

One Ireland
jobs, reform, fairness

FAIRNESS


Labour

Fairness

Fairness In Education

TIME FOR CHANGE

Labour's ambition is to build not just a knowledge economy, but a knowledge society. Education is at the heart of a more cohesive, more equal and more successful society, and it will be the engine of sustainable economic growth. Labour is committed to protecting children's education, because we believe they deserve the best start their country can give them.

Even in this crisis, we can make progress. Labour will put improving educational outcomes, from literacy to third level, at the heart of our education reforms.

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THE FIRST STEPS

- Improve child literacy standards for the first time in a generation
- Reform how schools are managed to focus on improving educational outcomes
- Transform the second level curriculum to equip young people with skills for the 21st century
- Prioritise school building and refurbishment in Labour's revised National Development Plan
- Put high standards of teaching and learning at the heart of third level reform



LOCAL EDUCATION BOARDS FOR LOCAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Labour will build on existing Vocational Educational Committees, and progressively transform them into Local Education Boards.

Local Education Boards will absorb the existing educational functions of Vocational Educational Committees, including the patronage of their existing schools at primary and secondary level, and in adult education. Their membership will continue to be elected in a manner similar to the present VECs.

New functions for Local Education Boards will include coordinating support services for schools to get better value for money, for example clustered secretarial services, co-ordination of supply teachers and tendering for electricity and heating. The boards will be responsible for repairs and maintenance, and will also act as project manager for all major school building projects and refurbishments within their areas.

Many administrative duties, relating to maintenance, school building projects and human resources, currently carried out by principals could be handed over to Local Education Boards. On top of this, Labour will implement a number of reforms to give principals more freedom and responsibility to raise the educational standards in their schools.

Principals will, with the support of the Inspectorate, draw up five year development plans for their schools and individual teachers. They will be enabled to allocate and manage staff with required flexibility, with management responsibilities delegated to teachers as school priorities require.

All new principal appointments will be for ten years only, and new principals will be required to complete a Master's degree in educational management within an agreed timeframe.

MAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL PATRONAGE FIT FOR PURPOSE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Labour wants to reform our education system so that it is more democratic, and recognises the diversity of ethos within modern Irish society.

Labour will initiate a time-limited Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector. This national Forum would be open to participation from all the stakeholders in the education sector. The Forum will have concise terms of reference and sit for a maximum of 12 months.

The recommendations of the Forum will be drawn up into a White Paper for consideration and implementation by the Government to ensure that our education system can provide a sufficiently diverse number of schools which cater for all religions and none. As part of this process, parents and the local

Labour will give principals more freedom and responsibility to raise the educational standards in their schools

BETTER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Good schools require one thing in common: good school leadership. Labour will reform school leadership to give principals the skills, support and freedom they need for this increasingly complex job. Principals will be given substantial autonomy to manage their school's resources, including staff, and to enable all schools to reach their potential.

community should also have a say in the patronage of existing and future schools, for example by direct ballot.

Labour in government will ensure Educate Together is recognised as a patron at second level by the Department of Education and Skills.

LEARNING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY AND IMPROVING OUTCOMES

Irish second level pupils are learning a 20th century curriculum based on rote learning, while competing in a 21st century labour market that rewards problem solving, flexibility, innovation and creativity.

Labour in government will progressively implement the reform of the Junior and Senior cycle, as envisioned by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. In particular, Labour will prioritise the reform of maths and science teaching at second level, including making science a compulsory Junior Cert subject by 2014.

The costs of expanding the curriculum and offering a wide range of subjects to pupils will be reduced by enabling schools to 'share' teachers via live web casts and other technological innovations.

Labour will progressively upgrade the information communications technology (ICT) infrastructure of schools over the course of new school building and refurbishment. Future investment in ICT will encompass mandatory professional development for teachers to incorporate new technologies into their teaching practice. Labour will also maximise investment through pooling of ICT procurement.

MAKING LITERACY A NATIONAL CAUSE

Literacy is the foundation stone on which all learning is built. Labour

Labour will make literacy a national cause

in government will make literacy a national cause, with a medium-term goal of ensuring that no child leaves an Irish school unable to read and write.

Labour's approach is three-fold: putting literacy policy at the heart of our agenda in government; embedding literacy in our communities; and focusing on the teaching of literacy in our classrooms. Labour will develop a national literacy strategy, with school-level targets. Every school will be required to have a literacy action plan, with demonstrable outcomes.

DEIS primary schools will be mandated to teach literacy for 120 minutes per day; non-DEIS schools will be mandated to teach literacy for 90 minutes per day. This time includes incorporating structured literacy tuition into the teaching of other subjects.

Teachers are our most important resource in tackling poor literacy. Labour will improve pre-service and in-service training in the teaching of literacy for all primary and secondary school teachers, and provide dedicated literacy mentors to work intensively with teachers in the most disadvantaged primary schools.

Labour will also work with local authorities to develop Labour's Right to Read campaign and to develop community supports for literacy, such as more spacious social housing, longer opening hours for libraries, homework clubs and summer camps that improve literacy through sport and games.

Labour's literacy strategy will involve refocusing some existing spending

on literacy goals, and will cost an additional €14 million per annum.

IMPROVING EQUITY IN EDUCATION

As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, Labour will examine how we can make existing expenditure on educational disadvantage more effective.

Labour will also look at innovative ways in which teenagers at risk of leaving the school system can stay connected, for example through the use of ICT-based distance learning and projects such as iScoil.

Labour is committed to reversing the cut to the number of psychologists in the National Educational Psychological Service in Budget 2011 at a cost of €3 million. Labour will support schools, parents and children with special educational needs by ensuring that necessary supports follow a child from primary to second level, and achieving greater integration of special needs-related services.

PRIORITISE THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME

Labour will prioritise school building projects in our revised national development plan. In cases where schools spend hundreds of thousands of euro renting prefabs, Labour will enable schools to build permanent school accommodation instead.

School planning, building and maintenance will be managed and delivered much more efficiently and cost-effectively by new Local Educational Boards.

In future, local authorities will be required to complete an Educational Impact Assessment on residential zoning, to identify potential need for schools. The creation of Shared Educational Campuses will be a core principle for future development of our educational infrastructure. Schools of different ethos and patronage could be located on a shared campus and utilise common educational facilities, secretarial supports, playing fields and sports facilities.

New schools will be built to grow with their communities, and to provide for a more interactive, child-friendly model of education. Labour will develop existing standardised designs for new schools, which will be the blueprint for future greenfield developments.

Labour in government will negotiate the transfer of school infrastructure currently owned by the 18 religious orders cited in the Ryan Report, at no extra cost, to the State. The existing patronage and activities of these schools will remain unchanged. We will also ensure that school buildings and land are zoned for educational use, so that they cannot easily be sold and lost to the system.

REFORMING THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION

Labour abolished third-level fees in 1995, and we are opposed to their re-introduction. We refuse to go back to the days when only the relatively wealthy could count on going to third level, or when a family could only afford to send one of their children to college.

However, Labour will expect radical reform in third level institutions to maximise their existing funding, in particular the reform of academic contracts.

In government, Labour will review the recommendations of the Hunt report on higher education. Labour supports a vibrant, pluralist third level sector that offers both high quality research and high quality undergraduate teaching. Reform of third level should be driven by the need to improve the learning outcomes of undergraduate degree students, as well as provide high quality research, and it is this principle which will inform Labour's policy on the future of the third level system. Labour will initiate a time-limited audit of level 8 qualifications on offer in Irish third level institutions and the learning outcomes for graduates of these courses.

In order to ensure that students' interests are protected in the delivery of third level education, Labour will extend the remit of the Ombudsman to third level institutions.

To reduce the bureaucracy associated with student support, Labour will transfer responsibility for the administration of student grants to the Department of Social Protection. We will also reform the means test for the student grant to ensure that it is equitable and targeted at those most in need of assistance.

Labour is committed to the relocation of the Dublin Institute of Technology to the new campus in Grangegorman.

DEVELOP IRELAND'S THIRD LEVEL SECTOR AS A CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Labour will devise a National Strategy for International Education which will seek to attract students from a select number of countries to study in Ireland, in line with the employment, academic and skill requirements of our overall economy and education sector.

The strategy will develop an 'Education Ireland' brand, and combine the ambitions and interests of government policy with those of the higher education sector for a five year period. The policy will target in particular students from India, China and the Middle East, with advertising, visa policies and quality assurance managed accordingly. This will form part of wider relationship-building with BRIC countries through developing educational links.

Postgraduate students should be allowed work in Ireland for up to a year after they complete their studies. High-value research students should be allowed bring their families to Ireland if they are staying for more than two years.

Labour will prioritise the development of a one-stop shop website which can enable international students to learn about Ireland, pick a course and apply for their visa.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Labour will transfer responsibility for vocational education and training, including an expanded apprenticeship programme, from FÁS to further education colleges and the Institutes of Technology. To qualify for this transfer of funding from FÁS, further education colleges and Institutes of Technology will be mandated to develop flexible, high-quality vocational training opportunities for jobseekers, in line with the recommendations of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs.

Fairness

Labour's Plan for Fair Health Care

TIME FOR CHANGE

Ireland's healthcare system is broken, and for thirteen years, Fianna Fáil has chosen not to fix it. Instead, they focused on privatising the health service, giving huge tax-payer funded windfalls to developers building super-private clinics. Labour in government will introduce Universal Health Insurance as a way of delivering better, more effective care for every patient, and reducing the cost of our health system. From our first day in office, Labour will begin the phased introduction of a Universal Health Insurance system, starting with GP care.

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THE FIRST STEPS

- Access to GPs covered by primary care insurance for all by 2014
- Universal Hospital Care Insurance that guarantees every citizen equal access to hospital care when they need it, phased in over six years
- Private hospitals opened to uninsured patients for diagnostic procedures from year one, reducing waiting lists
- Hospitals funded according to the number of patients they treat, so that it pays to treat people efficiently
- A focus on treating mental health in the community, with particular provision for young people



EXTENDING ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

Meeting more people's healthcare needs through the primary care system is key to reducing the overall cost of the Irish health system. This requires more services to be delivered at local level, instead of in hospitals, and more people being able to afford them.

Under Labour's plan, GP fees will be covered by universal primary care insurance. This universal primary care insurance will be extended to the portion of the population who do not have a medical card on a phased basis, so that by 2014, every person registered with a GP will be insured for primary care. This means patients will no longer pay upfront fees when they visit their GP. Labour will begin this process in our first year in government, by extending primary care insurance for GP visits to people on the Long-term Illness Scheme.

This reform will be paid for out of existing Exchequer funding, and savings in the health budget, which will go into a Primary Care Insurance Fund. From this fund, GPs will be paid a capitation fee per person registered with their practice, similar to the existing medical card system, but at a lower cost to the Exchequer.

By 2014, every person registered with a GP will be insured for primary care

Building up supply

In the short term, the supply of GPs can be increased by deferring the retirement of existing GPs; by recruiting more practice nurses, who could take on up to half the average workload of a GP; and by recruiting doctors from abroad, including Irish doctors who have emigrated. These measures will

ensure that there is enough supply to meet demand in phase one of Labour's healthcare reforms.

In the medium to longer term, the number of GPs being trained in Ireland will need to increase.

Care in the community

In order to free up more acute hospital beds, more step-down beds and home care packages need to be available to people who cannot be discharged without some post-hospital care. To facilitate this, Labour will invest additional funds in community and 'step down' care.

PHASE TWO: UNIVERSAL HOSPITAL CARE INSURANCE

Hospital care reform

Labour will introduce a system of mandatory Universal Hospital Care Insurance. Hospital care will be paid for in much the same way we pay for it now – through Exchequer resources and insurance premiums – except that money will be paid into a Hospital Insurance Fund, which will regulate the flow of funds to hospitals and insurance companies.

Premiums will be subsidised according to income, ranging from a 100 per cent subsidy for people currently eligible for medical cards, to no subsidy for those who can afford to pay for their own premium. Public, not-for-profit, and private insurers will be obliged to offer a guaranteed 'basket' of insured hospital services.

The cost of insurance premiums under a Universal Hospital Care Insurance system should not change from what they are at present. Implementation of these reforms will result in the cost of delivering healthcare being reduced, which means that more people can be treated for a similar level of funding.

The National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) and the purchasing arm of the HSE will come together to

provide a new non-profit insurer, which will automatically enrol people with a medical card and the uninsured. However, like all insurance customers, they will have the choice of whether to switch insurer.

Initially, half of acute hospital budgets will be paid via the Hospital Insurance Fund, which will manage risk equalisation between insurers, and fund A&E services, ambulance services, teaching and certain very expensive and rare procedures, such as transplants. The balance of acute hospital budgets will be paid via insurance payments based on the number of procedures they carry out.

Instead of every patient being a 'drain' on a fixed hospital budget, every patient will represent a 'gain', giving hospitals an incentive to treat as many patients as efficiently as possible. This is the 'money follows the patient' model of hospital funding that is driven by universal health insurance.

Reform in the management of hospitals, establishment of the new public insurer for acute hospital care, and development of systems of regulation and financing will take time, which is why introducing this system will take six years. However, a phased introduction of universal hospital insurance will start from year one with an expansion of the role of the NTPF to purchase certain diagnostic tests for people who do not have insurance.

Costs will be controlled through centralised negotiation of the price of drugs and professional fees by the Hospital Insurance Fund, in consultation with insurance companies. This centralised negotiation of key costs, in tandem with competing insurers, is similar to the German model of health insurance, and is critical to controlling the cost of delivering healthcare.

The role of hospitals

Under Universal Hospital Care Insurance, public hospitals will be given much more independence. They will no longer be managed by the HSE. They will operate as independent, not-for-profit foundations or trusts, with managers accountable to their boards. Boards will include representatives of local communities. For some smaller hospitals it will make sense for them to combine in a local hospital network, with a shared management and board. Hospitals and hospital groups will be able to compete to supply care to private or public insurers.

This freeing of public hospitals will not be a free market in care. A free market is not compatible with social solidarity and good planning for community health care needs. An unregulated market would jeopardise the survival of smaller hospitals in areas where the population is dispersed, and would run counter to the development of centres of excellence for certain kinds of care.

Under Universal Hospital Care Insurance, the Minister for Health answering to the Government and Dáil Eireann will be responsible for health policy, including hospitals policy.

Where a hospital plays an important role in supplying care in an area that cannot be fulfilled by primary care services, it will not be allowed to close. If, under the system of Universal Hospital Care Insurance, that hospital

is failing due to inefficiency, its management will be replaced. If it is failing because it needs to offer a differing package of care, it will be assisted by the Hospital Insurance Fund in achieving that change.

In the present fiscal crisis, Labour in government will prioritise capital spending in health. Even with significant reforms in how we pay for healthcare, Ireland's system needs more acute hospital beds and more step-down beds in the community.

Labour will prioritise investment in new, modern hospitals, including the National Children's Hospital, a new hospital for the North-East, and supports the policy objective of relocating maternity hospitals to acute hospital campuses in Limerick and Dublin. Labour in government will also explore the scope for providing health care facilities through non-traditional financing via the Strategic Investment Bank.

RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE QUALITY OF IRELAND'S HEALTH SERVICE

The Minister for Health will be clearly in charge of the health care system and answerable to the Government and Dáil Eireann. The Minister will introduce legislation to enact Universal Primary Care Insurance and Universal Hospital Care Insurance.

Labour's plan does not abolish the HSE outright. Instead, Labour's plan transforms what we have already, so that the functions of the HSE are split between purchasing

Labour in government will prioritise capital spending in health

hospital care on the one hand, and a continuation of its management of mental health, community care and social care on the other.

MENTAL HEALTH

Labour's proposals to reform healthcare and introduce universal health insurance will incorporate mental health care, both through a strengthened role for GPs, and through the ongoing development of Community Mental Health Teams and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Teams, as resources allow. Given the central role of primary care in our reforms, we will take action to ensure that GPs and other professionals at primary level have the skills and up-to-date knowledge to identify and treat mental health problems, or to refer patients on to the most appropriate care provider.

Labour will work with health providers and charitable organisations to explore how a nationwide early intervention 'walk-in' service for young people experiencing mental health difficulties, based on the 'Jigsaw' service operating in Galway, might be developed from within existing resources. Labour will also endeavour to end the practice of placing children and adolescents in adult psychiatric wards.

Labour will comprehensively review the Mental Health Act (2001) in consultation with service-users, carers and other stakeholders, informed by human rights standards, and introduce a Mental Capacity Bill that accords with Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

To ensure a joined-up approach to mental health in the community, we will establish cross-departmental group to ensure that good mental health is a policy goal across the range of people's life experience including housing, education and employment.

Labour's key reforms of primary care will enable more comprehensive preventative care

Labour will address the high rate of suicide, including a review of the current practice whereby caring family members are frequently given little or no information to assist them in the on-going care of loved-ones who have been discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt, a psychotic episode or other serious mental illness.

PREVENTATIVE CARE AND CARE OF CHRONIC ILLNESSES

Labour's key reforms of primary care will enable more comprehensive preventative care, and the management of chronic conditions in a community setting. We will develop strategies to address common and chronic illnesses including heart and stroke, diabetes, respiratory illnesses, rare diseases and Alzheimer's Disease.

In light of their particular needs, Labour will commit to enter into discussions with survivors of Thalidomide to ensure that they receive fair and equitable compensation and a statutory right to the health care they need for the rest of their lives.

Labour will also maintain progress on the cancer strategy, and progress the recommendations of the Task Force on Obesity. Labour will consider the introduction of 'traffic-light' labelling of food and drink products and, in consultation with stakeholders, a requirement to clearly display the calorie content of food in restaurants and cafés.

Fairness

Making Homes Matter

TIME FOR CHANGE

Fianna Fáil's policy of putting the interests of big developers and the banks ahead of people looking to purchase a modest home was a direct cause of Ireland's disastrous property boom and bust. The Labour Party will reform housing policy in Ireland, so that the housing market is never again treated like a private casino. We are committed to undoing the damage caused by Fianna Fáil's recklessness, beginning with helping homeowners in distress to weather this recession. Labour's vision for housing policy puts people, and liveable communities, first.

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THE FIRST STEPS

- A two year moratorium on house repossessions
- Develop MABS into a personal debt management agency
- Provide distressed mortgage-holders protection from their creditors
- Develop a coherent plan to deal with ghost estates
- Introduce a 'housing first' policy when it comes to accommodating homeless people



HELPING HOMEOWNERS WEATHER THIS RECESSION

Labour believes that the best way to deal with distressed mortgages is to make keeping people in their homes the absolute priority. No repossessions should be permitted for at least two years, where a person makes a genuine attempt to pay their mortgage on a home of modest size.

We will provide stronger support for people in difficulties with their mortgage, by converting the Money Advice and Budgeting Service into a strengthened Personal Debt Management Agency with strong legal powers. The agency will support families who make an honest effort to deal with their debts, including non-mortgage debt, providing protection from their creditors where appropriate, so that they have time to sort out their affairs.

In order to do so, the Personal Debt Management Agency will have quasi-judicial status. Labour will also reform Ireland's penal bankruptcy laws for those who have to take that route.

The best way to deal with distressed mortgages is to make keeping people in their homes the absolute priority

Labour will make greater use of Mortgage Interest Supplement to support families who cannot meet their mortgage payments, which is a better and cheaper option than paying rent supplement after a family loses their home.

In the longer term, Labour will establish a new Sustainable Homeownership Insurance Programme, which will be aimed at new residential mortgage holders and existing home owners who switch mortgage providers.

NORMALISING THE MARKET FOR HOMES

For the Labour Party a 'normal' home market is one in which mortgage lending practices are prudent, house price inflation does not sky-rocket, and where the vast majority of people can afford a family home. In government, Labour will ensure that the Central Bank and Financial Regulator supervise credit institutions' mortgage lending practices comprehensively and intensively. Where credit institutions fail to adequately control mortgage lending risks, the Central Bank will impose loan-to-value ceilings on mortgages, caps on loan-to-income multiples, limits on the term of new mortgages, and more rigorous procedures for verifying borrowers' incomes.

A well-functioning housing market requires that both buyers and sellers have access to reliable information on price trends in their neighbourhood, and for different dwelling types. Labour will improve the quality of information available on the Irish housing market by requiring that the selling price of all dwellings is recorded in a publicly available, national housing price database.

DEALING WITH GHOST ESTATES

Ghost estates are a bitter reminder of the planning failures of the past. They are a headache for residents of these estates, and for the wider community. The Minister for the Environment will bring forward, as a matter of urgency, a coherent plan to resolve the problems associated with ghost estates. This plan will be developed in cooperation with NAMA and local authorities, and will include, where appropriate, the demolition or completion of part built dwellings; the acquisition of properties by social landlords; or the sale of properties on the open market where this is possible, and where it is not, the disposal of dwellings by innovative means such as rent to buy and co-operative home ownership programmes.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: PLANNING FOR COMMUNITIES

Labour will reform how we plan for residential development, to prioritise liveable communities, and a healthier, safer environment.

Labour will link planning permission for residential developments to the provision of public transport, healthcare, recreational areas, shops and facilities. As part of this, local authorities will be required to carry out an 'Educational Impact Assessment' for all new zonings for residential development to ensure an adequate supply of school places.

To make the planning process more democratic, Labour will amend the recent Planning and Development Act (2010) to allow for detailed public submissions on zoning, and to rebalance power towards elected representatives. Local authorities will be required to carry out a flood risk report in the preparation of their City and County Development Plans, and will also be legally required to manage flood risk through sustainable planning and development.

Labour will reform how we plan for residential development, to prioritise liveable communities, and a healthier, safer environment

Labour will pass legislation to allow local authorities take housing estates 'in charge' after three years, and substantially increase existing penalties for those who break planning laws.

HIGH QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE SOCIAL HOUSING

Working within existing resources, Labour will introduce a staged purchase scheme to increase the stock of social housing, while achieving the best possible value for public investment. Under the terms of this scheme, leased dwellings will revert to the ownership of local authorities and housing associations at the end of the leasehold period.

Labour will also enable larger housing associations and local authorities to access private sector funding for social housing by issuing 'social housing bonds', secured on the value of their existing housing stock when market conditions allow.

We will direct the Housing Finance Agency to design and oversee the implementation of this funding mechanism, drawing on best practice in the many other countries where bonds are used to fund social housing projects.

In government, Labour will extend the remit of the Private Residential Tenancies Board to regulate social tenancies, as well as the private

rented sector. This will bring much needed regulation to social housing tenancies, which currently undermine tenants' rights and force landlords to engage in expensive court procedures if they wish to terminate a tenancy.

In addition, we will amend the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (1992) to require all local authorities and housing associations to register with the Department of the Environment if they wish to access government subsidies or other supports for social housing provision. Social landlords will be required to make annual returns to the Department to demonstrate their compliance with specific financial, housing management and governance standards. Landlords that fail to meet these standards will not be eligible for any Exchequer support.

In recent years the standard of social housing management has improved significantly but unfortunately anti-social behaviour remains a problem for many. In government we will address the issue of anti-social behaviour by introducing a twelve month probationary tenancy for all new tenants in social housing estates. If tenants or members of their households engage in anti-social behaviour during this period the tenancy will be terminated.

SUPPORTING PRIVATE RENTING TENANTS

Labour will establish a tenancy deposit protection scheme to put an end to disputes regarding the return of deposits, and ensure that changes to rent are linked to local market averages.

The number of people in receipt of rent supplement, and its cost, have more than doubled in the past decade.

Labour will reduce expenditure on rent supplement by making recipients' contribution to their rent a proportion of their income rather than a flat amount as is currently the case. This reform will incentivise recipients to negotiate lower rents with participating landlords.

To further reinforce recipients' negotiating power the maximum amounts of rent supplement payable in different localities will no longer be made publicly available on the Health Service Executive website. Labour will also instruct the HSE to deduct withholding tax from all rent supplement payments to promote tax compliance among landlords.

Labour will also reform the Rental Accommodation Scheme so that claimants' pay an increasing proportion of their rent as their income increases, and set the maximum contribution with reference to the total rent paid to the landlord.

HOMELESSNESS

Despite improvements in policy making, service development, and very substantial public investment, the numbers of homeless people remained high throughout the economic boom and have recently begun to rise as the economy has declined.

Labour will establish a tenancy deposit protection scheme to put an end to disputes regarding the return of deposits

In line with our Comprehensive Spending Review, Labour will alleviate the problem of long-term homelessness by introducing a 'housing first' approach to accommodating homeless people. Labour will lease-purchase or enable social landlords to build adequate numbers of long term dwellings for homeless people and fund support staff to enable them to successfully maintain these tenancies over the long term. In this way we will be able to offer homeless people suitable, long term housing in the first instance and radically reduce the use of hostel accommodation and the associated costs for the Exchequer.

Fairness

One Ireland For Children, Families & Older People

TIME FOR CHANGE

Ireland should be the best place in the world to grow up, and to grow old. It is a scandal that, despite a decade of prosperity, vulnerable children have been allowed to die for want of proper care; and that the privileging of profit in healthcare has put older people at risk of abuse by unscrupulous businesses. The Labour Party believes that it is time to put aside the 'me first' philosophy of Fianna Fáil, and to work together to build an Ireland that is a safe place for children, a supportive place for families, and which recognises the value and the potential of our senior citizens.

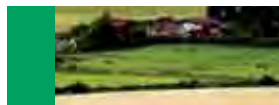
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THE FIRST STEPS

- A constitutional amendment on children's rights
- A radical, area-based approach to tackling child poverty in Ireland's most disadvantaged communities
- New community-based solutions to building age-friendly neighbourhoods and towns
- Remove the barriers to older people who want to remain active in the workforce, and use retirees' expertise to help new start-ups
- Regulation to ensure safe, quality home help services for older people



PROTECTING CHILDREN

The delay in proceeding with the referendum on children's rights is unacceptable. Labour will ensure that a children's rights referendum is urgently progressed.

Labour will legislate, as a priority, to allow for the exchange of 'soft information' on suspected abuse of children, and to significantly raise the level of proof which an accused person must reach when they are claiming 'mistake as to age' in a prosecution for sexual offences against a child.

The Ryan and Murphy reports identified significant inadequacies in how allegations of child abuse are dealt with in Ireland. The Ryan Report Implementation Plan set out 99 actions and policy objectives which if delivered will radically change the child protection service. Labour in government will expedite the implementation programme.

Labour will ensure that a children's rights referendum is urgently progressed

Labour will also update the Children First guidelines to restore the importance of family support, prevention and early intervention as key objectives of child protection; to clarify the 'threshold of concern' requiring a report to be made to the HSE; and to ensure compliance with the HIQA Guidance report of 2010, which deals with crisis intervention for particularly vulnerable children.

Finally, in government we will ensure that the promised 270 new social workers are brought into the system, and that emergency care is consistently available outside

of standard working hours. The particular problems faced by separated children, i.e. children who are outside their country of origin, will be taken into account.

CHILDCARE AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Labour Party was the first party to propose a free, universal year of pre-school as a vital first step in a child's education. Labour will build on the 2010 Early Childhood Education and Care scheme, when resources permit, to develop a comprehensive, national pre-school service that is focussed on early childhood development.

In the mean time, Labour will focus on the improvement of quality in the early childhood education and care sector through the implementation of Siolta standards; by ensuring the sufficient availability of training options for staff. Labour is also committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to avail of a universal pre-school year, wherever their location, and will review the age structure of the scheme to ensure that any rigidities do not work to the disadvantage of families.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF CHILD POVERTY

Child poverty in Ireland has remained stubbornly high, even through the boom years. This shows that simply adding more money is not enough to break the cycle of child poverty where it is most deeply entrenched. Labour will adopt a radical new area-based approach to tackling child poverty, based on the youngballymun project in Dublin, which involves all of the existing state services, such as public health nurses, schools, childcare professionals, and social workers coordinating their efforts, with expert Irish and international support, to tackle every aspect of

child poverty within Ireland's most disadvantaged communities.

Labour will seek philanthropic partners to co-fund and manage the rollout of this model to up to ten of Ireland's most disadvantaged communities, at a cost of up to €15 million.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Labour will take action to tackle the public health time bomb that is childhood obesity. In government, we will publish a National Nutrition Policy, and will bring together government departments, agencies and educators in a major and sustained campaign to address this vital aspect of childhood health and well-being. This will address advertising standards, the nutritional content of food sold in retail outlets and, most importantly of all, a strong educational campaign pitched directly at children and young people themselves.

The huge increase in the number of outlets supplying alcohol was a serious mistake, while the more recent restrictions on opening hours have had little discernible impact on teen drinking. Labour will take action to further restrict sales to under-age persons, notably in off-licence outlets. We will also work at EU level to develop a European-wide agreement to phase out, or substantially reduce, alcohol-related sponsorship of sporting events.

SUPPORTING MODERN IRISH FAMILIES

Irish family life has changed enormously over the past two decades, but changes in employment and legal rights have not kept pace.

Labour will legislate to guarantee that the State respects family life, whether based on marriage or not

Labour favours moving to a paternity leave model, where parents can share paid leave when a new baby is born, as resources allow. More immediately, Labour will introduce a legal right to a career break, subject to reasonable conditions, which would allow parents to take time out of the workplace without risking future benefits or job security. This would have the added benefit of creating mobility in the labour force. We will also explore the option of introducing a right to part-time work, subject also to reasonable conditions.

Labour will legislate to guarantee that the State respects family life, whether based on marriage or not, by passing our Guardianship of Children Bill (2010).

BUILDING AN AGE-FRIENDLY SOCIETY

Ireland needs the experience, the energy and the patriotism of its older citizens, just as older people themselves can benefit from help in their communities.

Labour will establish 'Give n Take', a community response to the everyday needs of people in a local community. In this exchange, people of all ages volunteer their time, which is lodged in a 'time bank'. This exchange, which would be weighted in favour of older people, would be a way of brokering volunteering good will in a community.

This will be a way of connecting people who want to help out in their communities, with those who need that help. It will be a local organisation, administered locally through the network of local development/partnership companies with assistance from Volunteering Ireland and new technologies. It would not require additional resources.

Labour will also initiate a national annual competition – 'A Shining Community' – to find the most age-friendly community in Ireland. Structured along the lines of the Tidy Towns competition, communities would research and develop a blueprint for how their community can become a model, age-friendly community accounting for the health, recreational, educational, participatory, built environment, emotional and security needs of older people.

Labour in government is committed to progressing the implementation of a National Positive Ageing Strategy.

MAKING SURE THE VOICES OF OLDER PEOPLE ARE HEARD

Labour wants older people to be heard in their communities. Local authorities will be required to establish local Older People councils, where members of the community can raise local concerns or issues of importance. These councils will be chaired by a representative of the Local Authority, who will be required

to report to both local elected representatives, and the Office for Older People.

BETTER CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Labour's reform of primary care services, and universal health insurance, will particularly benefit older people, who will be assured of access to care when they need it. Labour's plan to expand the community care sector, to enable older people to be discharged from hospital and cared for in their communities, is detailed in our proposals on Universal Health Insurance.

Labour will review the role and operations of the public network of geriatric hospitals and long term care units as part of a coherent strategy for residential care for older people.

Labour will regulate home help services so that older people and their families can have confidence in them.

Labour is committed to introducing a comprehensive statutory framework on mental capacity, including provision for the appointment of an independent advocate for those who need someone to advocate on their behalf.

HELPING OLDER PEOPLE WHO WANT TO WORK

Older people who wish to remain economically active should be able to do so. Phased retirement from

full-time work will be facilitated for those who wish to continue to work part-time on a contractual basis, underpinned by legislation and subject to commonsense exceptions and conditions.

The experience and skills of older people should not be lost to the economy when they retire. Labour will initiate a campaign, '*Flyin' at 60*', to encourage and support older people finalising one career to make their wisdom available to a new enterprise. Retired people with enterprise development and mentoring skills can also play a voluntary role in the services provided by the Local Development-Partnership or County Enterprise Boards.

County Enterprise Boards will also be mandated to develop a specific support package for 'start-up' Social Entrepreneurs.

BETTER, SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Ireland needs to plan now for homes and communities that make it easier for older people to live independently. Part M of the Building Regulations will be revised and developments complying with Universal Design principles will be favoured in the planning process.

As part of Labour's broader housing policy, we will seek to promote sheltered housing that meets a high standard of design and specification. Simple home maintenance can be one of the biggest challenges for people as they grow older. Through

the Give n' Take a Social Exchange Network, the local development and partnership companies will hold a register of skilled craftspeople willing to volunteer a little of their time, and who can undertake minor alterations and repairs.

Labour will allow for the development of 'No Cold Calling' Zones in areas with high concentrations of older people. This will prohibit the practice of cold calling and selling door to door in those areas.

An opt-in *Older People Community Register* will be established, in cooperation with Community Gardaí, the HSE, and locally-managed social care networks to maximise a community-wide response in the event of natural emergencies.

Labour will allow for the development of 'No Cold Calling' Zones

Fairness

A Fairer and More Equal Ireland

TIME FOR CHANGE

Equality is not a luxury for the good times or a buzzword: it is at the heart of what it means to be a citizen in our democracy, and it is at the heart of the Labour Party's view of the world. Labour believes that everyone has the right to reach their full potential, free from discrimination, and that we all benefit from living in a more equal society. Fianna Fáil presided over a very unequal and divided Ireland. Labour is committed to forging One Ireland, built on fairness and equal citizenship.

One Ireland
jobs, reform, fairness

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THE FIRST STEPS

- Bring more women into politics by tying funding for political parties to the participation of women representatives
- Reform the law on mental capacity
- Stronger laws against unfair discrimination
- A referendum on same-sex marriage
- Legislation to regulate scientific stem cell research

FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

Women continue to be under-represented – if they are there at all – in the decision-making arenas at all levels of politics, and on state boards. Labour will make it a legal requirement that 40 per cent of either gender is represented on state boards and committees, and we will ensure that other nominating bodies are bound by the same target.

Public funding for political parties will be tied to the level of participation by women as public representatives those parties achieve. Demanding targets for all political parties will be set out in legislation.

Labour will make it a legal requirement that 40 per cent of either gender is represented on state boards and committees

Labour is committed to tackling and eradicating domestic violence. We will protect funding for frontline services, such as family refuges, and draw on best international practice to reform the way the courts system deals with domestic abuse cases. Most urgently, we will tackle the delay in hearing domestic abuse cases in the courts, and provide national consistency of access to the courts for urgent applications.

Labour supports updating the Constitution to reflect the role of women in 21st century Ireland, which we will be recommending to our proposed Constitutional Convention.

A FAIR DEAL FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Labour remains committed to an approach to disability in Ireland based on rights, equality and participation. We will continue to work to vindicate the rights of people with disabilities to education, health, housing and work and to participate in an inclusive manner in the economic, social and cultural life of the community, and will work to advance implementation of the National Disability Strategy.

Labour will protect, as a priority, those people with disabilities who are most vulnerable to cuts in public services. However, it is also essential that we get the best possible value for money for the investment we make in services with people for disabilities, and that those services meet the needs of users.

Labour's proposed Comprehensive Expenditure Review will examine all provision for people with disabilities, with a view to determining how users can get the best services, for the public investment made. As part of this review, Labour will consider moving a proportion of public spending on disability services to a personal budgeting model, so that people with disabilities or their families have greater flexibility to make the choices that suit their needs best.

Labour is also committed to reforming the law on mental capacity, so as to ensure the greatest degree of autonomy for people with intellectual disabilities or suffering from a mental illness, and to reduce the need for expensive court proceedings.

LGBT RIGHTS

Labour is committed to holding a referendum to provide for constitutional recognition of same-sex marriage. Labour also supports entitling all parties to a marriage or civil partnership to apply to adopt a child, while ensuring that all adoption decisions must be made in the best long-term interests of the child. In the immediate term, Labour will enact provisions to extend the tax benefits of marriage to same sex couples in civil partnerships.

Labour is committed to ensuring all publicly funded colleges operate in accordance with the constitutional right to Freedom of Conscience. Labour will ensure the five teaching colleges introduce a Freedom of Conscience clause so that trainee teachers no longer are obliged to undergo compulsory religious education.

Labour will amend Section 37 of the Employment Equality Acts (1998) and (2004) to end discrimination against LGBT teachers and trainee teachers, and to ensure that there is no obstacle to schools tackling homophobic bullying.

Labour will continue to fund Gay HIV Strategies.

Labour will advance equality for trans-gender people by enacting gender recognition legislation, and by extending to them protections afforded by existing equality legislation.

FAIR EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Labour in government will address the fact that some unscrupulous employers have sought to undermine the right to collective bargaining. Labour will introduce legislation to strengthen the rights of workers to engage in collective bargaining, as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The legislation will also make it illegal

Labour will enact provisions to extend the tax benefits of marriage to same sex couples in civil partnerships

to discriminate in any way against an employee because they are a member of a trade union or involved in trade union activity.

Labour will also amend the Employment Equality Act to combat age discrimination by shifting the burden of proof to the employer as to why an individual must retire on age grounds.

FOSTERING A HEALTHY CIVIL SOCIETY

A robust civil society is essential to building a fair Ireland, where power is shared and dissent and debate are valued.

Labour supports the aims of the Conversation on Democracy in Ireland project.

Labour's Comprehensive Spending Review will examine all areas of government spending, to establish what is the best and most cost-effective way to achieve the positive outcomes we want for our country. This review will provide the basis for a coherent policy framework governing the State's partnership with community and voluntary organisations.

Labour is committed to continuing the work of the Forum on Philanthropy under the chairmanship of the Department of the Taoiseach, and to actively supporting the development of a strategy to promote philanthropy at all levels of society

PUTTING EQUALITY BACK INTO GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING

Fianna Fáil systematically filleted state bodies which criticised its record on equality, human rights and poverty. The Labour Party will put fairness and equality back at the heart of government decision-making. A new Equality and Social Inclusion Authority with a mandate to promote social inclusion and equality, and combat poverty and discrimination, will replace the Equality Authority and the National Disability Authority. It will incorporate the policy and research functions of the Combat Poverty Agency, which was dismantled by Fianna Fáil.

Labour will establish an Oireachtas Committee on Equality, Women and Human Rights, charged with progressing legislation in these areas.

BIOETHICS AND OTHER LAW REFORMS

Labour will legislate in accordance with existing constitutional provisions and court judgements to clarify the law – including the law relating to guardianship responsibilities – surrounding assisted human reproduction. Labour will also legislate to regulate stem cell research, with regard to the recommendations of the Irish Council for Bioethics.

Labour will legislate for post-mortem procedures and organ retention practices as recommended by the Madden report, and change the Organ Donation system to an 'opt out' system for organ transplantation rather than an 'opt in' system, so as to improve the availability of organs for patients in desperate need.

Labour in government will legislate in accordance with the Supreme Court judgment in the X Case, and the recent ruling by the European Court of Human Rights.

Fairness

Culture, Sport and the Arts

TIME FOR CHANGE

Labour believes that every citizen should have the opportunity to enjoy our shared cultural, artistic and sporting life, and to participate in it.

Excellence in the arts and in sport will be supported, but the thrust of Labour's policy will be to widen access to the arts, to grow Irish as a spoken language, and to build participation in sport from the ground up.

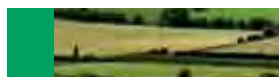
One Ireland
jobs, reform, fairness

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THE FIRST STEPS

- Vest overall responsibility for developing the Irish language in the Office of the Taoiseach
- Develop local sports partnerships nationwide using funding from an increased betting levy
- Prioritise multi-use facilities when investing in sports infrastructure
- Establish a National Endowment Fund to leverage private funding for the arts
- Focus public spending on the arts on making the best use of our existing arts venues, and on extending access to the arts



THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Labour Party recognises that the Irish language is an important part of our national and cultural identity. Its standing as one of the oldest spoken and literary languages still in use gives it a wider significance not only in Ireland but across Europe. Its importance goes beyond cultural heritage. Labour believes that the Irish language can and should contribute to our economic recovery through its continued use in tourism, the arts and in broadcasting.

As a foundation for the Labour Party's position on the Irish language, we support the *20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030*. Labour believes that the Office of the Taoiseach should be responsible for coordinating and driving the strategy, and that the Taoiseach should be answerable to the Dáil for its implementation.

Labour supports the longer term goal of introducing a second subject at primary level that is taught through Irish

virtuous circle where teachers and students are improving their spoken Irish on an ongoing basis. This can be done in part by reforming the curriculum so more emphasis is put on oral and aural skills. Our teachers will also need to be supported in this process. Opportunities will be provided, within the existing continuous professional development budget, to primary and secondary school teachers to attend courses in the Gaeltacht during the summer to maintain and improve their Irish throughout their careers.

Labour supports the longer term goal of introducing a second subject at primary level that is taught through Irish. Working in consultation with all stakeholders we will explore how this can best be achieved. The goal of normalising the use of Irish through teaching art, music or drama is one possible way of encouraging the use of spoken Irish.

In government, Labour will implement its strategy for improving literacy in schools. This strategy will include the improvement of Irish language literacy in gaelscoileanna and in Gaeltacht schools, with appropriate adaptations of the strategy developed in consultation with educational stakeholders.

CREATING LIVING GAELTACHTAÍ

The Labour party recognises the important place the Gaeltachtaí have in our country. The survival and enhancement of the Gaeltachtaí depends on people being able to make a living in these communities. Údarás na Gaeltachta, along with other enterprise agencies, will be able to draw down additional funding from Labour's dedicated Jobs Fund, if they can demonstrate that this additional funding will directly contribute to generating additional jobs in strategic areas such as food production, tourism,

REVITALISING THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

Labour will maintain Irish as one of the three core compulsory Leaving Certificate subjects. At the same time, we recognise that the teaching of the Irish language needs significant reform. Irish students should leave school able to hold a conversation in Irish with their peers.

Labour will undertake a thorough reform of the Irish curriculum in keeping with the aims of the 20 Year Strategy. Labour wants to create a

renewable energy, digital media or clean technology.

IRISH LANGUAGE BROADCASTING AND THE ARTS

When last in government, the Labour Party established TG4. We will continue to support the Irish language broadcasting sector. The Irish language is a key part of our artistic tradition, and this will also be supported by Labour in government.

AN GHAELIGE

Aithníonn Páirtí an Lucht Oibre gurb í an Ghaeilge cuid thábhachtach dár bhféiniúlacht náisiúnta agus chultúir. Cuirtear suntas níos leithne ina leith, ní in Éirinn amháin ach ar fud na hEorpa chomh maith, mar gheall ar an stádas atá aici mar cheann de na teangacha labhartha agus liteartha is sine atá in úsáid fós. Tá i bhfad níos mó ná oidhreacht chultúir i gceist leis an tábhacht a bhaineann léi. Creidimid gur féidir leis an nGaeilge agus gur chóir di cur lenár dtéarnamh eacnamaíochta trí úsáid a bhaint aisti go leanúnach sa turasóireacht, sna healaíona agus i gcúrsaí craolacháin.

Leagtar bonn síos i leith staid Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre maidir leis an nGaeilge tríd an tacaíocht a thugaimid don *Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge, 2010-2030*. Creideann Páirtí an Lucht Oibre gur chóir d'Oifig an Taoisigh freagracht a ghlacadh as an straitéis a chomhordú agus a chur chun cinn agus gur chóir don Taoiseach a bheith freagrach don Dáil maidir lena cur i ngníomh.

AN GHAELIGE AGUS OIDEACHAS

Coinneoidh Páirtí an Lucht Oibre an Ghaeilge mar cheann de na trí chroí-ábhar éigeantacha don Ardteistiméireacht. Ag an am céanna aithnímid go bhfuil gá le hathchóiriú suntasach a dhéanamh

ar mhúineadh na Gaeilge. Ba chóir go mbeadh daltaí na hÉireann in ann comhrá a bheith acu as Gaeilge lena gcomhpháirtithe agus iad ag fágáil na scoile.

Tabharfaidh Páirtí an Lucht Oibre faoi athchóiriú críochnúil ar churaclam na hÉireann a thiocfaidh le haidhmeanna na Straitéise 20 Bliain. Táimid ag iarraidh fáinne óir a chruthú ina bhfeabhsóidh múinteoirí agus daltaí a nGaeilge labhartha ar bhonn leanúnach. Is féidir é sin a dhéanamh go páirteach tríd an gcuraclam a athchóiriú ionas go leagfar tuilleadh béime ar scileanna labhartha agus éisteachta. Beidh tacaíocht ag teastáil ó mhúinteoirí chomh maith mar chuid den phróiseas seo. Cuirfear deiseanna ar fáil, laistigh den bhuiséad forbartha gairmiúla leanúnaí reatha, do mhúinteoirí bunscoile agus meánscoile chun freastal a dhéanamh ar chúrsaí sa Ghaeltacht i rith an tsamhraidh ar mhaithe lena nGaeilge a chothabháil agus a fheabhsú le linn a ngairme.

Tacaíonn Páirtí an Lucht Oibre leis an sprioc níos fadtéarmaí maidir le dara hábhar a mhúinfear trí Ghaeilge a thabhairt isteach ag an leibhéal bunscoile. Déanfaimid scrúdú ar conas is fearr is féidir é sin a bhaint amach agus muid ag obair i gcomhairle leis na páirtithe leasmhara go léir. Bealach amháin a d'fheadfaí spreagadh a thabhairt

d'úsáid na Ghaeilge labhartha is ea an sprioc a bhaineann le húsáid a bhaint as an nGaeilge i ngnáthchúinsí trí ealaín, ceol nó drámaíocht a mhúineadh. Cuirfidh Páirtí an Lucht Oibre a straitéis maidir le litearthacht a fheabhsú i scoileanna i ngníomh agus iad sa Rialtas. Áireofar mar chuid den straitéis sin, litearthacht na Gaeilge a fheabhsú i ngaelscoileanna agus i scoileanna na Gaeltachta, agus oiriúnuithe cuí den straitéis á bhforbairt i gcomhairle le páirtithe leasmhara oideachais.

GAELTACHTAÍ BEO A CHRUTHÚ

Aithníonn Páirtí an Lucht Oibre an staid thábhachtach atá ag na Gaeltachtaí sa tír againne. Braitheann maireachtáil agus feabhsú na nGaeltachtaí ar chumas na ndaoine chun slí bheatha a dhéanamh sna pobail sin. Beidh Údarás na Gaeltachta, i dteannta le gníomhaireachtaí fiontraíochta, in ann maoiniú breise a íostarraingt ó Chiste tiomnaithe Fostaíochta Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre, más féidir leo a léiriú go gcabhróidh an maoiniú breise sin go díreach le tuilleadh post a ghiniúint i réimsí straitéiseacha cosúil le táirgeadh bia, turasóireacht, fuinneamh in-athnuaite, na meáin dhigiteacha nó an teicneolaíocht ghlan.

Coinneoidh Páirtí an Lucht Oibre an Ghaeilge mar cheann de na trí chroí-ábhar éigeantacha don Ardteistiméireacht

CRAOLACHÁN GAEILGE AGUS NA HEALAÍONA

Chuir Páirtí an Lucht Oibre an-chuid de na struchtúir agus an reachtaíocht ar bun a raibh cruthú TG4 mar thoradh orthu le linn dóibh a bheith sa Rialtas an uair dheireanach. Leanfaimid ar aghaidh ag tacú le hearnáil an chraolacháin Ghaeilge. Is cuid lárnach dár dtraidisiún ealaíne í an Ghaeilge agus tacóidh Páirtí an Lucht Oibre leis sin freisin agus iad sa Rialtas.

A FRESH DIRECTION FOR ARTS POLICY

In the interests of value for money, achieving greater efficiencies and a more coherent policy, Labour will make strategic policy formulation the primary function of the Department, with its line agencies and bodies being responsible for policy implementation.

Labour in government will initiate a full review of the areas that receive state funding through the Arts Council. Funding will be targeted in areas where it can be most effective in extending the availability of arts and cultural activities, while balancing this against innovation and endeavour. We will also ensure that adequate support is extended to those sectors of the arts that are particularly popular with younger people. In the longer term, Labour favours putting a proportion of Arts Council funding on a multi-annual basis, to allow for longer-term arts planning.

Labour believes that the promotion of Irish arts abroad is important. However, this does not need to be done by a separate agency, with a separate board. Labour will transfer the functions of Culture Ireland to the Arts Council, and give the Arts Council an expanded mandate to promote Irish cultural projects abroad.

Labour will pilot a Local Arts Partnership to increase participation in the arts

Labour will also pilot a Local Arts Partnership, based on the successful local sports partnerships, in order to increase participation in the arts. This will be funded from within the existing departmental budget.

GETTING THE MOST FROM OUR CULTURAL VENUES

Labour will seek to capture some public good from NAMA by identifying buildings that have no commercial potential, and which might be suitable as local facilities for art and culture. We will also undertake a National Audit of Arts and Cultural Facilities to ascertain our current national arts infrastructure. However, Labour's focus of investment in the arts will be on ensuring our existing venues are fully utilised.

Labour will also review the opening times of our national cultural institutions, such as museums, to allow for later opening at least once a week, and make Culture Night a twice-yearly, nationwide event. This can be done from within the existing arts departmental budget.

SUPPORTING ARTISTS AND CULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

Labour will establish a National Endowment Fund for the Arts to leverage private funding to the arts.

We will maintain the Artists Tax Exemption at €40,000 per year, but will permit a facility that enables artists to spread income over a period of years.

There is a wealth of artistic talent in Ireland that must not be allowed to go to waste or be lost to emigration. Labour's Bridge the GAP apprenticeship and work placement scheme can be used to employ recent fine arts graduates in schools to facilitate the teaching of art. The existing apprenticeship scheme could also be expanded to include apprenticeship to artistic and cultural enterprises.

MAKING SPORT ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Everyone, regardless of gender, age or background, should have the opportunity to participate in sport. Labour's sports strategy will build on successful local schemes to develop programmes, facilities and activities, to increase participation for all. Local Sports Partnerships have the potential to build participation from the bottom up. Labour will mainstream successful sports partnership pilot projects that have proven their effectiveness in broadening participation, using funding from a reconstituted betting levy.

Labour will also support the work of Special Olympics Ireland in building a programme of sport and development in local communities for people with special needs.

A COHERENT APPROACH TO DEVELOPING SPORTS FACILITIES

The National Sports Facilities Strategy will become the blueprint for the future development of all sports facilities in the country.

In future, capital investment in multi-use sporting facilities will be prioritised. Overall, Labour believes that funding of Irish sport should be reallocated away from capital projects and moved towards employment and promotion of sport on a local and national level.

Any future grants allocated under the Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme will be cognizant of the National Audit of Sports Facilities and the amount of private facilities in the area. It will place most emphasis on the refurbishment of derelict pools; on ensuring provision in areas which have experienced rapid population growth; and areas that demonstrate a clear need.

SUPPORTING OUR ELITE ATHLETES

We will continue to support our elite athletes through the International Carding scheme which we will review after London 2012. Through the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport we will review the current structures and strategic plans of sporting bodies, examining the implementation of High Performance Plans and long-term coaching plans within the bodies.

A MORE JOINED-UP, STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SPORT IN IRELAND

It is in the interests of all stakeholders that national policy for sport should be effective and funding transparent and strategic. Responsibility for policy-making will revert to the department, while agencies will be accountable for implementing policy, assessing outcomes and value for money.

Funding for state agencies and governing bodies will be made more transparent and structured, with the Minister holding ultimate responsibility for funding decisions. However, all state funding will be

Labour will also encourage, where feasible, partnerships between schools and local clubs to build or develop shared sports facilities

subject to the beneficiaries signing up to a dispute resolution services, such as the Just Sport Ireland initiative, and the adherence to new mandatory codes of conduct regarding child protection in sport.

The Irish Sports Council will be renamed Sport and Recreation Ireland, with an expanded remit. Sport and Recreation Ireland will partner local authorities, OPW, Waterways Ireland and Coillte to identify appropriate outdoor facilities such as treks, walks and cycle ways, camping and water sports. It will also work with the local authorities to improve recreation facilities. A number of positions on the Sports Council's governing board will be made directly electable.

Labour will also encourage, where feasible, partnerships between schools and local clubs to build or develop shared sports facilities, which can be self-financing.

CHANGING HOW WE FINANCE THE HORSE AND GREYHOUND FUND

The horse and greyhound racing industries are part of Irish culture, and important employers. Labour will maintain the Horse and Greyhound Fund, though without direct subvention from the Exchequer. Instead, Labour will introduce a betting levy of 1.5%, extended across all media

and on-course transactions. Part of the revenue raised from this levy will go towards the Horse and Greyhound Fund. We also favour the benchmarking of Horse Racing prize money to a level above that of our competitor nations in Europe.

How a reconstituted fund will be raised and administered will be decided in consultation with all stakeholders.

Fairness

Foreign Affairs, the EU and Northern Ireland

TIME FOR CHANGE

Ireland's international reputation has been damaged by the disastrous mishandling of our economy by Fianna Fáil, and by the recklessness of those at the top of the banks. We need to rebuild our relationships and regain our lost influence within the European Union, and reach out to forge new relationships with emerging world powers. Ireland has always wielded influence greater than our size on the international stage.

The Labour Party is committed to restoring Ireland's good name, and to ensuring that Irish solidarity with the world's poorest people is maintained.

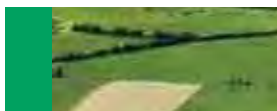
One Ireland

jobs, reform, fairness



THE FIRST STEPS

- Make restoring Ireland's international reputation a key objective of every government minister
- Maintain Ireland's overseas development aid budget, and progress to a target of 0.7 per cent of GNP dedicated to ODA by 2015
- Make Ireland an international emergency hub for humanitarian aid and personnel
- Work with our EU partners to reform international financial regulation, and grow the European economy
- Publish a white paper setting out a strategy for the future of our defence forces to 2020



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RESTORING IRELAND'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

Ireland's standing within the European Union and in the wider world has been compromised by the disastrous mishandling of our economy by Fianna Fáil. This loss of reputation is a real threat to Ireland's prospects of recovery.

Labour will make restoring Ireland's international reputation as a good, transparent place to do business, and as a responsible member of the international community, a key policy objective for our diplomatic corps, and for every minister in government.

Labour will ensure that Ireland is fully prepared, with a strategic plan of action, for both its chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2012, and the presidency of the EU Council in 2013.

values and principles underpinning the aid programme, and will provide a framework to enhance the predictability, accountability and impact of Irish Aid.

Labour will undertake a review of the implementation of the 2006 White Paper on Irish Aid, in order to learn from past successes and mistakes, and formulate clear objectives for Ireland's aid programme to 2020.

Labour will work at EU level to ensure that EU aid is transparent and clearly targeted at achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Within the UN, we will press for the establishment of the principle of access to clean water and sanitation as a human right in the upcoming review of the MDGs, and for the establishment of a Rapid Response Agency for natural and human disasters which would work to anticipate, respond and prevent natural and human disasters.

Labour will also back efforts at UN level to establish a form of Tobin Tax at on international financial transactions to help generate funds to meet the MDGs.

MAKING IRELAND A HUB FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

One of the major current weaknesses of the international response to humanitarian crises or conflicts is the absence of a coordinating centre to assemble resources and personnel. In government, Labour will position Ireland to become an international hub for the storage and distribution of emergency humanitarian supplies, and for the assembly of military and civilian personnel for EU or UN peacekeeping missions. The Shannon airport area, with easy access to ports, extensive space, long runways and large depots would be an ideal location for such a hub.

A COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT

Labour is opposed to any further cuts in overseas development aid. Labour is committed to increasing overseas development aid to 0.7% of GNP, which we will seek to achieve by 2015. We will introduce legislation by 2013 to ensure that the ODA budget is provided for from the Central Fund, rather than being at the mercy of the annual estimates process, at which point we will publish a pathway to achieving the goal. The legislation will also give legal expression to the

Labour is committed to increasing overseas development aid to 0.7% of GNP

FAIRER TRADE

International trade relations must be developed on the basis of equity between developed and developing countries. We will support efforts to ensure equity in taxation and trade regimes and in dealing with the burden of international debt.

Labour is also committed to strengthening policy coherence in relation to development issues across a range of other government policy areas, including trade and climate change.

REFORM FOR A MORE ETHICAL FOREIGN POLICY

The protection of human rights must be at the heart of any ethical foreign policy. Through our participation in international institutions, we will work towards the international recognition of the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

Labour strongly supports the United Nations but recognises the need for significant reform. The structure, and procedures, of the Security Council must be adapted to reflect the global politics of the 21st century, including the international standing of the European Union. Changes in the UN related multilateral institutions are needed to favour integrated approaches to aid, trade and debt.

The importance of UN Conventions in a wide range of policy areas must be recognised. Labour will seek to speed up their ratification and implementation, for example of the crucial UN Convention Against Corruption, which is of major importance in the field of development aid and assistance.

Labour in government will pursue a policy of positive neutrality, and we are opposed to Ireland participating in international mutual defence alliances. In line with our policy of positive neutrality, Labour will

Labour is committed to retaining Ireland's 'triple lock'

implement measures to restrict the use of Irish airspace, airports and related facilities for purposes not in line with the dictates of international law, with permission for military use of such facilities allowable only for international missions with explicit UN Security Council approval.

Labour is committed to retaining the 'triple lock', under which Irish defence forces can only participate in missions abroad with government approval, Dáil approval, and under a UN mandate.

Labour will give priority to achieving progress within the UN on the range of treaties and negotiations in the field of weapons of mass destruction, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the efforts to rid the world of landmines, cluster munitions and biological weapons.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE

The Irish Defence Forces have a proud tradition of participating in peacekeeping missions abroad, and are an important pillar of Irish diplomacy.

Labour will ensure that the Defence Forces are appropriately equipped and staffed to meet Ireland's obligations to United Nations and EU peacekeeping missions. In particular, Labour will ensure that the Medical Corps is fit for purpose, and able to attract sufficient personnel, and will develop an appropriate timescale for the renewal of the naval fleet.

The Reserve Defence Force is a valuable resource, which will be optimised in overseas missions

with the Defence Forces. Labour also supports greater coordination between RDF and Civil Defence at home. A stronger role for the RDF will be facilitated by the appointment of a Brigadier General to the RDF.

Labour will reform the governance structures of the Irish Red Cross to enable it to discharge its duties more effectively and transparently.

Acknowledging the current budgetary restraints, Ireland nevertheless needs to plan ahead to ensure that our defence forces are fit for purpose over the coming decade. Labour will publish a White Paper on the Defence Forces setting out our vision for the Defence Forces to 2020. This will include a strategy to restore the strength of the Defence Forces to 10,500 members. Such a paper will also consider what the appropriate role for PDFORRA might be within the wider Trade Union movement. Finally, it should also map out how Ireland will deal with future, unorthodox attacks, such as cyber warfare.

IRELAND IN EUROPE

The Labour Party believes that recovery depends on savings and growth. While the EU has played a crucial role, more must be done to simultaneously reform financial markets, counteract the recession and re-launch the economy to create new growth and jobs. By acting together in Europe and worldwide, we can forge a stronger path to recovery for us all.

JOBS AND GROWTH

The number one priority for Labour in Europe is to safeguard jobs, create new ones and promote smart, environmentally sustainable growth. Europe's strengths are its economic diversity and high skill base. Labour favours a European competitiveness strategy based on high skills, effectiveness, gender equality, productivity and innovation in a knowledge-driven economy.

Labour will continue to support reform of financial markets and banking regulation at a European level.

Labour is committed to maintaining Ireland's 12.5% corporation tax, and will oppose any move toward a mandatory Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base.

Labour will work at European level to progress the development of an EU-wide smart grid that would enable Ireland to scale up its renewable energy production for export.

Labour will also seek to draw down Ireland's entitlement to European Structural Funds and the European Social Fund to promote employment in areas such as research, development and deployment of renewable energies and for retrofitting the housing sector.

Labour supports the EU2020 development strategy, and will work to ensure that it has a stronger emphasis on employment, and a genuine integration of the social dimension into EU strategic thinking.

BUILDING A SOCIAL EUROPE

The European Union is far more than an economic union: it is a political union and community of values. In a Social Europe, the economic, social, cultural and political rights of all citizens will be safeguarded. With our sister parties in every member state and the Party of European Socialists,

Labour will work at EU level to ensure the EU takes a lead in climate change negotiations

Labour will work to make sure these rights are recognised and respected.

Labour will also seek to establish a European Employment and Social Progress Pact guaranteeing a more equal society and life of dignity for all citizens, whether employed or unemployed. This crisis has underlined the importance of strong, sustainable social protection systems. Through the social progress clause agreed in the Lisbon Treaty, we will ensure the real social and environmental cost of EU laws is fully assessed before they are agreed.

FULFILLING THE LISBON PLEDGES

The Lisbon Treaty has strengthened the role of the EU parliament in the EU legislative system. Labour Party MEPs, with their colleagues in the Group of Socialists and Democrats, will work for the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty reforms, for the greater transparency and accountability in the work of the EU institutions and for the prioritisation of economic stability, job creation and social development. The Lisbon Treaty also mandates a much greater role for national parliaments in the scrutiny of EU legislation, which Labour will enforce through the Dáil committee system.

Ireland has played a constructive role in the development and operation of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. Labour is committed to continuing this engagement, in the context of our policy of positive neutrality, and the reaffirmation of that neutrality by our EU partners in the Lisbon Treaty.

With our sister parties across Europe and the Socialist International, Labour will work to support gradual and considered further enlargement of the Union to bring peace, high living standards and stable growth across the continent.

COOPERATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Labour supports a meaningful and equitable international agreement to avoid runaway global warming, and will work at European level to ensure that the EU takes a lead in these negotiations. Such an agreement must be implemented and monitored by a democratic supervisory authority.

Labour also supports a more coherent approach to reducing greenhouse gases across the EU, including the introduction of binding energy efficiency targets by 2020, and reform of the Emissions Trading System.

EU REFORM

Labour will demand the highest standards of transparency and accountability from EU institutions such as the Commission and Parliament; including regulation of lobbying.

Labour supports the nomination of candidates for the office of President of the European Commission in advance of the 2014 European elections from the various political groupings in the European Parliament. This step will help give voters real choices in the future direction of Europe.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Labour is proud of our contribution to creating a more peaceful, lawful, and democratic society in Northern Ireland.

We believe that there is considerably more potential for North/South cooperation than has been the case to date, and that this cooperation could be of mutual benefit to all of the people north and south of the border. Through the North/South Ministerial Council, Labour will seek the immediate publication of the Phase One Review of North/South co-operation that was included as part of the St Andrews Agreement of 2006. Labour will also press for the earliest possible completion of the Second Phase, identifying new areas of co-operation and implementation between the two parts of the island.

Labour will commence additional work by the two administrations in identifying potential areas whereby savings and efficiencies could be achieved, services improved and developed, and jobs created through greater North-South co-operation.

We cannot forget that there are elements North and South that wish to destabilise and undermine the progress that has been made. In order to confront this threat, Labour in government will maintain and encourage the clear, close, and successful co-operation between An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland to deal with the threat of all dissident paramilitary groups.

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