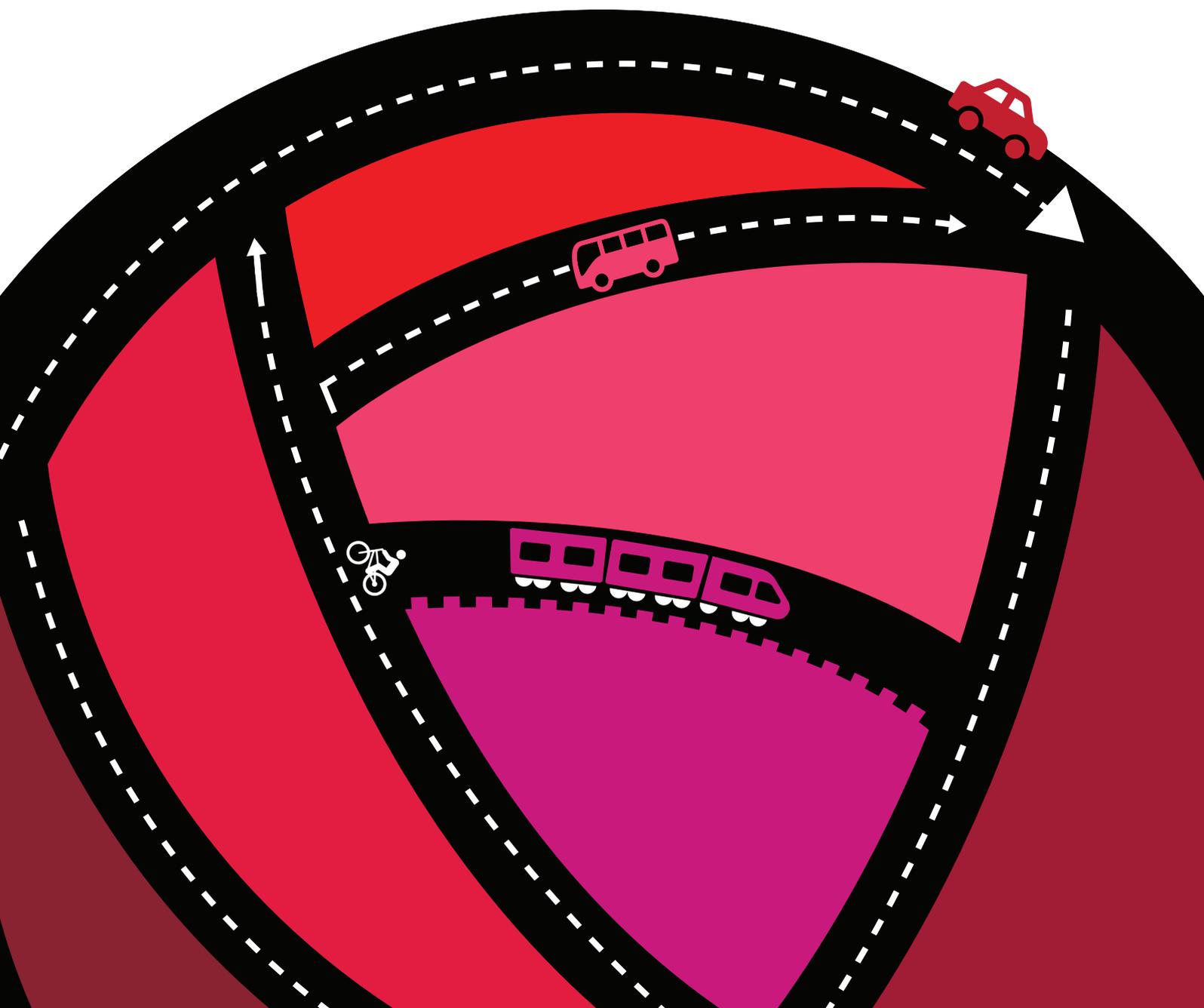


# LABOUR GETTING IRELAND MOVING: A SMARTER WAY TO WORK





# **GETTING IRELAND MOVING: A SMARTER WAY TO WORK**

**THE LABOUR PARTY'S PLAN TO CUT CONGESTION, PROMOTE  
REGIONAL JOBS AND CREATE LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES**

**LABOUR**



## INTRODUCTION

**Imagine leaving home in the morning and being at work just minutes later.**

We want to make this a reality for thousands of people across the country who are losing precious family time stuck in traffic every week.

Our plan is simple: we will move your work closer to you. And this is how we intend to do it:

- **Drive balanced economic growth by investing in strategic regional hubs**
- **Use State procurement to support small and medium Irish enterprises**
- **Support local businesses and services to promote vibrant main streets**
- **Empower Local Government and re-locate more public jobs outside the capital**
- **Roll out a public network of remote shared working spaces in commuter towns**

Even if you can't work remotely you will still benefit from this plan, as it will reduce congestion in our city and towns, and shorten your commute time.

But we know this plan will take time to implement, so in the meantime, Labour will do the following to immediately cut congestion, reduce commuting times and provide a better work-life balance for commuters:

- **Provide a Public Transport Guarantee to every city, town and village**
- **Promote the shift to off-peak travel and more active modes of transport**
- **Significantly reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles on our roads**
- **Introduce the Right to Flexible Employment, so that workers can reasonably avail of remote work, compressed hours and a Four Day Working Week**

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

### Labour's Vision to Spread Growth across the Country:

- 1) Deliver More Regional Jobs
- 2) Expand Local Government and Establish Town Councils
- 3) Build Affordable Homes for All
- 4) Prioritise Community-Led Healthcare
- 5) Provide a Fair Start for Every Child
- 6) Combat Crime in Commuter Areas

### Labour's Plan to Cut Congestion:

- 7) Bring in a Public Transport Guarantee
- 8) Promote Active Transport
- 9) Make the School Commute Sustainable
- 10) Have Fewer and Greener Vehicles on our Roads
- 11) Introduce the Right to Flexible Employment

## OUR COMMITMENT

Labour will cut congestion, promote regional jobs and create liveable communities

## LABOUR'S VISION TO SPREAD GROWTH ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Commuting has become a 'one-way street' with masses of people leaving large towns like Naas, Drogheda and Swords each morning to work and study in the capital. In 2018, three out of every five jobs were created in the Dublin area and the city now accounts for almost half of all new graduate jobs and over half of all economic activity in the country.

This pattern is simply not sustainable. The Labour Party will support the growth of a strong indigenous enterprise base and foster more jobs outside the capital.

### 1) DELIVER MORE REGIONAL JOBS

To end this unsustainable pattern of a Dublin-centric economy and long commutes, the Labour Party will instruct the IDA and Enterprise Ireland to invest in sectorial regional hubs linked to specialised satellite university campuses. And we will leverage State procurement to provide small businesses – which make up over 98% of businesses in Ireland – with greater opportunities to win contracts. We will also introduce strict social and environmental clauses for public procurement to support the shift to a green economy.

Labour will also roll out a public network of remote shared working spaces which will allow more employees to work closer to home. In addition, we will invest in our natural assets and heritage sites to promote more sustainable tourism jobs in regional areas, while also providing valuable recreational facilities for local communities.

#### **To ensure balanced regional growth, the Labour Party will**

- Recalibrate our regional growth strategy to ensure that potential opportunities for economic investment and development are maximised outside Dublin
- Provide new resources to the IDA and Enterprise Ireland to promote regional hubs
- Demand that the near 100 IDA sites outside of Dublin are prioritised and promoted to investors
- Open satellite specialised third-level campuses connected to sectorial regional hubs

#### **To support small and medium enterprises, the Labour Party will**

- Sub-divide procurement so that more small businesses can be awarded State contracts
- Introduce stricter social clauses to public tenders to encourage local employment
- Simplify the eTenders process to enable more SMEs to register, and expand the Go-2-Tender Programme to help indigenous firms compete for valuable foreign public tenders
- Pilot a Regional Bank scheme to support lending to small and medium businesses

**To build a network for remote working, the Labour Party will**

- Fast-track the creation of digital hubs in towns and communities across the country
- Roll out a network of shared remote spaces which are both affordable and flexible
- Launch a Local Innovation Initiative to provide communities with the digital skills training and the work space needed to take on remote jobs, or to start their own companies
- Support local start-ups by investing in incubation spaces and accelerator programmes

**To promote greener local jobs, the Labour Party will**

- Foster local construction jobs via a State-led Housing and Retrofitting programme
- Utilise semi-state companies, such as Bord na Móna, to invest in and grow the bio-economy
- Establish a real Just Transition Fund to create new, good green jobs in regional areas

**2) EXPAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ESTABLISH TOWN COUNCILS**

Our towns are the local and regional drivers of economic development, place-making and good, sustainable planning. Yet, Ireland remains one of the most centralised states in Europe, with our local authorities having few powers and almost no real financial autonomy. Only 8% of Irish public spending occurs at local government level, compared to an EU average of over 23%. Simply put, too much power is concentrated in central Government, and not enough with local councils to be the engine of economic and social development in Ireland.

By expanding Local Government, the Labour Party will establish and move more public bodies outside the capital. This will create more public jobs in regional areas and allow existing public servants to re-locate outside the capital. In addition, by re-establishing Town Councils, Labour will ensure that local authorities have real power and resources to regenerate, re-imagine and renew their areas and the surrounding hinterlands. And they will also have control over commercial rates to support local businesses and bring back vibrant main streets.

**To strengthen Local Government, the Labour Party will**

- Redirect more power and resources from Central Government to Local Government
- Legislate to Restore Town Councils and establish new councils in clearly defined urban areas
- Support the ambitions of urban areas such as Drogheda to achieve city status
- Provide more local jobs and opportunities for public servants to relocate outside Dublin

**To support regional towns, the Labour Party will**

- Oblige councils to co-operate across local boundaries to promote better development
- Extend the Living Cities initiative and expand the use of the Urban Regeneration Fund
- Empower Town Councils to act as rating authorities and reduce local commercial rates

### 3) BUILD AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR ALL

Commuter areas have the most unaffordable housing and rental markets in the country. Right now the average first-time buyer would need a multiple of five times their annual income – far in excess of that allowed under Central Bank rules – to qualify for a mortgage in these areas, while rents are also rising up to 5% per year.

Labour is the only party with a coherent plan to end the housing, rental and homeless crises. We are committed to building 80,000 new homes, we would both cap and freeze rents, and provide grants for retrofitting up to 100,000 homes per year.

#### **To end the housing, rental and homeless crisis, the Labour Party will**

- Create a €16 billion fund to build 80,000 affordable homes – at an average €200,000 per unit – on public land which Labour kept in public ownership
- Introduce a rent freeze along with local rent caps for new tenancies and promote a cost-rental model
- Restore the capacity of local government to deliver affordable housing, including social housing, cost-rental housing and affordable purchase under the cooperative housing model
- Invest in community clinics, childcare and schools, as well as public transport, so that existing and new housing developments have access to high-quality, affordable and adequately staffed services

### 4) PRIORITISE COMMUNITY-LED HEALTHCARE

Access to basic community healthcare, such as GPs, eldercare and mental health services is a postcode lottery with commuter areas left worst off in terms of availability of health and disability services.

Labour will end these prevailing health inequalities by building a national community healthcare system that serves everyone, starting with commuter areas where services provision is currently lacking.

#### **To support community-led healthcare, the Labour Party will**

- Introduce free-of-charge GP care for every child under 18 years of age
- Develop community healthcare services and diagnostic centres
- Deliver more bed capacity and ensure adequate staffing at all levels in regional hospitals
- Focus on expanding early intervention mental health services for children and adults
- Establish mobile clinics in commuter counties and towns
- Fund Community Health Projects to help patients and communities combat lifestyle diseases through self-help programmes and group activities

## 5) PROVIDE A FAIR START FOR EVERY CHILD

Ireland has some of the highest childcare costs in the EU, with fees in commuter areas topping the list. Like wise, two in three primary pupils are in class sizes of 25 or more, with the worst affected children living on the outskirts of Dublin and commuter counties such as Kildare, Meath and Wicklow. Such figures shows the Government's abject failure to adequately invest in these vital services and our children's future.

The Labour Party wants every child to have a fair start. We will introduce a Childcare for Working Parents Scheme on so that no parent has to choose between family and a career. In addition, we will make primary education genuinely free-of-charge, with free schoolbooks, an end to voluntary contributions and hot school meals for every child.

### **To ensure a Fair Start for Every Child, the Labour Party will**

- Introduce a Childcare for Working Parents Scheme on a pilot basis across the country
- Invest in community childcare schemes to increase the capacity of services in commuter areas
- Increase the universal childcare subsidy and seek the professionalization of childcare staff
- Reduce class sizes to historic lows and guarantee genuinely free-of-charge education
- Provide hot school meals to support parents and ensure every child gets a nutritious meal

## 6) COMBAT CRIME IN COMMUTER AREAS

The homes of those forced to commute long distances are vulnerable to break-ins, as would-be burglars know that there will be a mass commuter exodus towards the capital each morning, leaving behind whole estates full of empty houses. Community CCTV can be influential in deterring criminals, but its promised rollout has been continuously delayed.

The Labour Party funded the first local CCTV schemes, and we want to see it developed further to deter crime. We will free up frontline resources to ensure greater Garda visibility in commuter areas, while also promoting a Community Policing Model to strengthen the links between Gardaí and the communities they serve.

### **To tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, the Labour Party will**

- Provide more resources to increase Garda visibility in commuter areas to deter crime
- Hire 200 civilian for administration duties to free up Gardaí for front-line duties
- Train and deploy an additional 300 Gardaí specifically for Community Policing roles
- Establish a new role of Community Warden to be a familiar face in every locality and work in partnership with the Gardaí to keep an eye out for opportunistic crime
- Promote Local Policing Forums to strengthen the link between Gardaí and communities
- Ensure more Home Security schemes are put in place to help people, especially older members of our community upgrade the locks and security systems on their homes
- Roll out Community CCTV installations, made available to the Gardaí upon request, to deter burglaries

## LABOUR'S PLAN TO CUT CONGESTION

Almost 200,000 people (1 in 10) spend over an hour travelling to work daily, with commuters losing on average five hours every week stuck in traffic. Dublin is now the third worst city in the world for congestion. This is not only bad for the economy and the environment, but also bad for our health, with an estimated 1,100 premature deaths every year from air pollution.

Yet despite our congestion and climate crises, nearly half our transport budget goes on the construction of roads. In comparison, a mere 20% is put towards sustainable public transport such as trains, trams and buses, while less than 2% goes to walking and cycling.

Labour will reduce congestion and help commuters regain a healthy work-life balance. We will promote sustainable commuting by investing in a mixture of modes, from segregated cycle and walkways, to increased public transport and incentives for electric vehicles.

### 7) BRING IN A PUBLIC TRANSPORT GUARANTEE

The Labour Party will provide a Public Transport Guarantee to ensure that every city, town and village has access to an affordable, secure and sustainable transport network. We will commit to Fair Fares for all commuters, introduce a Public Transport Regulator to ensure the network is fully accessible and establish a dedicated Garda Transport Unit to prioritise the safety of passengers.

#### To promote travel by rail, the Labour Party will

- Immediately procure more train carriages to tackle over-capacity on commuter lines, and establish a structured procurement plan to replace, modernise and ensure capacity exceeds future demand
- Invest in more carriages for commuter services and prioritise longer services at peak times
- Extend the Luas Line to key commuter towns such as Bray, Lucan and Finglas
- Provide fairer commuter fares with LEAP fare capping to stations such as Laytown, County Meath, Wicklow Town and Newbridge, County Kildare
- Fast-track funding for the DART Expansion Programme to increase capacity and frequency of service
- Commence the construction of the Metrolink from Swords

#### To promote travel by bus, the Labour Party will

- Fast-track the delivery of 600 hybrid buses to be rolled out on key commuter routes
- Prioritise the implementation of an integrated Commuter Bus Corridor plan, while taking account of legitimate concerns, particularly those of the elderly, young and disabled
- Ensure enhanced monitoring and enforcement of illegal bus lane usage through CCTV, and transfer enforcement to the National Transport Authority
- Expand the Local Links scheme to include peak-time shuttles to inter-city commuter services
- Roll out a scheduled night bus service to facilitate night workers and the expanding night economy

**To support Fair Fares for All, the Labour Party will**

- Extend the LEAP fare capping boundaries by introducing intermediate zones across commuter areas
- Introduce a €2.50 flat-fare for a 90 minute transferable journey on Dublin Bus, Luas and DART services
- Decrease and unify the price of capped fares for weekly, monthly and yearly travel tickets
- Simplify LEAP fares through Contactless Payment with debit/credit cards and smartphones
- Introduce a Travel Smart Rewards (TSR) scheme to incentivise the switch to travel off-peak

**To ensure an accessible public transport network, the Labour Party will**

- Establish a Public Transport Regulator to prioritise punctuality and connectivity of services
- Require that all new housing and service development are linked to adequate public transport
- Ensure all public transport modes are age-friendly and accessible for people with disabilities
- Reverse the privatisation of public transport to ensure all communities are adequately served

**To provide a safe and secure transport network, the Labour Party will**

- Establish a Garda Transport Unit, with increased personnel at hotspots to deter anti-social behaviour
- Prevent the privatisation of security forces on our public transport networks
- Ensure adequate enforcement to combat alcohol and drug use on Bus, Dart and Luas services
- Provide secure and sheltered waiting spaces with adequate facilities at all transport hubs

**8) PROMOTE ACTIVE TRANSPORT**

Active transport is a win-win for commuters, our health and the environment. The Labour Party will increase the current transport budget funding for walking and cycling from less than 2% to 20% and ensure that these modes of travel are accessible and safe for all.

**To support walking, the Labour Party will**

- Expand the number of Pedestrianised Zones and crossings in cities and towns
- Promote walking by investing and maintaining pedestrian-friendly infrastructure that is both age and disability friendly, and increase the allotted time for pedestrians at signal
- Provide wider, wheelchair friendly footpaths and a network of segregated walkways
- Introduce Kiss-and-Drop zones (i.e. drop off/pick up) designed to keep the flow of traffic moving, reduce congestion and increase safety for both pedestrians and drivers

**To increase the number of cyclists, the Labour Party will**

- Expand the Public Bikes scheme to large commuter towns and introduce a subvention to local authorities for maintaining bikes
- Prioritise the delivery of a network of fast, safe and segregated Commuter Cycling Highways
- Reduce the rate of VAT on all essential cycling security and safety equipment
- Increase funding under the Smarter Travel scheme to support organisations in providing necessary cycling infrastructure such as showers, lockers and bike docking facilities

**To ensure safe and secure cycling, the Labour Party will**

- Promote a safe cycling culture, starting with awareness training for school-aged children
- Create a network of segregated off-road cycle lanes for the safety of both cyclists and drivers
- Roll out safe and secure bike docking facilities in public spaces, offices and on public transport
- Fund a Bike Bunkers scheme to roll out secure and sheltered on-street bike storage
- Establish a free and simple Bike Registration Database to deter the theft of stolen bikes
- Ensure our proposed Garda Transport Unit has a dedicated unit to deter bicycle theft

**9) MAKE THE SCHOOL COMMUTE SUSTAINABLE**

At present, 60% of primary school children and over 40% of secondary school children are forced to commute by car due to the absence of safe, secure and sustainable transport alternatives. The Labour Party will provide a Sustainable School Transport Guarantee to ensure school-children have a green and active transport alternative. This will benefit children's well-being, while also helping to tackle our climate crisis and reducing congestion.

**To support a sustainable school commute, the Labour Party will**

- Commit to a Sustainable School Transport Guarantee for school aged children
- Increase funding for the Green Schools Travel scheme, encouraging schools to promote sustainable, safe and active modes of transport
- Introduce a Bike to School scheme to significantly reduce the cost of bikes for students
- Establish an expert commission to examine changing school starting times to better align the schedules of parents and students while also reducing the numbers commuting at peak-times

**10) HAVE FEWER AND GREENER VEHICLES ON OUR ROADS:**

We are facing a climate emergency. Yet the numbers travelling by car and the level of transport related emissions continues to grow due to a lack of sustainable alternatives. Simply put, we must take more cars off our roads.

To help achieve this, the Labour Party will promote a system of car-sharing and carpooling to reduce the number of single-person-occupancy cars on our roads. In addition, we will incentivise the switch to low-emission vehicles and create an Electric Vehicle Charging Network.

**To reduce the number of vehicles on our roads, the Labour Party will**

- Provide incentives to support the growth of car-sharing and carpooling
- Reduce peak-time congestion by introducing dynamic pricing for toll roads and parking spaces
- Significantly limit the number of car spaces in urban areas and new building developments
- Establish high-density park-and-ride facilities connected to inter-city transport services on radial routes outside of major urban areas, in order to reduce traffic-inflow into city centres
- Relocate inter-city bus terminals outside urban areas to reduce congestion within cities
- Regulate tourist vehicles – for example, pedal tours and horse-drawn carts – in city centres

**To incentivise the uptake of low-emission vehicles, the Labour Party will**

- Commit to carbon-free transport, with incentives for drivers and operators to make the switch
- Ring-fence carbon tax revenues to invest in infrastructure and grants for electric vehicles
- Adjust VRT, VAT and Motor Tax to promote the uptake of low-emission vehicles
- Impose stricter environmental criteria for the significant number of company cars on our roads
- Phase in Zero-Emission Zones (ZEZs) in cities while ensuring commuters, particularly from disadvantaged communities, have access to public transport connections into urban areas

**11) INTRODUCE THE RIGHT TO FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENT:**

Technology has opened up new opportunities for more flexible working arrangements. This has the potential to both increase productivity and provide a better work-life balance, all while reducing rush-hour congestion and commuting costs. Yet, unlike other EU countries, there is currently no law that requires employers to grant flexible arrangements.

The Labour Party has consistently been at the forefront of advancing workers' rights. And we will continue to shape the future of work. We will introduce the Right to Flexible Employment which will benefit both workers and businesses alike, as well as reducing climate emissions.

**To reduce the commute, the Labour Party will**

- Legislate to allow employees the Right to Request reasonable flexible working arrangements, while taking into account the needs of business and service providers
- Expand the Travel Smart Grant to incentivise sustainable, off-peak commuter travel
- Promote and incentivise the uptake of Distance Learning for both Universities and students
- Set up a Future Work Commission to further examine innovative initiatives such as a Four Day Week



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