

**MOVING FORWARD. TOGETHER.
AG BOGADH AR AGHAIDH. LE CHÉILE.**

Supporting Older People



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The Fianna Fáil plan to support older people:

- Increase the State Pension to €350.
- Increase home care hours by 1 million hours every year.
- Build more public nursing home beds.
- Double the Housing Adaptation Grant.
- Reduce the Drug Payment Scheme monthly maximum payment from €80 to €40.
- Abolish the means test for Carer's Allowance.



Aging is a privilege. And with our population living for longer than ever before, we want to guarantee a decent quality of life for everyone in older age.

Fianna Fáil is determined to make Ireland a country that cherishes the older generation and recognises the invaluable contribution they had made to our economy and our society over the course of their lives.

The World Health Organisation recognised Ireland as the first Age Friendly country in the world. Fianna Fáil is committed to ensuring that this means something tangible to the everyday lives of our older population. That is why we established the pioneering Independent Commission on Care for Older People. We are determined to get this right.

In Government, Fianna Fáil increased the budget for older people by 50%. We invested heavily in the ‘triangle’ of supports (home care, day care and meals on wheels) to support older people to stay in their own homes for longer. There are now 400 people less in nursing homes than there was 5 years ago, at a time of population growth and ageing.

Dementia services has been a key priority for Fianna Fáil. We have delivered 36 dementia advisers, 54 dementia specific day services, 25 memory technology resource rooms, expanded day care at home and weekend activity clubs. Access to diagnostic services has also been greatly improved.

Promoting positive ageing is not just about healthcare supports. It is also about older people’s engagement in economic, social, cultural and community life and supporting them to leading fulfilling lives. Positive ageing also means utilising the knowledge, skills and lived experiences of our older generations to build a better society for all. Fianna Fáil is committed to making sure that the older years are healthy, positive, independent, cherished and celebrated.

1. A supportive welfare system

Fianna Fáil will ensure that older people have dignity, income security and a high standard of living as they age.

The State Pension is the bedrock of pension provision in Ireland. For many older people, it is their only source of income in retirement. Fianna Fáil is determined to ensure that it always provides older people with a decent standard of living.

In our plans, we are prioritising a substantial increase in the pension to at least €350 a week.

For those who live alone, will also increase the Living Alone Allowance, in recognition of the added financial burden of living alone.

If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- Increase the State pension to at least €350 per week.
- Increase the Living Alone Allowance.
- Maintain the State Pension age at 66.



2. Tackling the Cost of Living for Older People

We understand the need to address the impact that rising prices are having, particularly for older people. Prices for essentials like home energy and groceries are still too high.

We are proposing a range of actions to reduce prices.

Rising energy costs are a fundamental driver of the cost-of-living challenges that many older people have faced. In government, we responded with unprecedented supports including providing energy credits, reducing the VAT rate and targeted payments to provide immediate assistance to those who needed it. But we know that further action is needed in order to permanently reduce energy prices within Ireland and to secure our future supply. We will do this by keeping the lower VAT rate of 9% on electricity and gas, removing the PSO levy and huge investment in our energy infrastructure.

Grocery inflation has put increased financial pressure on older people. While there are many costs that no government can control, Fianna Fáil is acutely aware of the issue and is determined to support people by lowering importing and distributing costs where we can.

Our commitment to reduce the Drug Payment Scheme monthly maximum payment will help ease the cost-of-living pressures facing older people, by saving people up to €40 per month.



If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- Safeguard the Household Benefits Package.
- Make the reduction of the 9% VAT rate on electricity and gas bills permanent.
- Remove the obligation on consumers to pay the PSO levy. Instead, this will be paid by the State.
- Reduce the Drug Payment Scheme monthly maximum payment from €80 to €40 over the next five years.
- Consistently monitor network charges and ensure that Irish consumers do not pay excessive rates.
- Invest €2.5 billion into Ireland's electricity grid to modernise our power generation systems. This will prevent electricity prices going up.
- Work to reduce the cost of the weekly shop by investing in infrastructure to lower the shipping and transportation costs of goods.
- 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.
- Commission an independent investigation into the speed and extent of passthrough from wholesale energy prices to the amount consumers are being charged.

3. Social Connection and Community Engagement

Older people are valued members of Irish society and we must empower them to participate fully in the community.

To recognise this contribution, Fianna Fáil has delivered 320 day care services nationwide since 2020. In August 2024, a new fund of €10m for upgrades of day centres and meals on wheels facilities was also made available.

If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- 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.
- Expand the delivery of new day centres to areas currently lacking access.
- Invest in social programmes and befriending services to address isolation.



4. Supporting people living at home

Fianna Fáil recognises the connection people feel to their homes and to their communities. We want to ensure that people have the supports they need to live in their homes and in their communities for as long as they want to.

Home care support is crucial for older people living at home. Since 2020, Fianna Fáil increased the budget for home support hours by 70%. We want to build on this by providing an additional 1 million hours to support our older people every single year.

We will also support them to adapt their homes to meet their particular needs. Fianna Fáil in Government increased the Housing Adaptation grants and broadened the eligibility to ensure more people can avail of this grant. If elected to Government, we are determined to go further and will double the grant. We will also roll out the Care and Repair scheme nationally. Through this scheme small DIY jobs will be carried out, free of charge, for older people. This will help them maintain their homes and their independence.

If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- Develop a Statutory Homecare Scheme.
- Increase home support hours by 1 million hours annually.
- Rollout the Care & Repair scheme nationally.
- Double the Housing Adaptation Grant / Housing Aid for Older People Grant.
- Increase funding for the national Meals on Wheels network.

5. Care in the Community

We want to support older people to access as much care as possible in their community and away from the acute hospital system. Since 2020, we have made huge strides in the move to deliver increased levels of healthcare through general practice, primary care and community care.

If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- Increase the number of GPs by 1,500.
- Open another 100 more enhanced Primary Care Centres.
- Continue to expand our Community Care teams.
- Invest in our ambulance service to enable them to treat more patients in their own home.
- Further expand the services pharmacists can provide.



6. Strengthening our Nursing Home sector

There are just over 27,000 people in Ireland who live in nursing homes. Since 2020, Fianna Fáil provided over €500 million in new additional funding to the nursing home sector. It is absolutely essential that these people are able to live with a sense of connection and dignity, and we need to support those in the nursing home sector who make this happen and ensure that there is meaningful accountability where this doesn't happen.

Since 2020, Fianna Fáil put in place a Patient Advocacy Service, providing a free and independent service which helps people using healthcare services to make a formal complaint regarding the care they have received.

If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- Increase funding for the Fair Deal Scheme in line with population growth to ensure that access is sufficient to meet demand
- Build more public nursing home beds to provide stronger access and choice for those in need of nursing home care.
- Provide for a career pathway for healthcare assistants to ensure that their vital work is recognised and acknowledged.
- Continue HIQA inspections in nursing homes to ensure high standards of care.



7. Support for Older People's Mental Health

Anyone, at any age, can experience mental health issues. We are committed to addressing the growing needs for enhanced mental health supports for this group.

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.



8. Increased Dementia Supports

Fianna Fáil prioritised investment for dementia supports. We ringfenced funding for dementia-specific supports, including home help hours, to ensure that those living with dementia have access to the right services and supports to help them to live well in their communities.

We want to build on this momentum.

If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- Establish 20 new dementia-specific day care centres.
- Include dementia specific provision across all new Community Nursing Hospitals.
- Increase ringfenced home support 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.



10. Valuing Carers

All over Ireland, carers are doing work that is too often unheralded. Whether it is providing care for an older member of the family or a person with a disability, carers are doing work which is not only essential to those in receipt of care, but also to Irish society. Fianna Fáil is 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 and introduced a long-term Carer's Scheme to help these carers access the State Pension.

The steps that we have taken have made a difference, but we know that carers are still at risk of financial hardship and stress because of their caring work. This is not right or fair. For this reason, we want to improve how the State values and compensates carers by increasing the income disregards and moving to abolish the means test for the Carer's Allowance. We also want to acknowledge older people who are carers by allowing them to receive the full rate of Carer's Allowance as well as the State pension.

If returned to government, Fianna Fáil will:

- Allocate a minimum of €600m per year to increase the income disregard for the Carers Allowance, with a view to moving to abolish the means test over the term of Government.
- Ensure that on reaching pension age, carers can continue to receive the full rate of Carer's 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.
- Over the term of government, increase targeted personal tax credits for those involved in care work, such as the Home Carer Tax Credit as happened in Budget 2025.



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