



HOUSING

Fine Gael and Labour have caused chaos in housing. They failed to invest in social and affordable housing, so there are now officially 89,872 households on local authority waiting lists. They failed to deal with rents in the private sector and caused rents to increase faster in 2015 than at any time during the boom. They failed to deal with exorbitant variable mortgage interest rates, pushing families into arrears. They facilitated the mass sell-off of properties by NAMA to international speculators and vulture funds. They failed to deal with the consequences of bad quality materials and dodgy building practices during the boom, leaving thousands of families in crisis. In Budget 2016, they allocated €17 million to tackle the emergency homeless crisis. In the same budget, they allocated €28 million to increase the amount in tax free gifts and inheritances.

Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour handed housing policy over to private developers. This policy has been a disaster. We now have a national emergency and we need a national response. Solving the housing crisis requires political will. Housing will be one of Sinn Féin's key priorities in government.

*Mortgages are dealt with in a separate section of this manifesto.



COMMITMENTS

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- We will launch plans for 2030 - Project 100,000 to bring the State ownership of housing stock to a minimum of 200,000. This will ensure a build of at least 70,000 social units and at least 30,000 cost purchase and cost rental housing units by 2030.
- We will commit €5 billion (a cumulative €2.2 billion more than the government's commitment) in capital spending in 2016-2021 and strengthen Part V to ensure the delivery of 36,500 social and affordable houses.
- We will increase requirements under Part V to 20% social and affordable housing on all new developments with 10% social and at least 10% affordable housing.
- We will ensure that all housing construction delivered by the State is designed in mixed tenure developments of social housing with differential rents, sheltered housing, cost rental and cost purchase, alongside good infrastructure and amenities.

RENTS

- We will review all property-related tax reliefs that encourage speculation for profit.
- We will re-examine urgently the practice of capping rent subsidies – simultaneous to the introduction of rent regulations, to ensure rents demanded by landlords do not escalate to meet any increase in the rent cap.
- We will create rent certainty by linking rent increases to inflation.
- To provide greater security of tenure, we will amend the Residential Tenancy Act to restrict the grounds on which landlords can serve notices to quit.
- We will establish a Deposit Retention Scheme, authorising the PRTB to hold private tenancy deposits until the conclusion of a tenancy agreement.

SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS & GEOGRAPHIC SUPPORTS

- We will end the practice of removing HAP recipients from housing waiting lists.
- We will extend the Warmer Homes Scheme to include window and door insulation and increase funding to the grant system.
- We will continue to allow and smooth the planning process for the building of houses in rural Ireland as primary residences, but ensure this is achieved where the building is sustainable.

PLANNING REGULATION & BUILDING QUALITY

- We will establish an Office of Planning Regulator, with the appointment of a Regulator to be made following open public competition by an Independent Appointments Board.
- We will ensure all public areas are finished by developers by requiring lodgment of a realistic bond to cover the works.
- We will ensure that developers and/or builders who do not finish their developments to the required standard will be put on a shared LA list and barred from applying for planning permission for further housing developments.
- We will ensure that where developers are found to have knowingly put residents at risk in their dwellings through bad building practices, legal and financial proceedings will be brought against those developers and a ban put in place to prevent them from building future developments.
- We will include all homeowners whose houses have been built with the Mica Muscovite (weetabix) block and include them in any redress scheme – along with homeowners suffering with pyrite issues.

HOMELESSNESS, INCLUSIVITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS

- We will make an additional €30 million available to LAs and homeless agencies to house the homeless in emergency accommodation in year one of government.
- We will frontload funding to Local Authorities with a good track record of drawing down funds and providing Traveller accommodation, with penalties for those who refuse to build needed Traveller accommodation.
- We will develop Universal Design and Lifetime Adaptability Guidelines so new buildings can accommodate people with disabilities and save on future adaptation costs.
- We will remove blocks on survivors seeking social housing if they are named on a mortgage with their former abuser, as laid out in Sinn Féin's Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2014.
- We will increase funding for domestic violence refuges by €5.45 million in year one of government.

