical Screening Laboratory opened.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Allocate €35m in ringfenced additional annual funding to cancer services.
- Extend the BowelScreen cancer screening programme to everyone aged between 55 and 74.
- Build on the current lung cancer screening pilot and work towards developing a national cancer screening programme.
- Extend the ages for BreastCheck screening programme in line with updated standards from HIQA.
- Continue to invest in local cancer support groups, providing essential supports to those living with and beyond cancer.
- Fund Genetic and Genomic Medicine for better patient outcomes.
- Ban the sale of tobacco products to people under the age of 21.
- Double the number of clinical trials with a strong focus on cancer patients to ensure access to the latest treatments.
- Fund research and a public awareness campaign into preventing skin cancer.



## Care in the Home and Care in the Community

People should be able to access as much care as possible in their home and in their community. Since 2020, we have added over 5 million more homecare hours, two thirds more GP training places, a huge increase in funding for General Practice, almost 50 new Primary Care Centres, a new national network of Community Care teams and major investment in our hospices.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Design a Statutory homecare scheme to enable people who want to stay in their own home to do so for as long as possible.
- Open another 100 enhanced primary care centres.
- Continue to expand our community care teams.
- Further expand the services pharmacists can provide and streamline community pharmacy HSE reimbursement procedures.
- Ensure that pharmacists are supported to adopt a more proactive approach to managing medicine shortages.
- Continue to invest in palliative care to achieve full national coverage of hospice and community services.
- Develop a new national policy on palliative care for children and increase funding to children's hospice care.

## Cutting Costs for Patients

Cutting the cost of healthcare has been an important part of Fianna Fáil's effort to address the cost-of-living crisis. We extended free GP care to an additional half a million people, cut the cost of medicines for families and eliminated inpatient and outpatient hospital charges.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Extend Free GP Care to all children aged 12 and under.
- Reduce the Drug Payment Scheme monthly maximum payment from €80 to €40 over the next five years.
- Agree a new Dental Treatment Service Scheme for medical card holders.
- Cap all remaining hospital car parking charges that exceed €10 per day.
- Expand access to the orthodontic scheme for children.

## Helping people to stay healthy

As the party that introduced the world's first national ban on smoking in the workplace, Fianna Fáil has a steadfast commitment to improving public health. Since 2020 we have banned the sale of vapes to under 18s and launched the first ever RSV vaccine programme for newborn babies.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Introduce wide-ranging restrictions on vaping, including packaging, flavours, point of sale, advertising and a ban on disposable vapes and vaping in the workplace. We will work with the Northern Ireland Executive to make this an all-island policy.
- Increase the excise rate on e-liquid by 50c per annum.
- Expand the RSV immunisation programme.
- Ensure that children are safe online and implement the recommendations of the new Online Health Taskforce.
- Introduce restrictions on the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks, to include a ban on their sale to children.
- Establish a new Emerging Health Threats Agency to strengthen Ireland's ability to respond to emerging health and pandemic threats.
- Legislate to limit the administration of dermal fillers to trained healthcare professionals.
- Develop a DEIS-style programme of intensive health supports for disadvantaged communities.
- Expand the number of conditions babies are screened for.
- Support the work of the Covid-19 inquiry.





## Improving health outcomes

The impact of investment in healthcare is seen through the very significant achievements that Ireland has made in key health outcomes. Health outcomes clearly show that our health service is delivering quality care. Ireland is among a small group of only seven EU countries where life expectancy is above 82. We now have the second lowest mortality rate among the EU27 with mortality rates for cancers, heart disease and strokes falling significantly in the last decade.

We will continue to prioritise improving health outcomes based on strategies and policies that will have a positive and long-lasting impact on the well-being of Irish society.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Develop a new National Rehabilitation Strategy.
- Develop a new Strategy for Diabetes Care.
- Launch and implement the new National Rare Disease Plan, improving access to Orphan Medicines.
- Develop a new National Cardiovascular Policy and establish a dedicated programme, based on the success of the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP).
- Develop a new dedicated alcohol strategy to address problematic alcohol use.
- Review the legislation for manual handling in healthcare settings.

## Productivity

In Government, Fianna Fáil started a radical journey to embed productivity in patient care. By improving productivity and efficiency we can maximise the use of funding to ensure as many patients as possible get fast access to quality care.

We are now regularly publishing hospital productivity data, and we have formally linked new hospital development funding to productivity. The new public-only Consultant contract requires doctors to work at weekends and late in the evenings.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Ensure full transparency in published data on hospital productivity and use of public funds, including the implementation of agreed service improvements.
- Publish regular reports on the implementation of the public-only Consultant contract, including the expansion of activity at weekends and late in the evening.
- Ensure even more routine healthcare services are available in the evenings and weekends.
- Continue the transition to regular hospital care being available to patients 7 days a week.
- Ensure greater use of expensive diagnostic equipment and operating theatres at nights and weekends.



## A New Era of Innovation in Health

Advancements in science and technology allow us to transform and improve patient access, experiences, and health outcomes. Fianna Fáil wants the Irish health service to benefit from this new era of innovation. Since 2020 we provided the highest ever levels of funding for new medicines and progressed a new National Patient App and a National Shared Care Record.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Overhaul our existing adversarial system for dealing with medical negligence claims to it easier and less stressful for patients when things go wrong. We will establish a dedicated medical negligence court.
- Establish an advanced leadership training programme for managers and senior clinicians.
- Continue to work towards the full digitisation of Irish healthcare records and information systems.
- Pass the Health Information Bill 2023
- to provide the legislative basis for health record information systems.
- Double the number of clinical trials to make Ireland a global leader, ensuring patients can access innovative new treatments and medicines.
- Develop an overarching AI in Health strategy to ensure that the Irish health service harnesses the transformative potential of AI to improve the quality of care and to drive efficiency.



## Women's Health

In the last four years, Fianna Fáil has transformed women's healthcare, underpinned by the country's first ever Women's Health Action Plan. We built a new national network of same day see-and-treat gynaecology clinics, fertility hubs, specialist menopause clinics, and endometriosis clinics. We introduced a free IVF scheme, free contraception for those up to age 35 and a new, free Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) scheme.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Complete the national network of twenty-one same day, see and treat gynaecology clinics.
- Continue to expand specialist services in endometriosis.
- Develop an empowering model of care for managing menopause.
- Expand eligibility to State-funded IVF.
- Establish the new AHR Regulatory Authority (AHRRA) to support Assisted Human Reproduction, including IVF and surrogacy.
- Further extend the provision of free contraception.
- Develop a successor to the National Maternity Strategy.
- Build the new National Maternity Hospital.
- Invest in additional supports for breastfeeding and increase the number of lactation consultants in the community and hospitals.
- Introduce free pelvic floor physical therapy sessions for women after childbirth.





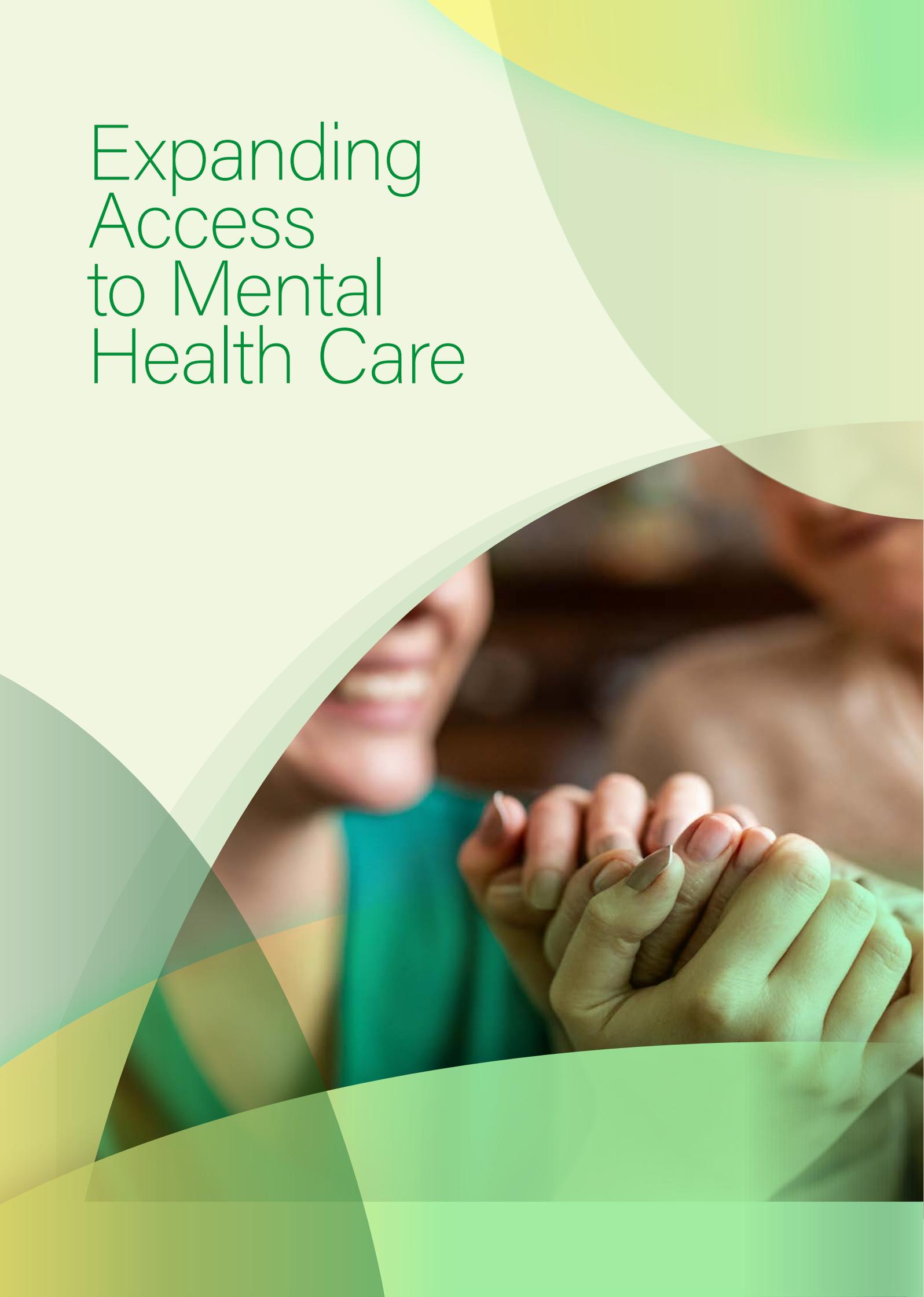
## Drug Use

Fianna Fáil is committed to the idea that drug addiction should be dealt with in a humane and compassionate manner, as a public health issue. Over €160m has been allocated to improve access to and delivery of drug services in the community. We have now published an interactive map of 442 publicly funded services across Ireland and are auditing current services to inform future planning.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Continue to develop our health-led response to drug addiction.
- Decriminalise drug possession for personal use.
- Prepare and publish a formal national position on cannabis regulation following engagement with other countries and health professionals.
- Introduce legislation to require those found in possession of illegal drugs for personal use to attend educational or treatment programmes.
- Continue to work closely with international bodies on drugs policy, including the British-Irish Council, the European Union, the new Drugs Agency, and the Council of Europe to ensure strategic alignment of policies on drug use.
- Implement a new Urban Communities Initiative focused on city centres and the areas of highest disadvantage, which would bring together all state agencies to implement community development planning, schemes for disadvantaged youth and expanded education programmes.

# Expanding Access to Mental Health Care



**It is a priority of Fianna Fáil to promote good mental health and ensure access to appropriate supports when and where people need them. Since 2020 the budget for mental health has increased by 44%.**

The investment has led to the reform and enhancement of mental health services. For the first time in the history of the State we now have a dedicated National Office for Youth Mental Health in the HSE. We opened the Portrane National Forensic Mental Health Facility and published the Mental Health Bill. If returned to Government, we will prioritise passing this Bill to modernise the State's approach to mental health services.

Through sustained investment in staffing and expansion of services Fianna Fáil is committed to ongoing reform and improvement in our mental health services. We know that more needs to be done.

***This is what we want to do next.***



## Expand recruitment and retention

Since 2020 Fianna Fáil has provided record levels of funding to mental health services to recruit more staff and increase the availability of mental health services.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Continue to recruit staff, both nationally and internationally, to meet the needs of our increasing population.
- Retain staff working in mental health services by providing access to training and supporting career progression.
- Expand the number of funded places in Clinical Psychology Doctorate training.
- Extend the funding of the HSE Assistant Psychologist pilot programme so more patients get support.

## Prioritise Child and Youth Mental Health Services

Child and Adolescent mental health is a key priority for Fianna Fáil. We have provided €150m in annual funding to CAMHS teams, alongside €110m for community-based mental health organisations. CAMHS facilitate 240,000 appointments for children and young people annually.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Continue to resource CAMHS teams to reduce waiting lists.
- Continue to implement the 'No Wrong Door' admissions policy nationwide, ensuring proper clinical triage for young people.
- Establish targeted supports for children with autism experiencing mental health challenges.
- Develop a new care model for HSE Primary Care Psychology to expedite services for young people with less complex issues.
- Enhance youth mental health services for those up to age 25, focusing on smoother transitions from CAMHS to adult services.
- Increase staffing in under-18 dual diagnosis services to better treat young people with mental health and substance abuse issues.
- Legislate to regulate CAMHS.

## Strengthen suicide prevention

In Government, Fianna Fáil has extended Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Suicide Prevention Strategy, launched the first-ever 24/7 mental health text line for immediate support, and promoted the Healthy Campuses initiative at universities to combat suicide. These measures have contributed to a 33% reduction in suicide-related deaths since 2021. However, we know that more needs to be done.

### ***This is what we will do next:***

- Expand the Recovery Colleges initiative nationwide, to empower and educate young people about their mental health and wellbeing.
- Continue the recruitment of suicide crisis assessment nurses in our communities.
- Continue to develop and fund out of hours crisis services.
- Design and fully implement the successor to the national suicide reduction strategy.
- Prioritise culturally appropriate mental health supports for Traveller and other minority communities.

## Support for Older People's mental health

Fianna Fáil has always prioritised the health and well-being of older people. We recognise that any one at any age can experience mental health issues and we are committed to addressing the growing needs for enhanced mental health supports for this group. We want to ensure that older people can access the supports they need in their own communities.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Fund mental health supports across all Integrated Care Programme for Older People (ICPOP) teams, making it easier for older people to access services locally.
- Invest in social programmes and befriending services to address isolation.
- Increase the rollout of telehealth across all health regions to offer remote counselling and mental health consultations for older people.

## Strengthening access, supports and community-based solutions

We broadened the coverage of eating disorder teams, enhanced funding for the Seeking Safety Ireland Programme, provided for new Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurses, and funded organisations such as Jigsaw for early intervention.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Extend free primary care counselling to GP card holders.
- Support local groups like Men's Sheds and retirement communities.
- Fund the national mental health policy Sharing the Vision.
- Expand specialist services for eating disorders, ADHD, intellectual disabilities, early psychosis intervention, self-harm, and others.
- Increase acute psychiatric bed provision to the recommended 25 per 100,000 population.

## Increase perinatal mental health care

Since 2020 Fianna Fáil has transformed women's healthcare. As part of this transformation, we have established perinatal mental health services for pregnant women and new mothers facing mental health challenges by establishing multidisciplinary teams and specialised midwives.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Deliver the first in-patient Mother and Baby Mental Health Unit.
- Double the number of multidisciplinary teams for pregnant women.
- Increase the number of perinatal mental health midwife posts.



# Supporting Children and their Families





**Fianna Fáil is committed to ensuring that Ireland is a good place to raise a family, and that all children are afforded an equal start in life and equal opportunities throughout their lives.**

That is why, over the past four years, we have reduced childcare costs by 50% and established the first ever National Youth Mental Health Office in the HSE. We have made huge strides in reducing costs for children through free schoolbooks, hot school meals, and the extension of the free GP Visit Card and free public transport.

## Deliver affordable, accessible childcare for all

Since 2020, we have doubled State investment in childcare, allocating €1bn in 2024 alone. This has dramatically reduced the cost of childcare and increased pay for childcare professionals.

We will continue to grow state involvement and investment in the sector to ensure that our three core objectives of access, affordability and quality are achieved. We recognise that private provision plays a very significant role in childcare supply. An overnight abandonment of this would create major concerns about existing provision and parental choice. We will work to support existing childcare providers, while also ramping up state-led provision, particularly in areas where there is insufficient supply.

Pay and conditions remain a major challenge in childcare, and we will work to increase pay in the sector by using the Joint Labour Committee to draw up Employment Regulation Orders. We will increase funding to childcare providers to meet the cost of these increases.

We must protect families' right to choose the childcare arrangement that makes the most sense for them and their children, whether this is with a creche or with a childminder. We will support all modes of childcare provision, giving parents flexibility and choice.

**Childcare provision will be structured around three core pillars: affordability, accessibility and quality.**

***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

### Affordability

- Increase the National Childcare Subsidy reducing parents' fees to €200 per month, going further should economic and fiscal circumstances permit.
- Place the ECCE scheme on a legislative footing.
- Establish a new National Childcare Price Register to ensure that there is transparency in fees for parents.
- Increase Core Funding to services provided their fees are under the fee cap, that they maintain fee freezes, and that they pay staff in line with the Employment Regulation Orders.

## Accessibility

- Bolster the new unit within the Department of Children to forward plan on childcare needs and undertake a national audit to identify blackspots where there are insufficient childcare places for the local population.
- Provide capital investment to build or purchase state-owned childcare facilities, which can then be leased to community childcare providers in these blackspots.
- Work to provide more childcare on school sites, including Irish-medium naíonraí.
- Make it easier for childminders to register with Tusla and help them in entering the contract for the National Childcare subsidy scheme. Childminders remain a valued and important part of childcare provision in Ireland.

## Quality & Inclusion

- Continue to increase pay for childminders and early years educators through the Employment Regulation Order instrument.
- Extend the AIM programme supports to all children with a disability aged 0 to 3-year-olds in childcare, building on the existent provision for 3 to 6-year-olds.
- Establish a professional register for childminders and early years educators. This will help reduce the administrative burden on providers and reflects the professionalisation of the sector.
- Deepen co-operation and shared learnings between early years education and the Department of Education Inspectorate.
- Expand the remit of the Ombudsman for Children's Office to investigate complaints received about childcare settings, including fully private settings.
- Introduce an "Earn and Learn" apprenticeship model enabling childcare staff to gain qualifications and advance their careers while remaining in the workforce.

## Dedicated budgets for children

Since coming into Government in 2020, Fianna Fáil has made substantial investments in children's welfare, tackling poverty and disadvantage. We have substantially increased social welfare rates, introduced a Newborn Baby Grant, reduced costs for families by introducing the free hot school meals programme, free schoolbooks and free public transport for children under age 9. We have also expanded the free GP Visit Card, and increased subsidies under the National Childcare Scheme and made legislative changes to remove child maintenance from all social welfare means tests.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Implement a whole-of-government approach to addressing child poverty and ensure child poverty proofing is central to Government decision making.
- Set a new child poverty target to focus work on improving the lives of children.
- Ensure that the social welfare system continues to insulate families and children from rising living costs.
- Continue to reform means testing in social welfare schemes to address anomalies and create greater fairness in the system.
- Ensure that the voices of children and young people are reflected in the development of policies that affect them.

## Strengthening support for Foster Carers

Since coming into Government in 2020, Fianna Fáil has increased the foster care allowance by 23% for children under 12, to €400 per week, and by 20% for children over 12, to €425 per week.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Recognise foster care through social welfare credits so that foster carers can access the State's contributory pension.
- Extend the Back-to-School Allowance to foster carers.
- Increase the After Care Allowance in line with the increase in the Foster Care Allowance for young people who remain living with foster carers after the age of 18 years and continue in education/training.

## Prioritising the wellbeing of children in State care

Fianna Fáil has invested over €1bn in Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to increase capacity in its residential care provision.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Replace the Child Care Act, 1991 with modern legislation.
- Address staffing challenges in special care units by providing a Special Care Allowance.
- Establish a high support model for step-down units so that any child in special care is not there for any longer than they need to be.
- Implement a clear policy on the rights of children living in informal kinship care, together with supports for those providing the care.
- Expand the Barnahus model nationally to support children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse.
- Put supports in place for all young people as they age out of State care.
- Guarantee that children have a voice in decisions relating to their care.
- Subject non-statutory residential care services to independent inspection by HIQA.

## Keeping children and young people safe online

We introduced the Online Safety Code in 2024. It is a gamechanger in our campaign for a safer online experience for our children. Video sharing platforms must protect their users from harmful content such as serious cyber-bullying, and the promotion of eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide.

Companies are now obliged to have age assurance and age verification measures in place, and to provide parental controls for content which may impair the physical, mental, or moral development of children. If they fail to do so they can face fines of up to €20m or 10% of turnover. We have also introduced a complete ban on targeted advertising of children based on their personal data.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Introduce new legislation requiring online service providers to verify users' age. We will hold them criminally liable and subject to fines for failure to do so.
- Legislate for a new online Digital Passport and require internet users to verify their age using these electronic IDs.
- Legislate to ban recommender algorithms in children's social media feeds and to fully supervise the use of all recommender algorithms by online platforms.
- Introduce new direct reporting channels (akin to Childline) so that members of the public can report harmful or illegal content directly to An Garda Síochána and/or Coimisiún na Meán. We will commence an appropriate advertising campaign to advise the public of the existence of these new reporting channels.
- Work at EU level to make the detection and reporting of child sexual abuse material by digital platforms a legal requirement.
- Implement the recommendations of the Online Health Taskforce in relation to the harms caused to children and young people by online activity.

## Enhancing access to leisure activities and cultural experiences

The initiatives under the Creative Ireland Programme and the Creative Youth Plan 2023-2027 have provided children and young people up to the age of 24 with access to creative, cultural, and artistic opportunities throughout their lives. We are committed to building on this work.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Make public transport free for all children under the age of 15.
- Establish a fund for every Local Authority to develop, update and adapt playgrounds to make them more accessible for children with disabilities.
- Set up a new Parks & Pitches Fund to acquire new lands for parks and playing pitches to help build liveable communities.
- Support young readers through a Republic of Readers scheme - establishing a national free book scheme, an automatic library card for every child when they begin primary school, and a national literary bursary fund.

## Revamping youth support services

Fianna Fáil has increased funding for youth support services by 26% since 2019, investing €78m in 2024 alone.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Develop a new Youth Services Action Plan within the first 100 days to provide a strategic direction for the delivery of youth services.
- Reform the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme and the UBU Scheme so that multi-annual funding is available, and that open-access youth work is funded.
- Create a pathway for youth workers to access mental health supports for the young people in their care.
- Establish advanced drug treatment centres for young people suffering from addiction, developing a health-led approach to addiction (see Health chapter for fuller details).

# Supporting People with a Disability



**Fianna Fáil is committed to advancing the rights and improving the lives of people with disabilities.**

By transferring responsibility for Disability from the Department of Health to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth, we ensured a rights-based approach to disability, embedding the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) into policymaking across government.

In Government, Fianna Fáil abolished the outdated wardship system, replacing it with the Decision Support Service and launched the country's first Autism Innovation Strategy.

Since 2020 we have increased funding for people with Disabilities by more than 50%. The Disability Capacity Review will guide future investment. We know that more needs to be done.

## Inclusive communities

Fianna Fáil established the Disability Promotion and Awareness Fund to support community initiatives for people with disabilities, including sensory projects. We increased funding for day services, now operating at 1100 locations. We also launched the Disability Day Service Referral Programme, allowing potential users to defer placement for up to five years to pursue education or employment.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase investment in Adult Day Services.
- Enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities by supporting programmes like WorkAbility.
- Implement signing-on and retention bonuses to attract staff to work in Disability Services.
- Introduce EU Disability Awareness Cards, ensuring that holders are entitled to any preferential treatment that applies in any member state.
- Allow people with disabilities to work more hours without risking their social protection payments.
- Rollout disability training for all Intreo staff.
- Establish public sensory rooms in new libraries.
- Establish a National Safeguarding Body to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of vulnerable adults.
- Increase Sport Ireland Core Funding for sports clubs to increase the participation levels by people with disabilities.
- Improve access for people with disabilities to participate in jury service.
- Establish a Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO) Forum for collaborative engagement on policy and legislation development.
- Continue to work towards the goals outlined in the Disability Capacity Review.

## Make neurorehabilitation a national reality

Fianna Fáil has expanded Community Neuro-Rehabilitation Teams (CNRTs) to nearly every Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO).

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Complete the national rollout of Community Neuro-Rehabilitation Teams.
- Develop more regional inpatient rehabilitation beds.
- Implement community-based multidisciplinary rehabilitation services in every CHO area.
- Raise the number of neurology nurse specialists.
- Increase the number of consultant neurologists.

## Helping children get the therapies they need

Fianna Fáil in Government started the process of reinstating therapy staff to special schools. We boosted funding to increase the number of therapists working in our Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs). Additionally, we established specialist CDNTs focusing on the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and those with sight loss.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Reinstatement of on-site therapists to Special Schools.
- Radically improve accessibility and effectiveness of therapy services through providing on-site support to children in special classes within mainstream schools.
- Recruit additional therapy clinicians and Therapy Assistants.
- Increase training places for Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy in third-level institutions.
- Double the number of Regional Assessment Hubs.
- Support families who are waiting too long for an Assessment of Needs to procure assessments privately.
- Establish an annual Children's Therapies Grant Fund to support organisations and community groups to provide evidence-based therapies such as equine/dog therapy.

## A stronger, sustainable voluntary sector

Fianna Fáil recognises the essential work carried out by staff in community and voluntary health and social care organisations. We are committed to recognising their contribution.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Aim to achieve pay parity with the public sector for Section 39 staff.
- Implement a Disability Service Sustainability Process for Section 38 and Section 39 organisations to ensure their long-term viability.

## Respite and Recharge

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has more than doubled funding for respite services. This has facilitated the establishment of new respite houses in each CHO area facilitating a 75% rise in overnight stays and the expansion of alternative respite models.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Invest at least €15m more annually in respite services.
- Increase funding for the Home Support Emergency Respite Scheme for unpaid carers in need of urgent respite.
- Continue to support respite houses.
- Enhance alternative respite options, including home sharing, after-school clubs, weekend breaks, and tea-time respite.

## Independent living, independent lives

In Government, Fianna Fáil prioritised investment in personal assistance (PA) hours by increasing funding by 15%, providing hundreds of thousands of additional hours annually. We increased the Housing Adaptation grants and broadened the eligibility. We also launched the 'Time to Move from Congregated Settings' strategy to help people with disabilities transition from large institutions to their own homes in the community.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Continue to increase the Housing Adaptation Grant and broaden eligibility.
- Provide annual funding to increase personal assistance hours by at least an additional 20,000 hours per year.
- Deliver more home support hours.
- Align Disability Home Support pay rates with Older Persons Services.
- Rollout Personalised Budgets nationally.
- Develop a multi-year capital plan for investment in residential and independent living options.
- Promote shared services in independent living housing developments.
- Continue work to end the practice of placing young people with disabilities in nursing homes.
- Expand the role of Disability Access Officers in Local Authorities.
- Work with the Law Society to create a solicitor's portal to simplify enduring Power of Attorney applications.
- Reform the Blind tax credit and examine the possibility of introducing a Deaf tax credit for congenital hearing loss.

## People with Autism

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has introduced the inaugural Autism Innovation Strategy and the AsIAM Information Phoneline, providing vital resources and support related to autism. Additionally, we established the first two 'Autism One Stop Shops,' to further enhance access to services.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Establish a Centre for Autism/ Neurodivergent Services tasked with providing supports for children and adults with autism, from diagnosis and assessment to therapy and support groups.
- Build on the Autism Innovation Strategy by co-developing initiatives with people with autism to address service gaps for the neurodivergent population.
- Expand the coverage of 'Autism One Stop Shops' in all regional health areas.
- Create a public pathway for neuro-affirmative assessments and interventions for adults with autism.
- Increase the Sensory Initiatives Grant for communities to develop sensory gardens, hubs and spaces.

## Empower mobility through enhanced transport and technology

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has consistently increased funding for the enhancement of public transport and transport services and ensured that 90% of Local Link networks are fully accessible for people with disabilities. Additionally, we partnered with the World Health Organization to launch the Global Report on Assistive Technology, and increased funding by 60% for the Assistive Technology Scheme.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Introduce an Assistive Technology Passport, a personal record of all of the relevant information about an individual's requirement for Assistive Technology.
- Expand the Travel Assistance Scheme nationally.
- Launch an annual vehicle upgrade initiative for disability service providers.
- Expand the Leitrim Integrated Transport Pilot Project nationally. This will allow passengers with disabilities and those access health care services.
- Support localised door-to-door services like ACTS (Accessible Community Transport Southside).
- Extend the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Taxi Grant Scheme.
- Reduce the 24-hour notice requirement for disabled users of rail services.



# Supporting Families, Carers and Pensioners



**Fianna Fáil has always believed in the State's responsibility to help those in need and to support a decent society. Our pioneering introduction of the Widow's pension, Unemployment Assistance, Children's Allowance, Fuel Allowance, and Free Travel Pass reflects this unwavering commitment.**

Since 2020, we have prioritised protecting the most vulnerable in society, ensuring our welfare system supports those unable to provide for themselves due to age, incapacity, caring for others or economic challenges.

Our pandemic response shielded families from the worst economic impacts, including the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), which provided over €9.2bn in support to 880,000 people.

Over the last five budgets we have secured annual increases in weekly allowances and income disregards and provided payments to insulate individuals and families from rising inflation and increasing costs. We will continue to increase social welfare rates and work to reform the means testing system to address inconsistencies and promote greater equality and fairness, including for those in self-employment.



## A supportive welfare system

A core value of Fianna Fáil has always been to support people when they need it most. Whilst we are now at full employment, we recognise that people may need the safety net of the social welfare system at various times in their lives because of circumstances outside of their control such as illness or unemployment. In the last four budgets we increased core welfare rates, and we also introduced a landmark reform, a Pay-Related Benefit Scheme, which will protect people from a 'cliff-edge' for a period of time when they lose their job.

Fianna Fáil will always ensure that our social welfare system provides an adequate income when people need it most, whilst also ensuring that it encourages people into further education and training and employment.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Increase core welfare rates by at least €12 annually.
- Continue to implement Pathways to Work and develop and publish a new employment and activation strategy.
- Ensure intensive and appropriate supports are in place to support those most distant from the labour market and those most at risk of long-term unemployment.
- Continue to resource the INTREO service and the recruitment and job matching service for employers via events, in-person and online engagements and using the Jobsireland.ie website.
- Tackle abuse of social welfare payments.
- Extend the period of a social welfare payment, following the death of a dependent, from 6 to 12 weeks.

## Protecting pensioners

The State pension is the bedrock of pension provision in Ireland. In 2019 it was €248.30 and now it is €289.30 per week under Fianna Fáil in Government. We are committed to ensuring it provides older people with a decent standard of living in retirement.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Increase the State pension to at least €350 per week and maintain the retirement age at 66.
- Increase the Living Alone Allowance.
- Increase the Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Pension,
- the Blind Pension and the Invalidity Pension.
- Legally enable people who want to work beyond the age of 65 to do so.
- Protect the Free Travel Pass.
- Introduce a free OPW heritage pass for all those aged 66 and over.

## Reforming supports for people with a disability

We are committed to empowering people with disabilities by providing the support needed for greater independence. Since 2020, we've raised income disregards and core welfare rates and introduced key initiatives like the WorkAbility Programme and the Work-Life Balance Act 2023, granting all workers the right to request remote working.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Work to reform and improve disability payments.
- Put the Disability Support Grant on a permanent footing and increase it incrementally.
- Increase the Disability Allowance and the Domiciliary Care Allowance.
- Support individuals in accessing pathways to employment and examine the 'ability to work' criteria for certain payments.
- Reform the Disability Allowance into a new Independent Living Allowance.
- Increase the Housing Adaptation Grant.
- Redesign Census 2027 and future studies to enable detailed disability data breakdowns.
- Eliminate the biannual review of the medical card for everyone born with a congenital condition.
- Review the Primary Medical Certificate criteria to include more people.

## Valuing carers

Fianna Fáil recognises the essential and relentless work that carers do. We are the Party that introduced the Carer's Allowance and the Half-Rate Carer's Allowance. More recently, we have increased the rates of payment and income disregards, extended Carer's Benefit to the self-employed and introduced a long-term Carer's Scheme to help long-term carers access the State Pension.

The steps that we have taken have made a difference, but we want to go further. We want to improve how the State values and compensates carers.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Allocate a minimum of €600m to increase the income disregards to qualify for the Carer's Allowance, with a view to abolishing the means test for this payment over the term of Government.
- Ensure that on reaching pension age carers can retain the rate at which they are paid their Carers Allowance, and concurrently receive the State Pension.
- Provide full-rate Carer's Allowance for those caring for two individuals and a Half-Rate Carer's Allowance for any additional people.
- Increase the annual Carer's Support Grant to €2,500.

## Supporting families and workers

Fianna Fáil is committed to supporting vulnerable families from rising living costs through targeted welfare supports. Since coming into Government in 2020, we have extended Child Benefit to 18-year-olds in full-time education, increased all core payments, and provided lump sum payments for working families and lone parent households. Furthermore, Hot School Meals will be a universal provision in all primary schools in 2025 with 550,000 children eligible for the scheme.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Increase the Child Benefit payment.
- Increase the Child Support Grant across all welfare payments.
- Expand the eligibility for the Fuel Allowance to families in receipt of the Working Family Payment.
- Extend Parent's Leave and Benefit from 9 to 12 weeks.
- Extend the duration of Parent's Leave and Benefit to allow parents to take leave and access benefits for up to five years following the birth or adoption of a child.
- Extend and target the School Meals Holiday Hunger Project.
- Increase the Back to Education Allowance by 25%.
- Enact legislation to give entitlement to unmarried cohabitants to a Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory pension.

# Supporting Older People



**Fianna Fáil is committed to making sure that all of us can age well with dignity and support. We want people to stay in their own homes for as long as possible, with the correct supports.**

Since coming into Government in 2020 we have expanded home care hours, daycare services, at home dementia care, and Meals on Wheels. We also established a Commission on Care for Older People to identify the best ways to support aging, and we are committed to implementing its recommendations.

Dementia services are a key priority for Fianna Fáil, with 30 new cases of dementia diagnosed across the country daily. We have already set up 53 dementia day centres, 25 memory clinics, more than 30 dementia advisers, and three dementia-friendly towns. We are determined to do more.



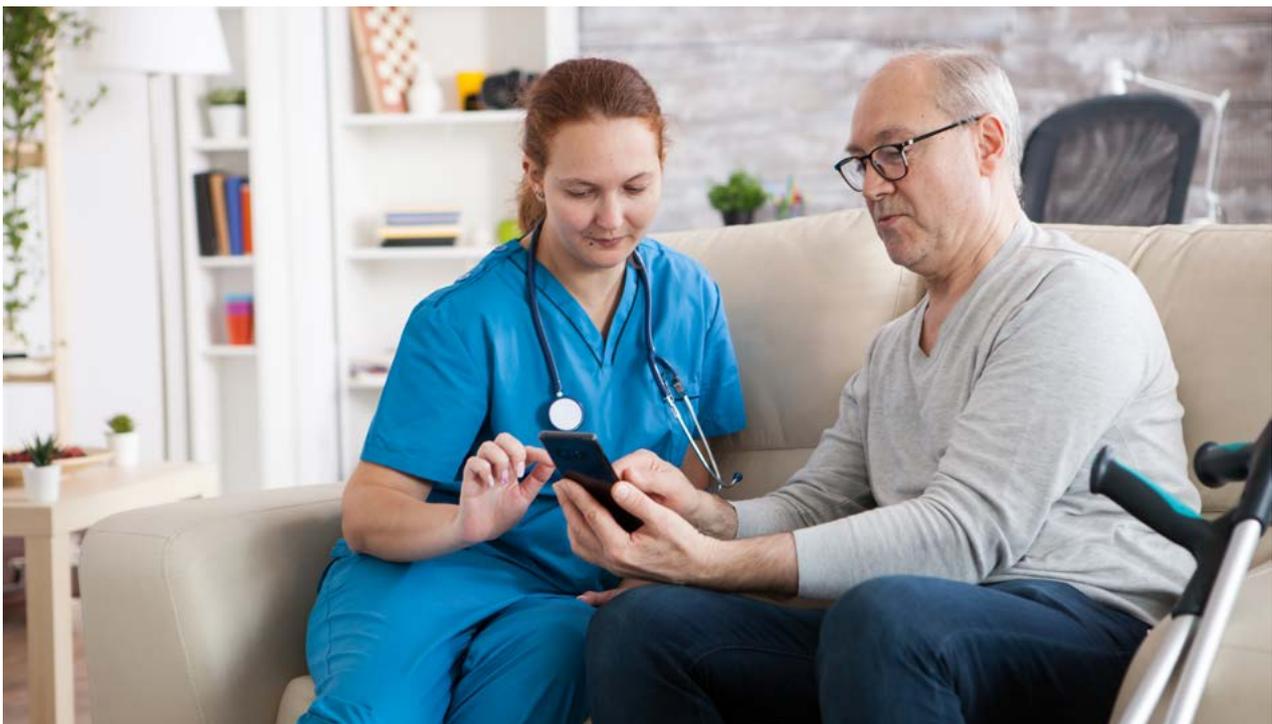
## Supporting people living at home

Since coming into Government, Fianna Fáil has increased home support hours by 20%, supporting 56,000 people each month. The waiting list for this service has also reduced by 33% since 2019.

Since 2020, we re-opened 320-day centres post-pandemic, greatly enhancing the health and well-being of older people and helping them stay in their homes longer. We also doubled funding for the Meals-on-Wheels service allowing an average of almost 240,000 meals being given to 19,000 people each month.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Design a Statutory Homecare Scheme to enable people who want to stay in their own home to do so for as long as possible.
- Increase home care hours by 1 million hours annually.
- Rollout the Care & Repair scheme nationally.
- Double the Housing Adaptation Grant.
- Increase funding for the national Meals on Wheels network.
- Expand the delivery of new day centres to areas currently lacking access.
- Invest in expanding the Enhanced Community Care Programme and rolling out Community Health Networks.
- Increase investment in the Community Service Hub model.



## Increased dementia supports

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has ringfenced funding for dementia-specific supports and made substantial improvements in the availability of dementia services across the country.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Establish 20 new dementia-specific day care centres using existing facilities.
- Include dementia specific provision across all new Community Nursing Hospitals.
- Increase ringfenced home care hours, and funding for Dementia Intensive Home Care Packages.
- Double funding for dementia day care at home for those unable to attend a day centre.
- Double the number of dementia advisers.
- Rollout more Memory Assessment Support Services teams.
- Double the rollout of early age dementia supports, including activity clubs.
- Support the further development of the Dementia Friendly Towns initiative.

## Strengthen our nursing home sector

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase funding for the Fair Deal Scheme in line with population growth.
- Build more public nursing home beds.
- Provide for a career pathway for healthcare assistants.

# Empowering the Next Generation



# Investment and Reform in Education

**Throughout its history Fianna Fáil has established an unmatched record of commitment to education. We believe that education is the great leveller and the great enabler – the bedrock of our country’s continued social and economic progress. We have led every significant expansion of Irish education, from the establishment of free secondary schooling and creation of special education supports, to broadening access to university education and most recently the free schoolbook scheme.**

Since coming into Government in 2020, we have undertaken the single largest expansion of the DEIS scheme to support students at risk of educational disadvantage. We have also reduced the primary pupil:teacher ratio in three successive budgets, bringing it to a historic low of 23 pupils per teacher. OECD and EU studies confirm that school completion and third-level qualifications are at their highest ever level, and Ireland has achieved real progress in literacy and other core educational outcomes. Given the central importance of education to individual development and society as a whole, the rapid development of new challenges requires concerted action to protect children and to give them the skills to succeed. Our reform agenda has this at its core.



## Smaller classes, stronger schools

Under Fianna Fáil leadership, the education sector has enjoyed sustained progress over the last four and a half years. 7,000 more teachers are today working in our schools, securing the lowest ever pupil-teacher ratio and reducing the number of classes with more than 30 pupils by 50%. We have introduced upskilling and greater promotional opportunities for existing teachers, while almost €5bn has been invested in school buildings. We have introduced Ireland's first free Schoolbooks Scheme, implemented a dramatic reduction in the cost of school transport, and dramatically extended the free hot school meals scheme across the country. These are just some of the transformational changes introduced since Fianna Fáil took responsibility for education in 2020.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Continue to increase capitation funding for schools so that they have more resources for each pupil. We will increase capitation by 40%.
- Establish a new DEIS Plus Scheme to support schools with the highest level of educational disadvantage.
- Target a reduction of the general Pupil Teacher Ratio at primary level to 19:1.
- Work with schools to build on our progress to date and eliminate very large classes.
- Continue, expand, and improve the quality of the Free Hot School Meals programme.
- Expand the Home School Liaison Co-Ordinator service to every second-level school with an identified attendance problem
- Introduce a national Small Schools Project for all 1300 small primary schools enabling them to access and share additional resources, promoting active coordination for the benefit of pupils.
- Trial new administrative supports for Principals and Boards of Management to reduce their workloads.
- Implement an annual Summer Works Programme so that schools can carry out important improvement works.
- Increase the Minor Works Grants that are paid to schools on an annual basis to help meet maintenance requirements.
- Encourage the rotation of STEM teachers in an area so that clusters of schools can benefit.
- Reform the redeployment panels for both primary and secondary schools.
- Increase bursaries for student teachers to promote accessibility into the profession.
- Increase the number of training places on educational psychology courses to address workforce planning difficulties.
- Develop a common application system and standardised admissions time across schools.
- Expand the School Transport Service to include 100,000 students by 2030.
- Provide more Community Link Workers to schools to support Traveller and Roma students and their progression in education.

## Further improve outcomes for students

Since 2020, under Fianna Fáil leadership, Ireland's ranking in all three core educational outcomes of reading, mathematics and science have improved. In addition, school completion has reached its highest ever level. We want to ensure that Ireland remains among the top-performing countries in the world and to that end we introduced the most far-reaching reform of the Leaving Certificate cycle in half a century.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Continue the reform of the Leaving Certificate in order to broaden the range of learning and examination approaches involved.
- Support the rollout of more international languages in primary and secondary schools.
- Reform the Irish language curriculum so that a greater emphasis is placed on speaking the language and expand opportunities for students to attend Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí.
- Introduce universal elements to all Transition Year programmes in each secondary school.
- Expand the JCSP School Library Programme.
- Introduce a single application process for students applying for third-level courses, further education courses and/or apprenticeships.
- Overhaul guidance services in schools to ensure that all students have access to career guidance advice.

## Safer, healthier schools

Fianna Fáil believes that school prepares young people for life, and that the school environment should be as supportive and as nurturing as possible. Since 2020, we've introduced increases in the minimum hours of timetabled physical education up to Junior Cycle, initiated new anti-bullying procedures in schools and set up a national database of bullying incidents in schools for the first time. We have reformed the curriculum to ensure that all students receive the information they need about drugs and alcohol, safe internet usage, relationships, consent, and healthy lifestyles.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Ensure enforcement of a ban on smartphone use during the entire school day to protect students' wellbeing and learning.
- Expand the FUSE anti-bullying and online safety programme to more schools and students.
- Assess the ongoing Mental Health pilots to ensure that students experiencing mental health challenges can receive the support they need in school.
- Set up a new dedicated PE Hall Fund in co-operation with the Sports Capital Fund to provide specific new Physical Education facilities to schools.
- Increase the number of schools offering Physical Education as a Leaving Certificate exam subject.
- Establish a new School Yard Fund for surface works and equipment.
- Expand the Active School Flag to a greater number of schools, especially secondary schools, through continued funding support.
- Build new Music Education Hubs so that more students can benefit from structured and sustained instruction in music.
- Expand the highly successful BLAST and Creative Schools Programmes.

## Special Education

Since entering Government in 2020, we have more than doubled the number of special classes and introduced 11 new special schools nationwide. We have quadrupled the number of summer provision camps for children with additional needs and educational disadvantage and have introduced a new pilot scheme to place therapists directly into special schools to ensure children have rapid access to the supports they need.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Roll out the first national Therapy Service in Education, with therapists providing therapies in schools. We will start with special schools, special classes and DEIS Plus schools.
- Continue to hire more special education teachers and special needs assistants to ensure that every student receives the support they need.
- Expand the availability of early intervention classes, under the remit of the Department of Education, so that those children in need of an early intervention can access it in their local school.
- Continue to expand the free-of-charge Summer Programme for students with special educational needs.
- Ensure that schools in every community have special classes so that all students can attend local schools.
- Continue the establishment of new special schools across the country.
- Introduce a national centralised application system for children applying for a place in a special school or in a special class within a mainstream school.
- Reform the Drumcondra Tests which are used to gauge student learning to include assessments for dyslexia.
- Complete the Review of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act and introduce necessary legislative changes to ensure that it meets the needs of students.
- Increase the number of post-primary school places for children with ASD.
- Implement a mandatory disability education module during teacher training, along with a mandatory placement in a special class or school for all student teachers.

# Expanding Access and Excellence in Further and Higher Education



**Expanding access and excellence in further and higher education has been a core priority for Fianna Fáil for much of the party's history - with Ireland now ranked at the top of international tables for educational achievements at these levels. We have built on this since 2020 through a sustained commitment to the development of our universities, colleges and training programmes.**

Ireland's continued social and economic progress relies on a skilled workforce, and we are focused on equipping young people and those returning to education with the necessary tools to achieve this. It is why in 2020, Fianna Fáil established a dedicated Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and it is why we have an ambitious programme for the future.



## Increased support for Students and for the Sector

Fianna Fáil has significantly increased funding for further and higher education, investing almost €16bn over the past four years to advance a more unified and better resourced tertiary education system across the island, including the establishment of five new Technological Universities.

In the same period, Fianna Fáil has boosted student support by abolishing contribution fees for those from low incomes households and by cutting fees by €1000 for those from middle income households, benefitting nearly 100,000 people.

We invested over €17m in the Student Assistance Fund and raised the Postgraduate Fee Contribution Grant to €5,000. We also fully restored postgraduate maintenance grants, as promised.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Eliminate the core funding gap in the third level sector through use of the National Training Fund.
- Facilitate access to financial markets by Technological Universities for investment in student housing, infrastructure and R&D expansion.
- Add a further 100,000 places in Further Education and training nationally.
- Increase the SUSI grant and reform eligibility to enable tiered payments.
- Extend SUSI grants to Graduate Entry medicine and engage with domestic banks on the reintroduction of a Graduate Entry Medicine loan.
- Increase the Student Assistance Fund by €5m.
- Boost the Fund for Students with Disabilities.
- Raise PhD stipends further for students in paid scholarship posts.
- Introduce a €500 placement grant for students on mandatory placements.

## Ensuring Ireland has the Skills and Apprenticeships we need

Since Fianna Fáil took responsibility for apprenticeships in 2020, the country has seen a massive increase in the number of apprenticeship programmes available and the numbers of qualified individuals working in key sectors.

Continued, targeted and sustained investment in skills and apprenticeships will be crucial to meet the needs of employers in sectors as diverse as homebuilding and healthcare. In Government, we established the High-Level Skills Implementation Group to align national skills policy, and we have ambitious plans to meet the needs of the coming decade.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Expand the skills categories that can avail of the National Training Fund, to cover essential public services like healthcare and education.
- Launch a new 5-year Apprenticeship Action Plan for 2026-2030 to set a strategic vision for further enhancing the sector.
- Expand retrofitting training and establish industry centres of excellence nationwide.
- Facilitate plumbers in upskilling as heat pump installers through tailored apprenticeship training and Continuous Professional Development options for qualified plumbers.
- Reduce student contribution fees for apprenticeships in line with reduction for others in higher and further education.
- Introduce a tax credit for apprentices for apprenticeship-related income.
- Expand the CAO system to include more apprenticeship options and introduce a single application process for students applying for third-level courses, further education courses and/or apprenticeships.
- Increase the Apprenticeship Employer Grant.
- Develop AI upskilling programmes for workers through partnerships with educational institutions and industry, integrating AI and data science into higher education curricula.
- Maintain the Gender Based Bursary to encourage female participation in traditionally male dominated sectors of the economy.
- Enhance bursary funding to encourage participation from underrepresented groups in apprenticeships.

## Student accommodation

Fianna Fáil is committed to removing accommodation issues as a barrier to further and higher education. In Government, we delivered almost 9,000 student rooms and allocated €100m from the National Development Plan for delivery of student accommodation projects. We also extended the rent-a-room scheme to allow local authority tenants take part in it. We introduced rent tax credits, which assisted students renting, we banned 51-week leases and strengthened protections on advance payments.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Invest a further €200m in the development of new student accommodation.
- All additional funding for student accommodation will be accompanied with agreements to cap rents and a code of practice for student accommodation.
- Strengthen regulation on student accommodation rents, building on the ban on 51-week student leases, and ensuring the effectiveness of rent pressure zones (RPZs).

## Driving excellence in Research & Innovation

Fianna Fáil directly created most of the core research support system in Ireland and remains committed to enhancing and improving the range and excellence of Irish research. Since 2020 we have supported major improvements in funding and ongoing innovation.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase funding for research and development in each budget based solely on excellence criteria and independent review.
- Ensure that distinct funding programmes for research in the Humanities and Social Sciences are maintained.
- Publish annual details of research funding - providing transparency on the areas funded, the division between basic and applied research and the number of researchers supported.
- Expand EU Research and Innovation Partnerships with Small and Medium sized businesses.
- Maximise Horizon Europe engagement with a €1.5bn funding target.
- Strengthen all-island R&I collaborations and increase Co-Centres Programme funding to €100 million for all-island R&I hubs.
- Facilitate international researcher mobility through targeted visa programmes for non-EU countries to broaden expertise.
- Scale up exchange programmes and secondments between academia and Government, to enhance policymaking.
- Increase third-level places in the blue bioeconomy, renewable energy, and marine science to position Ireland as a leader in marine research.

# A Safe, Just and Secure Nation



# Tackling crime and keeping our communities safe

**Everyone deserves to feel safe in their home, in their community, on our streets and on public transport. Fianna Fáil is committed to ensuring that everyone in Ireland feels safe and protected.**

To achieve this, citizens must have faith and trust in An Garda Síochána to effectively tackle crime and in our criminal justice system's ability to punish offenders. Fianna Fáil wants Ireland to have a world class police force that maintains public safety and security which is central to social cohesion. To achieve this, and to reflect new challenges which have emerged in recent years, a major structural reform is required in how policing and related functions are overseen.

If elected to Government, Fianna Fáil will establish a standalone Department of Justice and Public Safety, and a separate Department of Domestic Affairs. At least initially under a single cabinet minister to ensure a seamless transition and effective coordination, this major reform will ensure much more effective action on a diverse agenda.



## More Gardaí in our communities

Garda visibility on our streets and in our communities is vital to ensuring families feel safe. Since 2020 the Garda training allowance has been increased, we have raised both the age limit for entry and the retirement age to aid Garda recruitment and retention. However, we need to do much more to ensure that there are far more Gardaí visible across our communities.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase the number of Gardaí, by recruiting up to 5,000 Gardaí over the course of the next five years and to plan for a medium-term force strength of 20,000 as recommended by the Garda Commissioner.
- Reform the Garda recruitment and training processes to increase capacity and to widen the talent pool which will include developing an accelerated graduate entry programme.
- Reform Garda structures to ensure that greater numbers of Gardaí are available for frontline policing.
- Create a standalone, dedicated Transport Police, focused on preventing and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour on our national public transport network.
- Increase the strength of the Garda Reserve.
- Increase the number of civilian staff within An Garda Síochána to complete administrative tasks.
- Further increase the Garda training allowance.
- Transfer certain prosecutions from An Garda Síochána to State solicitors and the Director of Public Prosecutions to reduce the administrative workload on Gardaí.
- Increase funding to the Director of Public Prosecution's office to enable criminal trials to be dealt with much faster.
- Provide all frontline Gardaí with Body Worn Cameras.
- Allow Gardaí to use facial recognition technology when investigating very serious offences, subject to appropriate oversight.
- Legislate for mandatory minimum sentences for people who assault emergency workers in the course of their duties.
- Increase the penalty for public order offences and in particular for threatening and abusive behaviour in public places.
- Increase investment in Forensic Science Ireland to clear the backlog in analysing drugs for criminal investigations.
- Increase funding for the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau to ensure that cyber forensics keep pace with modern technology.
- Enact legislation to allow the Gardaí to request the preservation and production of data being held on IT systems controlled by internet service providers, to investigate and tackle crime.
- Support the Gardaí to use Artificial Intelligence in criminal investigations subject to clear guidelines and oversight – for example, to enable for prompt trawling through thousands of child-sexual-abuse images to identify victims, and to monitor social media activity to prevent criminal activities being planned.

## Tough on crime, tough on criminals

Fianna Fáil is committed to a criminal justice system that respects the rights of the accused – but also one that meets the needs of victims. Since 2020 we have legislated for tougher sentences for crimes including assault causing harm, conspiracy to murder and knife related crime. We have also introduced new offences for crimes such as grooming children into a life of crime, and stalking.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Strengthen our bail laws.
- Reform criminal legal aid to ensure that all of an accused person's assets are assessed, including by mandatory swearing of financial circumstances, open disclosure of bank accounts and assets and notification to CAB. We will allow for refusals or reasonable contributions and make it an imprisonable offence to make a false statement of financial position.
- Clawback free legal aid from convicted offenders where they have or acquire significant assets post-conviction.
- Further build capacity to white collar crime such as fraud and corruption, including implementing the Hamilton Report.
- Build the 1,100 prison places funded in Budget 2025 and increase the number of prison officers proportionally.
- Assess the need for a women's open prison.

## Putting victims at the centre of our justice system

Fianna Fáil is committed to building a victim-centred criminal justice system. We have established the Victim's Forum, legislated for preliminary trial hearings and provided funding to organisations that support victims of crime. Training for all personnel who deal with vulnerable victims is underway.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Carry out major reform of our District Court practices to free judges from administrative matters. We will increase the limit of the small claims court procedure from €2,000 to €10,000 to remove the burden of small claims on the District Court.
- Legislate to allow for increased court capacity by way of Nightingale and off-site temporary courts to provide emergency or acute capacity as needed; for example, to clear backlogs, address public disorder cases or asylum matters.
- Ensure comprehensive support services for victims of crime.
- Legislate to allow judges to impose minimum prison terms for people given life sentences.
- Place the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal on a statutory basis.
- Reduce recidivism by rolling out nationally the voluntary restorative justice programme and the Youth Diversion programmes.
- Introduce a monitoring system of recommendations made by juries at Coroner's Court inquests to make sure action is taken on foot of the recommendations.

## Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour threatens and undermines the fabric and cohesion of our communities. It is a scourge on our society and Fianna Fáil is determined to tackle it head on.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Introduce Dispersal Orders allowing Gardaí to disperse groups involved in anti-social activities.
- Implement Public Space Protection Orders to protect public spaces from anti-social behaviour. This would include orders designating zones where conduct aimed at impeding/obstructing access, influencing decisions, harassing/causing fear or causing public disorder is prohibited, for example outside public libraries or politicians' homes.
- Create a Safe Public Places Unit that can advise Local Authorities and planning authorities, as well as Community Safety Partnerships, on best practice in public lighting, estate and street design.
- Strengthen knife crime legislation to provide for tougher sentences.
- Legislate to allow Gardaí to remove face masks at protests.
- Enhance funding for community CCTV.
- Tackle rural crime by expanding nationwide the successful Garda Operation Rototiller, that targeted criminal gangs operating in Tipperary.
- Continue to fund community watch schemes.
- Establish a dedicated Rural Crime Unit.
- Rollout out Community Safety Partnerships nationwide.

## Tackling drug supply

Fianna Fáil recognises the need for a differentiated response to treating drug addiction on the one hand, and tackling drug supply on the other. Whilst we are committed to treating drug addiction in a humane and compassionate manner, as a public health issue (and have detailed relevant measures in the health chapter of this manifesto) the illegal importation and supply of drugs is a criminal justice issue and must be dealt with as such.

We have invested record amounts into An Garda Síochána to target those involved in the sale and supply of illegal drugs - up to €400m worth of drugs has been seized since 2020. We introduced legislation criminalising the grooming of children into a life of crime – a move we took to target those gangs using children as “runners” for drug dealers.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Intensify our partnership with Interpol, Europol, and other international agencies to detect the illicit trafficking of drugs before they enter the Irish market.
- Expand the Remit of the Special Criminal Court to ensure that organised crime groups engaged in drug trafficking are prosecuted in the Special Criminal Court.
- Introduce specific legislation requiring social media companies and online communication platforms to provide An Garda Síochána with any information they have on their platforms relating to the supply of illegal drugs.
- Legislate for new criminal offences relating to items used in drug trafficking and serious crime, including 3D printer firearms templates and tablet presses, electronic devices, and vehicle concealments.
- Increase investment in our Naval Service including enhanced radar capability and an integrated monitoring and surveillance system across sea, land, and air.
- Fund innovative law enforcement technologies including unmanned drones to patrol our coast and detect the trafficking of illegal drugs.
- Increase Garda monitoring of logistics hubs and digital channels that are being exploited for medium and small-volume drug distribution.
- Strengthen the powers of the Criminal Assets Bureau to target the proceeds of crime. We will amend existing law to ensure that once a Court determines property is the proceeds of crime, immediate action will be taken to remove the criminals and to secure it.
- Increase sentences for those involved in the supply of drugs. The punishment imposed must reflect the destruction and devastation that those drugs impose on our communities.
- Introduce x-ray body scanners for visitors to our prisons and fund the upgrading and improvement of netting over all prison yards.

## Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence

As a society, we must work collectively to combat domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. An enormous body of work has been done and some progress has been made, but we must not lose focus of our commitment to a zero-tolerance approach.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Expedite the delivery of 150 more refuge units.
- Increase funding allocated to Sexual Assault Treatment Units across the country
- Introduce a Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme' by enacting the Sex Offenders (Amendment) (Coercive Control) Bill. This would establish a coercive control register, so that a person could obtain information on the offences committed if entering a relationship with someone on the register.
- Legislate to make it a criminal offence to seek sex in exchange for rent.
- Ensure faster access to Court for people who are alleging that they were raped.
- Ensure that deep fakes, AI generated sexual abuse images and cyber flashing are treated in a manner equivalent to the non-consensual sharing of genuine intimate images.
- Introduce Valerie's law to ensure that those convicted of killing their partners or a parent of their child will lose guardianship rights over their children.
- Undertake an audit of our courthouses and facilities to assess their suitability for victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

## Civil Law

Fianna Fáil is committed to reducing the cost of litigation and making the Courts more accessible, more efficient and user friendly. We also want to increase the number of Specialist Courts.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Ensure the timely construction of a new, standalone Family Law and Children's Court Complex.
- Restore the Defamation Bill to the Order paper at its current advanced stage, maintain its current approach and implement it within three months.
- Make the Small Claims Court more effective and accessible by raising the limit of the small claim procedure from €2,000 to €10,000 and reducing the fees for using it.
- Reform the civil procedure rules to reduce delays and costs in civil proceedings.
- Reform the Coroner's Court, including the establishment of a Chief Coroner with nationwide jurisdiction.
- Transfer responsibility for conveyancing, the regulation of estate agents (Property Services Regulatory Authority) and the regulation of multi-unit developments (MUDs) to the Department of Housing.



# Guarding our national security and borders

An tAontas Eorpach  
European Union

ÉIRE  
IRELAND



**With an increasingly unstable global environment, Ireland faces new challenges and threats. Due to our strategically important maritime area, our membership of the EU, our status as European host of critical cyber infrastructure and our open border with the North of Ireland, we are vulnerable to the threat of hybrid warfare.**

Yet Ireland is one of the few countries which does not have a separate Department with responsibility for internal affairs. The dispersal of some responsibilities in different Departments and the over concentration of others in the Department of Justice undermines the ability to effectively develop and implement policy in the face of rapidly evolving challenges.

That is why Fianna Fáil will create a new Department of Domestic Affairs - Roinn na Gnóthaí Náisiúnta. This Department will have a separate Intelligence Agency similar to other EU countries. It will be responsible for key elements of national security, including counterterrorism (both internal and external threats), the Offences Against the State Act, Cyber Security and migration issues such as asylum, border control, human trafficking, people smuggling, slavery as well as integration, visas and citizenship.



## National Security

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Transfer the National Cyber Security Centre to the new Department of Domestic Affairs.
- Establish a dedicated threat tracking team within the National Cyber Security Centre. This team would take a proactive approach to identifying and nullifying threats to Ireland's national security and state infrastructure.
- Complete the National Security Strategy and establish a National Security (Intelligence) Agency.
- Establish a new Border Management Agency to equip security at our ports of entry with a strong command structure and a remit to act to counter terrorism and tackle cross border organised crime.

## Asylum seekers

We are in a new reality – a time of great global turmoil. We have seen an enormous increase in the number of people seeking international protection across European member states, and indeed the world.

In having the conversation around immigration, we must avoid dehumanising the people arriving here seeking refuge. We have an obligation to understand and respond to the human stories behind their arrival. We are a nation shaped by emigration, with an instinctive understanding of the plight of those who seek shelter elsewhere.

Nor can we dismiss those people who have legitimate concerns about the sudden increase in the numbers of people arriving here. Irish people want, and are entitled, to have confidence in our asylum system.

The system must be rules-based. It must be fair to those who come here to work, study or join family – so long as they do so legally. It must be fair to those genuinely fleeing war and persecution.

The system must be tough on those who do not come here legally, including those who use the international protection system for economic migration. Ireland is a welcoming country that provides refuge to those who need it. We cannot and should not allow it to be abused. We know that current structures are not adequate to the scale and pace of this new challenge, and as such transfer to the new Department of Domestic Affairs is a necessary step towards improving the response.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Automatically deem ineligible any applicant who has already been refused an asylum application in another EU member state.
- Increase fines to €10,000 for airlines and ferry companies that fail to comply with their obligations to ensure that each person they carry into the country has a valid passport or valid documentation.
- Expedite the deportation of any applicant convicted of a serious crime within the jurisdiction during their application period.
- Expedite the processing of any person who arrives from a safe country, arrives with no or false documents, has a criminal conviction or has crossed borders illegally to enter Ireland. They will not be authorised to enter the State and will be accommodated in dedicated locations.
- Ensure where any applicant arrives from another EU country they are returned to the country of first entry.
- Work with the EU to agree access to the new Visa Information System to prevent Visa shopping.
- Charter deportation flights when necessary.

## Accommodating asylum seekers

Over the term of the last Government, there was a dramatic growth in the number of people being accommodated in International Protection accommodation. Fianna Fáil is committed to delivering a fair, efficient, and sustainable model of accommodating International Protection applicants.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Reduce further the accommodation delivered by commercial providers and move to a fully or predominately State-owned system.
- Avoid entering into contracts for the use of properties providing essential services to communities, such as hotels and care homes, to accommodate asylum seekers.
- Standardise state support to asylum seekers, bringing Ireland into line with other EU Member States.

## People smuggling and human trafficking

Fianna Fáil is determined to disrupt and dismantle the people smuggling gangs that are facilitating illegal immigration into Ireland. As part of our campaign to crack down on these gangs, in 2021 we introduced a 10-year custodial sentence for anyone caught facilitating people to enter the State illegally.

The new National Referral Mechanism is a game changer in identifying, supporting and assisting victims of trafficking.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase the number of Gardaí stationed at Europol.
- Invest in state-of-the-art technology and enhanced intelligence capabilities.
- Double the number of Gardaí trained as Immigration Officers.
- Legislate to make forced labour a standalone criminal offence.
- Initiate a public education campaign highlighting the fact that it is a criminal offence in Ireland to pay for sex.

## Work permits

There is a broad array of vital jobs throughout our economy and society that we rely on workers from outside the EU to do. In Government, we delivered the largest ever expansion to the employment permits system. We are committed to broadening the legal pathways for skilled migrants to come to Ireland to work.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Launch a new ICT processing system for employment permits to speed up applications.
- Expand the categories of roles eligible to include retail, hospitality, care work and construction trades.
- Examine ways to facilitate people who are on work permits to move jobs more easily and legally.

## Integration

Fianna Fáil recognises that communities across Ireland are hosting considerable numbers of new arrivals. We will assist integration in these communities, helping new arrivals and host communities to understand each other better and build connections.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Transfer responsibility for integration policies, currently under the remit of Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, to the new Department of Domestic Affairs.
- Have in place a community support fund for every community hosting asylum seekers and refugees. While funding will be competitive, a ring-fenced amount will be available to each community to guarantee supports for schools, health facilities and general community resources.
- Support programmes which increase the level of direct engagement between new arrivals and host communities in broader social, cultural and sporting activities.

# Investing in Defence



**Fianna Fáil is deeply committed to investment in and the development of our Defence Forces across land, air, sea and cyber domains, while firmly maintaining our commitment to military neutrality.**

Óglaigh na h'Éireann's role at home and their performance in peacekeeping overseas is a source of great national pride and a projection of our nation's values around the world.

Fianna Fáil has initiated a substantial increase in funding and a deep transformation of culture and practices in our Defence Forces. This programme of large capital investment and reform is beginning to have an impact, with major improvements for members of the Defence Forces.

Because we recognise the scale and urgency of the challenges faced by our Defence Forces, we are determined to go further. We will continue to expand resources and capabilities and ensure that Ireland develops its ability to monitor and address direct threats to our interests, while also promoting our values in the world.



## Investing in Defence Forces Personnel

The men and women of our Defence Forces are our most important asset. Fianna Fáil in Government has made significant improvements to their pay and conditions, including hugely increased starting salaries, a doubling of the Patrol Duty Allowance after ten days at sea, access to Private Healthcare for all personnel, and increasing the mandatory retirement age. We also initiated a process of cultural change, to ensure every serving man and woman is respected and valued, and veterans get the services and support they deserve.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Continue the process of improving pay and conditions for serving personnel.
- Invest in a more structured and sustained recruitment campaign to attract more people into a career in the Defence Forces, with a view to achieving the target of 11,500 personnel.
- Fully implement the Working Time Directive.
- Deliver the transformational change in the culture of Defence Forces.
- Ensure the External Oversight Board is fully supported in driving the change necessary to make our military a modern and effective employer of choice.
- Initiate an annual nationwide programme for all Transition Year students to promote the role of, and opportunities within our Defence Forces.
- Drive forward the development of our Reserve Defence Force, ensuring that the newly established Office of Reserve Affairs and our new Regeneration and Development Plan for the Reserve Defence Force is fully resourced.
- Ensure the roll-out of the newly developed process for the awarding of military service medals.
- Establish a properly resourced Office of Veteran Affairs, based within the Department of Defence but working across Government, responding properly to the housing, medical and mental health needs of our veterans.

## Equipping our Military

Fianna Fáil has invested at an unprecedented rate in making sure that our serving personnel have the equipment and facilities they need to do the job we ask of them, including new aircraft, armoured vehicles and in-shore patrol vessels. We have also driven forward major investment to improve military facilities around the country, including the completion of the Cadet School.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Secure enhanced radar capability, prioritising investment in an Integrated Monitoring and Surveillance System across Maritime, Land and Air domains.
- Upgrade the military transport fleet and deliver next generation radio communications and signal equipment.
- Progress the Naval Service Vessel Renewal and Replacement Programme, including the Multi-Role Vessel project, replacement of secondary armament across the fleet and enhanced sub-sea capabilities.
- Deliver a third new C295 Maritime Patrol Aircraft and accelerate the procurement of additional Air Corp capacity.
- Continue the transformational investment in the military estate and the upgrading of barracks across the country, including the future-proofing of Haulbowline and a major upgrade of Casement Aerodrome at Baldonnel.

## Fit for Purpose Defence Policy

The level of debate about Defence in Ireland has not been at a level commensurate with the threats we face. That is a luxury we can no longer afford, and it is why Fianna Fáil in Government established the first-of-its-kind National Consultative Forum on International Security Policy, to kick start an informed national debate on the subject.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Pursue continued reform of the military leadership structures, including the changes necessary to introduce a new Chief of Defence (CHOD) role.
- Ensure the Defence Forces receive the funding and political support required to achieve Level of Ambition 2 Enhanced Capability and move as quickly as practicable to Level of Ambition 3.
- Continue to protect and promote Ireland's military neutrality including sensible reform of the 'Triple Lock' legislation.
- Ensure full delivery of our new Joint Cyber Defence Command strategy.
- Prioritise the regeneration and growth of Ireland's Naval Service, with a focus on protecting our significant and expanding sub-sea data cabling infrastructure, and as we embark on a multi-billion-euro transformational investment in offshore energy.



# An Equal Society



**Fianna Fáil is committed to creating a fair, safe and inclusive Ireland and has a long and proud history of campaigning for equality, from the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993 to the delivery of Civil Partnerships in 2010.**

Since 2020 we have taken real and effective action to end inequality through different initiatives, including the publication of a new National Action Plan Against Racism, pay gap reporting obligations for businesses and a review of the Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts.

Despite progress in many areas, challenges remain and more needs to be done to ensure equality and that everyone in our society can live their lives safely, free from discrimination, harassment and violence.

***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Strengthen supports for suicide prevention and provide funding to improve the long-term health and wellbeing of Traveller and Roma communities.
- Provide greater employment opportunities for Travellers and Roma through a strengthened Traveller employment support programme, a new Public Service Traveller and Roma Internship Programme, and enterprise supports.
- Continue to improve investment in and access to a range of health services for LGBTQI+ people and provide for a more inclusive health and social care environment.
- Enact legislation to ban conversion practices that violate individual rights.
- Enact legislation to disregard historical offences related to the criminalisation of homosexuality.
- Publish and implement the successor strategy to the National Strategy for Women and girls.
- Raise the compensation limit of €15,000 for claims made under the Equal Status Act 2000.
- Require employers to disclose proposed salaries in job advertisements to promote full transparency.
- Publish and implement a new National Disability Strategy.
- Advance the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
- Eliminate the employment provision that permits pay reductions based on disability.

# Renewing Rural Ireland



# Ensuring a thriving agriculture and agrifood sector

Our farmers are world class food producers. They are the social, economic and cultural pillars of our rural communities and of Irish society.

Since taking on responsibility for the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine in 2020, Fianna Fáil has worked hard to deliver investment both on the farm and in industry and to provide tangible financial supports for farmers. This includes a new €1.5bn agri environmental scheme (ACRES), a new Agri-Food Regulator, supports of €225 per suckler cow and €25 per ewe, and a new Protected Geographic Indicator (PGI) for Grass Fed beef.

Protecting farm family incomes is an absolute priority of Fianna Fáil. We want Irish Agriculture to be a world leader in terms of innovation, sustainability, and value; we want Irish farmers and their families to thrive.



## Protecting and Improving Farm Incomes

Fianna Fáil is acutely aware of the cost challenges facing our farm families and their businesses, and we have demonstrated our support for all the agricultural sectors including horticulture. We have secured almost €10bn between EU and Exchequer funding to support our 130,000 farm families for the period 2023 to 2027.

Irish Farmers have demonstrated their commitment to innovation, in particular by embracing the challenge to reduce the environmental impact of farming. Fianna Fáil supported 55,000 farmers to join ACRES - our flagship environmental programme. Moving forward, this will provide another income support to farm families, while rewarding high quality habitats, improved biodiversity and water quality.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Increase supports for farming sectors to include a payment of €350 per suckler cow and €35 per ewe.
- Approve €300m for tillage over five years to grow the sector.
- Increase existing financial support for the Dairy Beef scheme to €100 per calf.
- Introduce a new income volatility taxation measure, which would allow a farmer to voluntarily defer up to 5% of his/her gross receipts in any one year.
- Ensure that a Farm Retirement Scheme that assists generational renewal is included in the next CAP programme.
- Boost financial incentivisation to drive the use of genetically superior beef AI/stock bulls.
- Introduce an Emergency Weather and Flood Damage Scheme for farm businesses.
- Examine establishment of a one stop shop for farmers to access emergency assistance from government.
- Fight at European level for a fully funded budget in the next CAP and reject any proposals to undermine CAP funding.
- Negotiate at EU level for CAP payments that are straightforward for farmers, reduce red tape and ensure controls are balanced and proportionate.
- Actively work at EU level to secure additional funding – separate to CAP – to support environmental ambition on farms.
- Ensure that the agricultural sector is supported through the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund.
- Intensify efforts to open new markets for Irish food products.
- Bring forward a successor strategy to Food Vision 2030.
- Introduce a Climate Data-Use Performance Payment that financially rewards farmers for delivery on emissions reductions and biodiversity actions at farm level.
- Review rates payable under the Farm Plan Scheme on designated land.
- Ensure transparency in the food supply chain and fair prices for farmers by giving the Agri-Food Regulator the power to compel participants in the supply chain to provide the necessary price and market information.

# Supporting Farming Families

Supporting farming families is a priority for us and this is why we implemented a range of new supports and reforms, including measures to support inter-generational farm transfers.

## *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Acknowledge the central role of succession planning for farmers, instituting a formal national programme to advise and assist farmers with succession issues.
- Amend Fair Deal Scheme regulations to ensure that it does not hinder succession planning and respects the unique position of agricultural land.
- Work to attract young people into farming.
- Continue to support the category of farmers known as the 'forgotten farmers.'
- Deliver the recommendations of the Women in Agriculture Action Plan, in particular addressing barriers for women farmers within the taxation system.
- Investigate ways to encourage young people to live and work in rural Ireland through supportive taxation measures and additional support in CAP schemes.
- Incentivise farmers to produce energy for their own use or to diversify their farm income by selling excess energy to the grid.
- Bring the Traditional Farm Buildings grant in line with the vacant property refurbishment grant.
- Ensure that there are sufficient General Employment Permits (GEPs) to support the ambitions of the agri food sector including the equine and horticulture industries.



## Meeting Environmental Standards while retaining the Nitrates Derogation

Fianna Fáil is committed to achieving our urgent national environmental goals and we reject the idea that there should be a conflict between having a strong agrifood sector and meeting these goals. Farmers are playing a vital part in delivering a sustainable economy. Fianna Fáil is absolutely committed to securing the retention of Ireland's Nitrates Derogation at EU level, while improving our water quality. Our grass-based system, in tandem with our climate and soil type support the case for maintaining the derogation and Fianna Fáil in Government has and will make this case at every level.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Protect Ireland's derogation by continuing to promote our case at European level based on the significant difference between Irish farming and other countries, and the action we are taking to improve water quality.
- Ensure that our water improvement ambitions are properly resourced with one-to-one support for farmers by expanding the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) and creating a permanent "Farming for Water" scheme for all relevant areas to directly aid farmers with advice, support and resources.
- Introduce a water quality investment scheme.



## Strengthening animal welfare and supporting the equine sector

We support action to ensure high standards in animal welfare. Since 2020 we have banned fur farming in Ireland, supported animal welfare charities, banned the use of remotely controlled electronic shock collars on pets and approved the establishment of two new veterinary colleges.

For the first time, equine holders now have the opportunity to invest in important infrastructure for their farms including housing, training facilities, and fencing under TAMS. We also allocated over €5m to the development of the Irish Sport Horse Industry.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Upgrade regional veterinary laboratories.
- Significantly increase the number of trained vets through completing our expansion of veterinary education.
- Support the Irish equine sector and maintain its position as a global leader.
- Maintain funding of the Horse and Greyhound Fund, recognising the important economic contribution and employment created by these sectors in rural Ireland.
- Provide further resources to improve animal welfare and traceability in our equine and greyhound industry.

## Investing in forestry, organics and horticulture

Under Fianna Fáil leadership, the felling licence backlog has been cleared and €1.3bn has been allocated to encourage farmers to plant trees by increasing premiums by up to 66%.

The area of land being farmed organically has tripled since we entered Government following the introduction of generous incentives. We also increased funding to the horticulture sector and launched a National Strategy for Horticulture.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Support the promotion and marketing of organic products.
- Enhance the Organic Farming Scheme.
- Increase support for capital investment through the Horticultural Grant.
- Introduce a programme for removal of trees with Ash Dieback. We will support research into how to control the disease and develop options for replenishing trees which play an important role in Irish culture.
- Recognise Irish strawberries as a heritage crop and ensure their continued production.
- Ensure that growers continue to have access to essential pest control products consistent with protecting public and animal health.

# Securing Ireland's Fishing and Maritime Future



## Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has successfully championed a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Ireland's waters are one of our most valuable natural resources, with a coastline of 7,500 km, making it one of the longest in the EU. Since 2020 we have invested €180m into the seafood sector and strengthened industry representation by officially recognizing two new inshore fishery producer organisations. We reopened the Spurdog as well as Northwest herring fisheries and provided vital financial support to smaller inshore boats.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Reestablish a dedicated Minister of State of the Marine who will work with the Cabinet Minister.
- Promote innovation in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Explore incentives for boats to land their catch in Irish ports, stimulating the domestic processing sector.
- Advocate for Common Fisheries Policy reforms that reflect Ireland's share of fish species caught in its waters, ensuring fairer quotas.
- Promote the uptake and development of marine education courses and degree programmes.

## Marine Planning and Development

Since entering Government in 2020 Fianna Fáil established the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) to regulate the development and activity of Ireland's maritime area, understanding the importance of this asset for the livelihoods of many.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Support MARA to best carry out its functions in marine planning and in the development of a robust Offshore Renewable Energy sector through rapid, rigorous and transparent procedures.
- Complete the Celtic Interconnector and continue to explore and support options for further interconnection.
- Formally assign an area off the West Coast for a floating offshore wind test project.

## Coastal Communities

75% of Ireland's population live in coastal counties, where maritime activities sustain thousands of livelihoods. Fianna Fáil believes that we can balance the need for economic development with environmental protection, to bring about a sustainable and prosperous future for our coastal communities.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Promote the diversification of coastal economies to create new opportunities beyond traditional industries.
- Ensure coastal communities directly benefit from the growth of offshore renewable energy projects.
- Review and enhance conservation measures for marine ecosystems and wildlife, including expanding Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), increasing penalties for marine pollution, and establishing wildlife sanctuaries.
- Support the continued sustainable development of our aquaculture sector.
- Establish a Maritime Regeneration, Development and Conservation Fund, to support marinas, harbours, and tourism development and measures to address coastal erosion.
- Strengthen the governance and involvement of fisheries communities in local development planning.
- Work with Fáilte Ireland to launch a Marine Tourism Strategy aimed at attracting domestic and international tourists to coastal villages, boosting local economies.
- Promote eco-tourism by supporting wildlife activities like whale and dolphin watching, protecting marine species while growing the tourism industry.
- Introduce initiatives to preserve maritime cultural heritage.



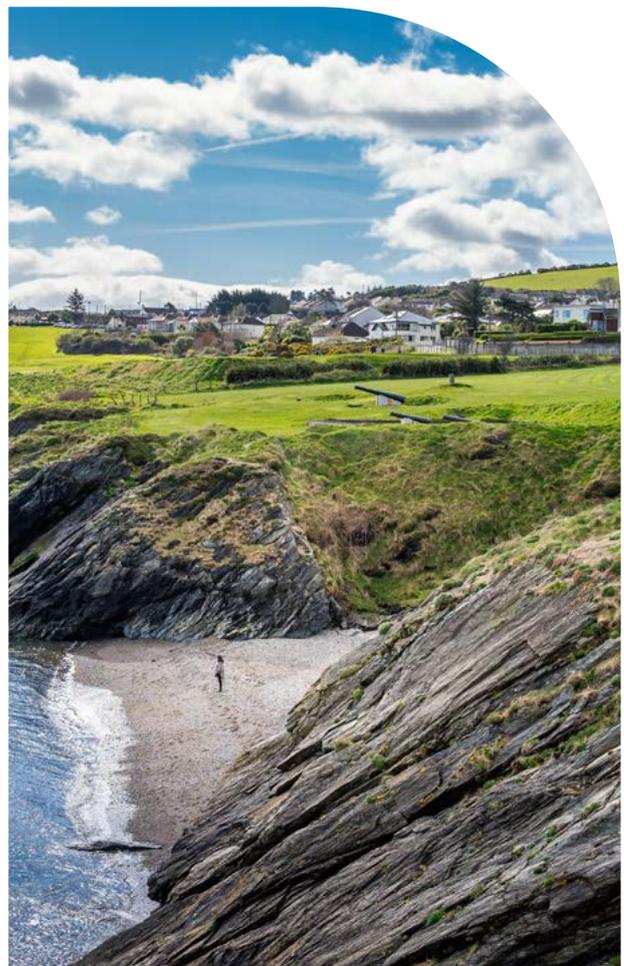
# A New Deal for Rural Communities



**Fianna Fáil has always valued our rural communities and prioritised rural development. Today, there are more people living and working in rural Ireland than at any other time during the history of the State.**

Recognition of the distinct needs and opportunities of rural Ireland must be at the heart of decision making. Fianna Fáil is committed to new dedicated initiatives and comprehensive cross cutting measures to rejuvenate our town centres and villages.

Fianna Fáil is committed to targeted investment to support rural regeneration, improving the lives of those living in our towns, villages and countryside. We will support initiatives to facilitate remote working, to foster regional enterprise growth, and to enhance community structures. National policy and empowered local government have crucial roles to play in supporting and renewing towns across Ireland.



## Investing in Rural Ireland

Fianna Fáil in Government prioritised helping rural communities to thrive through investment in the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, Town and Village Renewal Scheme, CLÁR, the Community Centres Fund, the LEADER programme, the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. We introduced the new Vacancy and Derelict Home refurbishment Grant, helping to revitalise areas blighted by dereliction, and a series of Town Centre First policies, directly supporting efforts to restore and enhance both the physical condition and amenities in the centre of our provincial towns.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Re-establish the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to drive forward and coordinate a new era of support for community development.
- Establish a Rural Communities Initiative to bring together all state agencies to implement community development and town-centre rejuvenation. This work will be co-ordinated by a dedicated Development Office. The work will be funded by an expanded Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.
- Roll out and fund Town Centre First plans for all towns.
- Establish a new Towns Investment Fund of €2bn to build and upgrade infrastructure to support the communities living in our towns and the businesses operating there. This will include a new public Parks and Pitches Fund, which will support the unlocking of unused or disused industrial facilities and will support the redevelopment of town centres.
- Support people working remotely from rural homes through the Connected Hub Voucher Scheme.
- Continue to support our Post Office network.
- Prioritise locating new State agencies and enterprises in cities and towns outside of Dublin.
- Ensure that extra funding is allocated to the Local Improvement Schemes (LIS), CLÁR and the Town and Village Renewal schemes.
- Work at EU level to increase LEADER funding under the next CAP
- Introduce an Islands Infrastructure Fund to support those living on our islands on a multi-annual basis.
- Take any steps necessary to ensure that no town is excluded from access to national infrastructure funding.
- Review the designation of key towns with a view to ensuring that all towns with a population over 10,000 are included.

## Rural Housing

Fianna Fáil supports rural housing so people can live and work in the areas they come from. We are bringing vacant and derelict properties in rural areas back into use through the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (VPRG) and the SEAI grants. There is now up to €100,000 available to help people bring a derelict or vacant home back into use in rural areas.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Uphold the rural right to build where there is a clear social or economic need.
- Increase the Vacancy Refurbishment Grant.
- Maintain access to the Help to Buy and First Home scheme for self-build homes.
- Continue the Ready to Build Scheme to support Local Authorities to make available serviced sites for sale for individuals to build their own homes.
- Support group water schemes and private well grants.
- Implement the special rural water investment scheme.
- Fully fund Uisce Eireann to ensure it builds adequate infrastructure to support home building in towns.

## Supporting Communities to Thrive

Our work with the Community and Voluntary Sector is contributing to the enhancement of local community structures, strengthening their resilience, and building social cohesion. Fianna Fáil will continue this important work.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Allow tax breaks for donations to community development companies.
- Extend the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) to new communities.
- Increase the number of places on the Rural Social Scheme (RSS).
- Open the Community Services Programme (CSP) for applications annually.
- Expand the Community Centres Investment Fund to refurbish, as well as build, more community centres.
- Provide €15m to fund early childhood visiting programmes across the country to focus on early intervention and parental support.

## Addressing disadvantage in local areas

In government, we have prioritized support for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, through increased investment in social protection payments, increases to the DEIS model in our education system and dedicated local initiatives.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Require the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) to recruit Social Development Managers to prioritise very disadvantaged areas.
- Tackle deprivation across rural areas based on the Pobal index by developing a new Rural Deprivation Fund (CLÁR +) and prioritise additional funding for ETBs in counties with a high number of towns with deprivation.
- Remove the necessity for co-funding for state funded projects in areas of high socio-economic deprivation.
- Invest in the rollout of the Local Community Safety Partnerships and social and economic regeneration programmes to support communities experiencing high levels of crime, unemployment and social exclusion.



# An Ireland Confident in the World, and Ambitious for The Future



# A Strong Voice for Ireland in Europe and the World

**Fianna Fáil brought Ireland into membership of the now European Union and is absolutely committed to an Ireland which works to strengthen the Union. As Taoiseach and Tánaiste, and in a time of major global upheaval and conflict, Micheál Martin demonstrated real leadership in promoting both Irish and European values at critical moments.**

In 2020 Fianna Fáil gave a commitment that Ireland would no longer stand on the sidelines and would become a more active and substantive contributor to shaping debates. We have been true to this commitment.

We also place great value on our membership of other international multilateral structures. We are champions of the Rule of Law, we are committed to international trade, and we unapologetically prioritise our connections with democratic states.

We believe that Ireland's position in Europe is at a critical juncture, and that the policies regarding the European Union to be followed by the next government deserve serious discussion especially given the approach of key opposition parties.



## A Stronger, More Effective European Union

Through the leadership of Fianna Fáil Ireland has become a strong advocate for a stronger, reformed and more effective European Union which has the ability to help its citizens and protect our democracies. The next five years will continue to present profound challenges, and it is necessary to have an unequivocal position on where Ireland should stand in relation to the future of Europe.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Support the completion of the European Capital Market, seeking opportunities to improve competition in key financial sectors.
- Support an ambitious new Budget settlement which will protect existing EU programmes and allow further action on strategic priorities.
- Promote international trade, vital to the Irish economy.
- Move forward with plans to increase the number of Irish people applying for positions in the institutions of the Union.
- Introduce a new EU-specific fund for projects which will build links and understanding with other EU capitals in the fields of culture, education, research and innovation. This will be distinct from the current Diaspora support schemes which are principally non-EU.
- Introduce a John Hume Fund in recognition of one of Ireland's greatest ever patriots and the only member of the European Parliament to win a Nobel Prize. Under the Fund we will sponsor an equivalent of the Parliament's Sacharov Prize, to be awarded by the Parliament annually in recognition of persons or organisations who promote reconciliation and shared prosperity in Europe.
- Support pan-EU and multilateral initiatives aimed at exposing threats to democracy and the rule of law and proposing actions for tackling them.

## Ireland's Presidency of the EU

Ireland's next Presidency of the EU in 2026 will mark a defining moment for the Union in a range of areas. In this election there is a stark choice between our positive position of seeking to strengthen the Union, and those parties who want to weaken it and reverse decades of progress.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Immediately publish plans for the Presidency, that includes details on sustaining a secure agrifood sector, investing in research and supporting cooperation on public health.
- Work with other EU countries to insist on respect for the rule of law.
- Support sanctions against countries seeking to undermine European democracy.

## Peace and Justice in the Middle East

Under Fianna Fáil leadership, Ireland has been one of the most prominent voices in the world in our condemnation of Middle East violence, in our support for humanitarian relief efforts, and in our advocacy for a Two-State Solution. We led the way in recognising the State of Palestine last May. We firmly believe that there can be no peace in the Middle East until the Israeli and Palestinian people alike enjoy the same rights to self-determination, statehood, peace, security and dignity.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Continue to work with partners in the region and leverage Ireland's relationships in Europe and the US to advocate for an immediate ceasefire and grow the international coalition of countries supporting a two-state solution through formally recognising the State of Palestine.
- Continue to seek the application of International Law and Justice to all sides in the current conflict through the international court system.
- Advocate for internationally sponsored political negotiations on achieving a peaceful and secure Israel and Palestine.
- Continue to work with partners in the EU to introduce further sanctions to punish illegal settler activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- Ban imports from the occupied Palestinian territories following the July 2024 International Court judgment, by making necessary and significant amendments to the Occupied Territories Bill (2018) so that it will withstand any future legal challenges.

## Supporting Ukraine

Fianna Fáil led the country's response to the latest phase of Russia's war against Ukraine, articulating Ireland's solidarity with the Ukrainian people and mobilising unprecedented assistance throughout our country for the biggest movement of refugees in Europe since World War 2.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Strongly advocate for Ukrainian membership of the European Union.
- Support ongoing and enhanced sanctions against Russia.
- Continue to support Ukrainian resistance through Ireland's contribution to the European Peace Facility and the Ukraine Facility.

## Ireland's Presence in the World

Under Fianna Fáil leadership, Ireland's physical presence around the world has continued to grow, with almost 100 international missions now in place across the world and three new openings planned this year. We also ensured continued investment in the Emigrant Support Programme and established a new one-stop-shop for returning emigrants.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Build on ever deeper post-Brexit relationships with our European partners.
- Continue to grow Ireland's physical presence throughout the world, with an expansion of the successful Ireland House concept, where all of our agencies in a country are in one location.
- Develop a new Diaspora Strategy to ensure that the new generation and profile of emigrants are aware of and can access our country's support overseas.
- Introduce a reciprocal driving licence arrangement with USA, Australia and Canada to help citizens who are returning to Ireland.
- Review the three-year residency requirement for younger citizens residing overseas who want to study full time in Ireland.
- Advocate to the US Administration and on Capitol Hill to advance the case of Undocumented Irish citizens in the USA.

## Helping those furthest behind

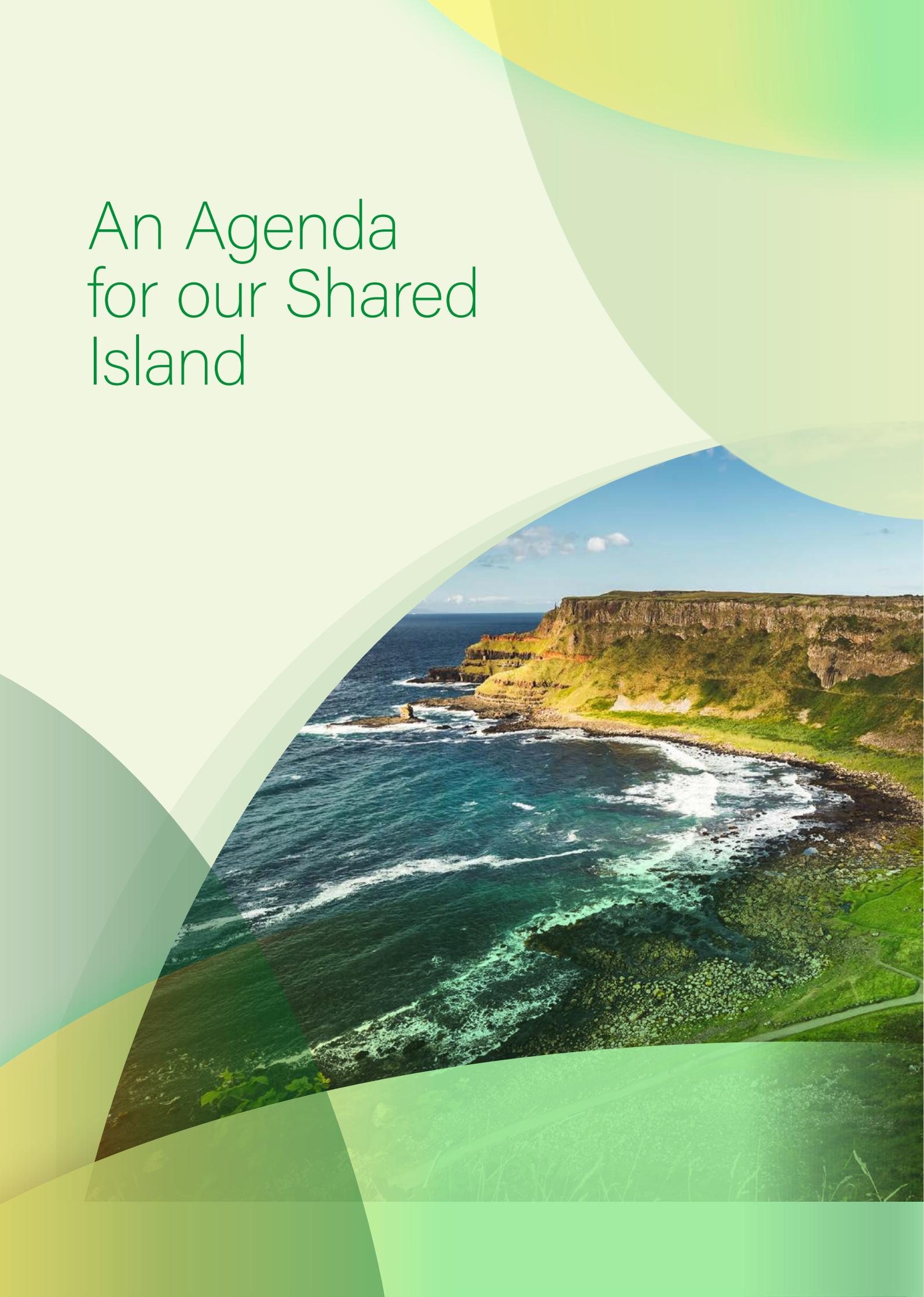
Under Fianna Fáil leadership, the level of Official Development Assistance provided by Ireland is now at a historic high and the programmes that are funded help the most vulnerable people across the world.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Continue to increase Official Development Assistance annually.
- Deliver on Ireland's International Climate Finance Roadmap, providing €225m annually by 2025.
- Recommit Ireland to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Continue to promote the new Fund for Loss and Damage, prioritizing the world's most vulnerable countries.
- Work with international partners to keep attention on the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan.
- Build on Ireland's leading role internationally in advocating for and supporting small island nations most directly affected by climate change.
- Ensure a significant increase in the proportion of Official Development Assistance is channelled into the education of young people in developing countries, with a particular focus on the education of girls.
- Continue to support humanitarian agencies.



# An Agenda for our Shared Island



**The unity of all the Irish people within a shared state is and shall remain a founding value and objective of the Fianna Fáil party.**

This fundamental goal can only be achieved through peaceful means and through reconciliation, and one of Fianna Fáil's most significant ever achievements is our role in the Good Friday Agreement negotiations that brought peace to our country.

The Good Friday Agreement, the blueprint for unlocking the full potential of the island, set out the three strands of relationships necessary to do just that – the relationship between Ireland and Britain, between the different communities in Northern Ireland, and between the North and South of our island. Unfortunately, many years were wasted, and the hard work of building understanding, concrete connections and reconciliation was often neglected.

Through the leadership of Micheál Martin, Fianna Fáil in government has put in place the first ever major programme of research and all-island investment. We have remained faithful to the vision of the Agreement, and the pursuit of ever deeper and more meaningful progress in each of those relationships is at the core of Fianna Fáil's approach.



## Shared Island

Fianna Fáil in Government has been responsible for the establishment of the most important and consequential all-island initiative in our country's history. The Shared Island Initiative, backed up by a €1bn Shared Island Fund, is transforming the North – South Dynamic.

It is delivering infrastructure projects that have been talked about for decades, connecting people and sectors across the island, investing in research that is giving us a clear picture of life and society across the island for the first time since Partition, and hosting a series of Dialogues involving thousands of people in discussion about our island's future.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Increase the resources available to the Shared Island Fund by an additional €1bn, to ensure a further acceleration of this vital work.
- Increase staffing levels in the Shared Island Unit and introduce specific targets for each government department to come forward with new and relevant projects.
- Ensure that the Shared Island Unit engages with all communities and avoids any engagement in party political campaigns.
- Provide a broader funding scheme for research bodies or institutions which have an independent cross-border studies agenda from the Shared Island Fund.
- Provide annual funding for a new scheme to be operated by the Coimisiún na Meán to encourage increased levels of cross-Border professional journalism.
- Fund research on how to increase levels of daily cross-border engagement with media coverage other than at times of crisis.
- Explore opportunities to include common elements in school curriculums on both sides of the border.
- Introduce an annual statistical publication which would provide rigorously sourced and directly comparable data on economic activity, public expenditure, educational attainment and wider social measures.
- Complete construction of the iconic Narrow Water Bridge and support Local Authorities in promoting the new tourism opportunities it will provide.
- Complete the remaining phases of the Ulster Canal.
- Begin to deliver the vision set out in the All-Island Rail Review.
- Work with the Northern Ireland Executive to deliver the A5 upgrade.
- Deliver a PSO to support direct flights between Dublin and Derry City.

## Legacy and Reconciliation

Fianna Fáil in Government has stood with victims against the UK's appalling Legacy Act and has driven forward the difficult but crucial job of reconciliation on the ground in the North.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Work with victims' groups, the Northern Ireland parties and the British Government to develop a new and fit-for-purpose mechanism that seeks truth and justice for victims, with the needs of the families of those victims at its heart.
- Ensure that our Government and State agencies co-operate fully with the newly established Omagh Inquiry.
- Oversee the proper disbursement of our joint €1.1bn PEACE PLUS scheme.
- Significantly enhance the Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund, more than doubling this investment in community-level reconciliation to €20m per year.
- Push for the re-establishment and full operation of a Northern Ireland Civic Forum, an important part of the Good Friday Agreement which has been stymied since the earliest days of the Northern Ireland institutions.

## Irish – British Relations

Fianna Fáil in Government worked with European colleagues and with the British Government, in often challenging circumstances, to navigate the complex outworkings of Brexit and restore the institutions.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Work to restore the genuine spirit of partnership and respect between Ireland and Britain that delivered such dividends in the past. This will include new formal arrangements for regular and structured engagement and co-operation, throughout and at all levels of Government.
- Work with our British counterparts to enhance the smooth running of the Common Travel Area, co-operating closely to protect it from illegal migration activity.

# Future Constitutional Arrangements

## *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Undertake significantly more research to understand the full extent of differences and similarities between the current jurisdictions on vital issues. Research to date shows that there is a real need to do this so that a meaningful proposal for future arrangements can be developed or have any hope of ratification by the people.
- Engage with other parties on areas where work can be undertaken to develop essential information and proposals concerning future constitutional arrangements.
- Ensure that discussions on a referendum on unity are not allowed to get in the way of the essential work of building the understanding and reconciliation without which the fundamental causes of conflict and division cannot be addressed.
- Remain steadfast on implementing the Good Friday Agreement in full.



# Valuing our Culture and Heritage



# Supporting our Arts & Culture

Ireland is world renowned for our rich, diverse and vibrant arts sector. Fianna Fáil is committed to ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to experience and engage fully with the arts, which enrich our lives and have a positive impact across the whole of society.

From community arts to arts of international excellence, Fianna Fáil in Government will continue to be a champion of one of our most important sectors.

## Investing in artists, output and infrastructure

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has increased funding across a range of initiatives and disciplines, delivered the innovative Basic Income for the Arts and provided record funding for the Arts Council. The challenge ahead is to ensure a strategy that supports community arts and participation while also encouraging, protecting and promoting excellence.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Develop a new multi-year Capital Programme for National Arts Infrastructure.
- Establish an Arts Capital and Equipment Programme to invest in local and community arts.
- Continue the section 481 film tax credit to support film and unscripted productions.
- Examine options to introduce sector specific measures for the visual effects sector.
- Retain the Basic Income for the Artists Scheme and address access issues for disabled artists.
- Support artists to access international opportunities through increased funding for Culture Ireland and support for our embassies to promote more bilateral exchanges.
- Boost funding for the Touring of Work Scheme to facilitate regional presentations of professional productions and extend access to arts organizations and venues in Northern Ireland.
- Explore initiatives to promote our thriving design and fashion scene, including support for the Design and Crafts Council Ireland and the Irish Grown Wool Council.

## Audience Development

Learning from the experience of similarly sized countries in Europe, long-term success of the arts sector demands sustained investment in audience development, particularly by increasing the number of young people exposed to and engaged in a variety of art forms.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase financial support for the Creative Schools and Music Generation projects.
- Establish and fund an Irish Town of Culture programmes to support local creative projects.
- Mandate each of the National Cultural Institutions to develop a programme for Transition Year students.



# Advance Ireland's Attractiveness as a Tourism Destination



**Tourism is one of our most vital economic sectors, serving as a key driver of regional development and supporting jobs in communities across the country.**

Since 2020, we have allocated unprecedented funding to Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to promote Ireland as a premier holiday destination through high-quality international marketing.

Additionally, we have provided significant support to the sector to help it navigate the unprecedented challenges posed by global disruptions, including Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the energy crisis.



## Tourism development

We want our tourism sector to continue to evolve and innovate, ensuring the best possible visitor experience for both national and international visitors. Our goal is to attract more visitors who will stay longer to experience our unique culture and heritage. We recognise that the tourism and hospitality sector are acutely affected by rises in the cost of living and of doing business, and this must be addressed.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Publish and implement a new bold and ambitious national tourism policy to 2030, setting out our vision to grow visitor and employment numbers in the sector across Ireland.
- Work to ensure that our reputation as a high-quality, good value destination is protected.
- Recognising the importance of Dublin airport for tourism development, we will remove the passenger cap at Dublin Airport as soon as possible.
- Make use of the National Training Fund expand the range of courses in tourism and hospitality in our Higher Education Institutions to equip the industry with the skills it needs.
- Develop a strategy to sustainably promote the 'Ireland of Islands' as a unique tourist experience, marketing our small island destinations alongside the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.
- Allocate EU Just Transition Funding to develop regenerative tourism initiatives in the Midlands.
- Introduce a targeted Employer PRSI reduction for minimum wage workers to reduce the wage costs for employers while protecting employees' income.
- Increase investment in the national grid and reform the Commission for Regulation of Utilities to bring down electricity costs for businesses.
- We will also build on work to bring down insurance costs by continuing to tackle insurance fraud and drive reform across the sector.



# Supporting Irish Sport and Athletes



**Sport holds tremendous significance in Ireland, offering numerous benefits that extend far beyond the track, pool or playing field.**

It promotes health and well-being, fosters social connections within communities, and instils a profound sense of national pride that helps shape our identity as a nation. Through sport, we not only enhance our physical wellbeing but also strengthen the bonds that unite us, reflecting our shared values and aspirations.



## Sport for all

Since 2020 we have reached a record high of two million adults participating in sport every week, thanks to targeted investments in facilities, equipment, and support for our athletes. We have made significant strides towards achieving gender equality in sports, resulting in a greater number of women participating than ever before. We want to do more.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Increase capital funds to develop multi-sport facilities in communities that can be shared by various local sports clubs.
- Allow approved sports bodies to create long-term Strategic Development Funds for capital investment in facilities, removing the requirement that the proceeds of donations (and associated tax relief) be tied to a specific approved capital project.
- Implement the New National Swimming Strategy by investing in pools and swimming facilities allowing everyone an opportunity to swim.
- Extend charitable status to National Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships on an opt-in/opt-out basis.
- Create a Next Generation Fund to support soccer academies.
- Provide dedicated funding to support and train high-performance coaches.
- Appoint a Sport Ireland Disability Lead.
- Increase funding to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in a wider range of sports.
- Increase the Betting Tax Levy from 2% to 3%, with a portion of the additional yield to be allocated for the development of sports infrastructure.
- Introduce a tax credit on gym membership.

## High-performance athletes and facilities

Our success at this year's summer Olympics is a testament to our commitment to our high-performance athletes. We want to build on this success.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Complete the development of the National Sports Campus in Blanchardstown.
- Proceed with the National Velodrome and Badminton Centre, as well as the new National Cricket Stadium.
- Strengthen efforts to seek business and philanthropic funding for high-performance sport to complement state funding.
- Promote research and development of initiatives that support participation and excellence in sports.

## Major international sports events

Fianna Fáil is ambitious for Ireland and recognises that hosting major international sports events can significantly impact our nation. By bringing the world's attention to Ireland, we create opportunities for economic growth and cultural exchanges, all the while inspiring increased participation in sports.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Support Limerick in its hosting of the Ryder Cup in 2027.
- Bid for The Open and the AIG Women's Open at Portmarnock Golf Club.
- Support Euro 2028 to ensure that it leaves a positive legacy in terms of both promoting Ireland and developing active participation in sports.

# Protecting our National Heritage



**Ireland is rich in unique natural and historic heritage, a vital national asset that we must cherish and protect. Since 2020, Fianna Fáil has invested unprecedented levels of funding in heritage preservation.**

In the last two years alone, we have increased funding to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) by 50% and also established Ireland's first Marine National Park. We also enacted the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 requiring all public bodies to integrate biodiversity into their plans and policies.

We created the Infrastructure Climate & Nature Fund to ensure ongoing protection for our environment for future generations. Building on this progress, we will implement a comprehensive action plan to strengthen our national heritage.

***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Fund the National Parks and Wildlife Service to purchase land for the establishment of new National Parks.
- Acquire key national heritage assets, prioritising State acquisition at both national and local level.
- Further develop and strengthen the NPWS as Ireland's leading natural heritage agency.
- Extend the remit of the NPWS to include the management of the Curragh Plains to ensure its ecological, archaeological and cultural uniqueness is nurtured and protected.
- Create an NPWS internship programme across all levels focused on traditional skills, ecology, wildlife rangers and advanced nature research.
- Amalgamate all designated non-timber productive Coillte lands into NPWS so they can be managed for nature.
- Implement a national invasive species elimination programme.
- Extend the network of Local Authority Biodiversity Officers nationwide.
- Double the funding available under the Community Monuments Fund, the Historic Structures Fund and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme.
- Ensure that Local Authorities have archaeologists and an architecture conservation officer on their staff.
- Establish a dedicated World Heritage Funding Stream to be managed by National Monuments Service as Ireland's Focal Point to UNESCO.
- Raise the annual ceiling for donations of cultural and heritage goods to the national collections.

# Ag tacú leis an nGaeilge agus an Ghaeltacht



## Is é cuspóir bunaidh de chuid Fhianna Fáil an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn mar theanga bheo phobail, agus ag an am céanna a chinntiú go gcosnaítear cearta na gcainteoirí.

Príomh-mhisean de chuid an Fhianna Fáil is ea tacú leis an nGaeilge agus a húsáid mar phríomhtheanga phobail na Gaeltachta agus forbairt na teanga sa ré dhigiteach a neartú.

Since 2020 Fianna Fáil has delivered significant policy improvements for the Irish language and the Gaeltacht. We introduced legislation to ensure that all public bodies are now obliged to produce at least 20% of their annual advertising in Irish, and 20% of new public service staff must be competent in Irish by the end of 2030.

## A Living Language

Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam. Irish is a unique part of our heritage. Fianna Fáil is committed to protecting and promoting the language in every facet of life.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Provide broadcasting licenses for mainstream Irish language radio stations which focus on young listeners.
- Increase North-South Co-operation on the Irish language.
- Ensure that TG4 is fully integrated into any reform of funding for public service broadcasting.

## Gaeltacht Communities and the Islands

Since 2020 we launched Our Living Islands, an ambitious ten-year strategy, underpinned by an Action Plan for the period 2023-2026. It is the first national islands policy in 27 years.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Hold direct elections to the board of Údarás na Gaeltachta.
- Support Údarás na Gaeltachta in the provision of housing for gaelgoirí in the Gaeltacht.
- Restore the Scéim na mBóithre Áise to improve the non-county roads in Gaeltacht areas.
- Introduce an Islands Infrastructure Fund on a multi-annual basis.
- Develop a strategy to sustainably promote the 'Ireland of Islands' as a unique tourist experience.
- Invest in the existing ferry and air services and develop new services to meet the needs of island communities.

## Education

Fianna Fáil is committed to the teaching and the promotion of the Irish language and we are passionate about ensuring it remains a key part of our culture and identity. We want to ensure that as many citizens as possible are bilingual in both Irish and English. With that in mind, we passed the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021, requiring 20% of new recruits to the public service to be competent in Irish by the end of 2030. Furthermore, all staff and public services and public offices in the Gaeltacht will speak Irish. We are determined to equip the education system to deliver on this commitment.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Increase assistance through the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme.
- Provide financial assistance to facilitate a greater number of less well-off students to go to the Gaeltacht summer colleges.
- Roll out an Irish language familiarisation programme for crèches to encourage use of the Irish language from a young age.
- Increase the dedicated Irish-medium teacher training programmes to improve on the quality of Irish language teaching and learning in all schools.
- Improve the quality of Irish teaching and learning by investing in both initial teacher education and continuing professional development for existing teachers.
- Increase the opportunities for students to attend Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí.
- Develop and expand connections with universities throughout the world that teach Irish.
- Enable our Institutes of Higher Education to make Beginner Irish classes accessible to Erasmus participants and international students.



# Safeguarding a Democratic Future



**Local Government is the beating heart of our democracy. It is responsible for many of the essential services on which we depend – housing, local roads, planning, the environment, fire safety, libraries and amenities. Local Government in Ireland, although severely limited in its functions compared to nearly all other European countries, has served this country well.**

Since entering Government in 2020, Fianna Fáil has secured and delivered significant support and investment for local communities and enterprises. We provided a Local Government Rates Waiver of over €1bn to support local businesses and allocated €1.3bn in Urban Regeneration Funding for rejuvenating towns and cities.

When it comes to local services, decisions are better made when they are made by the communities that use them. However, a recent report from the Council of Europe raises serious questions about the strength of local democracy in Ireland.

Strong local government is essential to the future of our democracy. Weak local government undermines democracy by reducing accountability and limiting citizen participation, making it harder for residents to engage with their local representatives. This can lead to inequitable resource distribution and dependence on national government, resulting in policies that may not reflect local needs.

Additionally, weak institutions are more vulnerable to corruption and mismanagement, alienating citizens and eroding trust in the political system. Fianna Fáil will rebuild, reform, strengthen and expand local government to restore local people's power over local decisions.



## Restoring Power and Accountability at a Local Level

Our system of Local Government has been the subject of much analysis over the past five years, most notably the CLÁR report, the AILG report on “The 21st Century Councillor in Irish Local Government” and the Seanad Public Consultation Report. These reports are consistent in their views of the shortcomings of Local Government, including the narrow range of functions; the lack of independent financing; the need to serve people better; the imbalance in executive power; the diminishing powers of local elected representatives to act on behalf of constituents; a lack of access to independent expert advice; lack of supports for elected councillors; and the lack of diversity on local authorities in a changing Ireland.

Fianna Fáil believes it is time to act on the recommendations of these reports.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Convene a ‘Local Democracy Taskforce’ to finalise a programme for the reform and strengthening of local government.
- On a phased basis establish formal town councils in towns with a population of over 7,500 to provide a focal-point for raising concerns of towns and coordinating town-focused activities.
- Bring forward legislative and regulatory proposals required to rebalance the democratic deficit, with a particular focus on:
  - The principle of subsidiarity.
  - Increasing the range of reserved functions.
  - Granting councillors greater input and control over the Council budget.
- Rebalance power between elected officials and executive officers, to ensure that elected officials have a right to be consulted on a greater range of decisions and the right to know of decisions in a timely manner.
- Increase the accountability of the Chief Executive and Directors of Services to councillors for executive decisions.
- Increase the number of mandatory meetings between council officials and Oireachtas members to twice yearly.
- Launch a new Political Participation campaign to support and promote greater numbers competing for Elected Member roles in Local Authorities.

## Dáil and Seanad Reform

The legislative power vested in the Oireachtas is the fundamental bedrock of our democracy. Fianna Fáil is committed to ensuring that our national parliament and the structures that underpin it keep pace with societal change and are fit for purpose. We established the independent Electoral Commission to uphold the core institutions of our democracy. Furthermore, we want to ensure that we address barriers that prevent people from considering running for or staying in public office.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Resource and support the independent Electoral Commission to play a central role safeguarding the integrity of our democracy and promoting voter information and participation.
- Continue to reform political party funding to ensure complete transparency and fairness for all parties and protect against malign influences on our political system.
- Implement the digital transformation of parliament, in line with the digital-first principles as contained in 'Connecting Government 2030'.
- Implement recommendations of the Task Force on Safe Participation in Political Life
- Learning from the Covid experience, set up a review of provisions in the Constitution relating to sittings of parliament in emergency situations.
- Create new Oireachtas committees on Artificial intelligence, Security and Defence
- Make changes to Standing Orders to promote greater accountability and meaningful engagement through reformed Leader's Questions, Parliamentary Questions and Private Members Time.
- Introduce ways to increase the level of spoken Irish used in parliament.
- Overhaul post-enactment legislative scrutiny and ensure each committee regularly carries them out on key legislation.
- Strengthen the role of the Parliamentary Budget Office and the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisers in supporting Oireachtas members in scrutinising policy and producing feasible policy and legislative proposals.
- Fully implement the Seanad University Act 2024 and strengthen the Seanad's role in assessing EU secondary legislation and North-South issues.

# Supporting Public Service Broadcasting and Independent Journalism



**Fianna Fáil recognises and values the critical role that an independent and strong media plays in our democracy.**

Public interest, fact-based journalism and high quality indigenous Irish content has never been more important. In today's digital world, where the sources of news and information can be varied and uncertain, it is absolutely essential that we have media that people can trust. Equally, it is important that professional media operates to high standards.

## Supporting public service broadcasting

In Government, we introduced a new funding model for RTÉ. This new model ensures RTÉ is adequately supported, independent and can plan for the future. It also ensures that the Broadcaster can deliver the necessary change in culture so as it can continue to provide high quality, authoritative and accurate content.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Ensure that RTÉ delivers reform measures that allow for the changes needed as outlined in the recent Reviews of Governance and Culture and of Contractor Fees, HR, and Other Matters.
- Conduct a mid-Government review of the new funding model for RTÉ.
- Enact new legislation to ensure that the corporate governance model in RTÉ is open, transparent and appropriate to its public service mandate.
- Maintain and continue to grow the Global Ireland Media Challenge Fund to build capacity of Irish media outlets to undertake quality reporting on international geopolitical events.
- Through Coimisiún na Meán, allocate Shared Island Funding resources to schemes which encourage professional cross border reporting on an ongoing basis and not just at times of crisis.



## A strong independent sector

Independent media, both nationally and locally, performs a vital public service and deserves to have this recognised. Since 2020 we have funded the Sound and Vision scheme to enable high-quality programmes across Irish radio and TV services. We also zero-rated VAT for newspapers and digital publications.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Expand the Sound and Vision scheme, to support the independent sector's production of public service content.
- Increase funding to local radio and newspapers to ensure they are sustainable as they perform a vital role in ensuring our local communities remain cohesive and well informed.
- Provide support for Digital transformation.
- Enhance supports for increased use of the Irish language.

## Supporting journalists

In Government, we introduced the Defamation (Amendment) Bill. This legislation will radically reform our defamation laws at a time when they are increasingly being used to intimidate journalists and political opponents. It will ensure that defamation awards are proportionate, and it will reduce delays and legal costs. It will protect publishers against strategic lawsuits (SLAPPs) and will safeguard responsible public interest journalism.

### *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:*

- Restore the Defamation Bill to the Order paper and make passing the legislation a priority.
- Support efforts to ensure that national and local media are paid properly for their news content when it is used by online platforms.
- Through Coimisiún na Meán, introduce further measures to support the training and upskilling of professional journalists.
- Fund a National Counter Disinformation Strategy to enhance trust and protect the safety of people using global content platforms.

# Creating a Safer Digital Future



**It is clear that more work needs to be done to ensure that the many benefits of technological advancement are not outweighed by very real risks and dangers. Robust measures must also be put in place to tackle online fraud, the misuse of personal data, extremism, and disinformation.**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is here to stay, and we can see the enormous impact it is already having by quietly transforming the systems we rely on daily by making our interactions smoother and more efficient. Alongside these benefits, however, AI poses serious risks, including the potential to quickly spread misinformation and create 'deepfakes' that threaten the integrity of democratic processes.

Since 2020 we have introduced a radical new online safety framework comprising the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act and the Digital Services Act. Coimisiún na Meán is at the centre of this framework, which has brought an end to the era of unlimited self-regulation for large technology companies and social media giants.

## Ensuring a safe Digital Sphere

Fianna Fáil is committed to maintaining a safe digital environment. We must work with tech companies and An Garda Síochána to detect and remove illegal content and help online users to stay safe from online fraud and scams. The revolutionary Digital Services Act places obligations on online platforms to have a straightforward system for flagging illegal content. This law requires that advertisements will have to be clearly identified with information as to why you are seeing it, and who has paid for it.

### ***If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will:***

- Legislate to give An Garda Síochána and Coimisiún na Meán the power to seek a court order requiring the immediate removal of illegal or harmful content. We will extend the same powers under the EU Terrorist Content Online Regulation to require the removal of all illegal or harmful content.
- Refresh Ireland's National AI Strategy and implement the new regulations including the EU AI Act that will focus on three areas:
  1. Building trust in AI,
  2. Leveraging AI for societal and economic benefit including supporting businesses to adopt AI and harnessing AI for better public services,
- Require social media companies and online platforms to detect and remove fake advertisements.
- Amend legislation so that online platforms can only publish advertising for financial products and services from companies that are regulated to provide such products.
- Publish the National Counter Disinformation Strategy and an implementation plan to empower citizens through media literacy, education, and awareness so they have the skills to identify disinformation.
- Finalise engagement with the EU to implement Part 5 of the Electoral Reform Act 2022 and empower the Electoral Commission to tackle the scourge of online disinformation.
- Fully implement Part 4 of the Electoral Reform Act to ensure full transparency for online political advertising.



# Economic and Budgetary Assumptions

## Overview

Fianna Fáil believes that sound public finances are essential to promoting economic prosperity, providing good public services and social progress. We are also extremely conscious of the uncertain international situation and the need for Ireland to both be prepared for economic challenges and urgently invest in strategically important infrastructure.

Therefore, our core principles for managing the public finances over the next five years are:

- Run budget surpluses while our economy remains at or close to full employment.
- Increase expenditure to provide additional public services to meet the demands of our rapidly growing population.
- Ramp up public sector investment to address infrastructural deficits, including using once off receipts to address strategic gaps in key areas.
- Build the two longer-term savings funds in preparation for fiscal challenges over coming decades.
- Emphasize progressive changes in tax and encouragement of long-term economic strength.
- Reduce public debt as a share of national income.

Our plans have been developed using the independent forecasts published in Budget 2025 by the Department of Finance and endorsed by the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council. The plans are fully compliant with EU Fiscal rules and targets under the revised fiscal governance framework for the European Union.

## Fiscal Rule

Our fiscal rule for the next five years would see the rate of increase of (net) government spending moderate from 6.6% in 2026 (as assumed in Budget 2025) to 5.5% by 2030. This planned path of expenditure would mean more spending over the period 2027-2030 than projected in Budget 2025, but we believe such additional spending is justified and necessary to address the infrastructural deficits in the country. Approximately €36.6bn will be available through this spending growth rule.

The figures for spending above do not include the increased capital expenditure that will be financed by the once off revenue of €17.1 billion from the CJEU ruling and AIB share sales. Fianna Fáil will use these funds to boost the capital stock in key strategic areas.

## Budget Surpluses, Falling Debt, Rising Reserves

Under our fiscal plan, the budget will remain in surplus throughout the term of the next government, with an expected budget surplus of around €6 billion (or 1.4% of national income) by the end of the next government.

Currently, there is €10.4 billion in the Future Ireland Fund (FIF) and the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund (ICNF). We will continue to make transfers of 0.8% of GDP each year to the FIF and €2 billion each year to the ICNF in accordance with the legislation that underpins these funds. By 2030, some €50 billion will have been transferred to these two funds.

Under our fiscal plan, the national debt will decline from nearly 64% of national income in 2025 to below 60% by 2030.

### Budgetary positions, 2025 and 2030

	2025	2030
General government balance	€9.7bn	€6.1bn
General government balance % GNI*	2.9%	1.4%
Accumulated transfers to FIF and ICNF	€16.5bn	€50.2bn
National debt % GNI*	63.8%	59.2%

### Spending Growth

Spending		2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Current	€bn	90.52	96.2	102.55	108.70	115.22	121.56
	% growth		6.3	6.6	6.0	6.0	5.5
Capital	€bn	14.93	16.20	17.27	18.31	19.40	20.47
	% growth		8.5	6.6	6	6	5.5
Total	€bn	105.45	112.40	119.82	127.01	134.63	142.03
	% growth		6.6	6.6	6.0	6.0	5.5

### Departmental Costings

Our tax and spending plans have been costed via each relevant Department, the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform and the Department of Finance.

These allocations are in addition to what has already been pre-committed to 2030, including the National Development Plan.

Critically, we are providing a reserve of €20 billion which will go towards delivering existing services and for public service pay. The reserve funding for existing levels of service is at 3% of current expenditure as set out in the Medium Term Expenditure Strategy (MTES).

**Current Expenditure** (numbers may be impacted by rounding)

	<b>Current (m)</b>
Agriculture and Marine	€278.1
Children, Youth, Equality and Disability	€628.9
Tourism, Culture, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	€192.5
Defence	€590.0
Education	€1,028.6
Further and Higher Education	€561.2
Environment	€355.2
Enterprise	€517.5
Foreign Affairs	€215.1
Health	€3,424.2
Housing	€350.6
Justice	€383.1
Rural and Community Development	€112.3
Social Protection	€6,485.3
Transport	€48.0
<b>Total Current (€m)</b>	<b>€15,170.5</b>

## Taxation

	(m)
Total Tax Measures	€4,555
Less Tax Increases	€1,570
Net Tax Measures	€2,986

## Capital Expenditure & Escrow

Capital	(Budgetary)(m)	Escrow and AIB Share Sales (m)
Agriculture and Marine	€38.5	€0.0
Children, Youth, Equality and Disability	€148.3	€0.0
Tourism, Culture, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	€35.0	€0.0
Education	€359.5	€0.0
Further and Higher Education	€100.0	€0.0
Environment	€21.5	€2,500.0
Shared Island	€100.0	€0.0
Health	€1,500.1	€2,000.0
Housing	€1,379.0	€9,000.0
Justice	€7.4	€0.0
Rural and Community Development	€139.0	€0.0
Transport	€107.2	€3,600.0

## Overall

<b>Total available spending</b>	<b>€m</b>
Budgetary Package	€36,600.0
Escrow and AIB Share Sales	€17,100.0
Tax compliance & efficiencies	€3,000.0
Second round "Buoyancy" effects	€2,200.0
NTF Surplus Drawdown	308.0
Total	€59,208.00
Manifesto Commitments	
Total current	€15,170.5
Total capital	€3,935.5
Total escrow	€17,100.0
Total net taxation	€2,985.6
ELS, Unallocated fund to cover national pay deal and contingencies	€20,000.0
Total	€ 59,191.5

\*numbers may be impacted by rounding

## Economic Shocks and Corporation Tax Volatility

Over the past several years, Fianna Fail has led the way in acting decisively to address the impact of external shocks like Covid, supply chain disruptions and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. While we are providing very significant reserves and contingency funding all of our plans are premised on the fact that we will act decisively to protect Ireland's economy should new threats emerge.

Fianna Fáil established the Future Ireland Fund to help meet future healthcare, pension linked to our growing and aging population. Similarly, we have established the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund (ICNF) to smooth the investment cycle and avoid 'stop-start' in capital spending and meet our climate goals.

We will build up these Funds using budget surpluses and use them if necessary to provide for countercyclical capital expenditure in the event of an economic or fiscal downturn.

In addition to the expenditure outlined in this document we will deploy the ICNF on appropriate environmental projects designated during the next term of government, following due assessment, potential expenditure re-profiling and subject to the overall cap of €3.15bn.

In the event that upside changes materialise and Corporation Tax receipts exceed the levels currently projected by the Department of Finance, we will consider allocating some of these excess receipts to spending in strategic areas.

Any additional proceeds from bank share sales will be allocated to the Future Ireland Fund.





**Fianna Fáil**

AN PÁIRTÍ POBLACHTÁNACH

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