

# A NEW DEAL FOR RENTERS

**The private rental market in Ireland is broken and renters live in constant fear of eviction. Labour will introduce a New Deal for Renters.**

Labour will be guided by the recommendations of the Housing Commission, but we will fundamentally change the balance of power so that people are protected in their homes. Landlords will be able to remove tenants who fail to pay their rent or meet the terms of their lease but otherwise the grounds for eviction will be severely restricted.

Labour will introduce an immediate freeze on rent increases and evictions until housing supply dramatically increases and introduce a Register of Rents. As part of our overhaul, Labour will consolidate the Residential Tenancies Act, update the regulatory framework, and introduce the following reforms:

## **MORE SECURE HOMES**

- End no fault evictions, and stop evictions if a property is being sold, ending the practice of vacant possession.
- Limit evictions on the grounds of refurbishment only to when it is not fit for habitation.
- Restrict eviction on the grounds of extended family use to personal use only of spouses and children with stronger regulation and enforcement.

## **FAIR RENTS**

- Provide for a Register of Rents to give the number and length of previous tenancies, the rent being paid and previously paid.
- Introduce a system of Reference Rents for the setting of new tenancy agreements.

## **NEW RIGHTS**

- Introduce a Deposit Protection Scheme administered by the RTB.
- Give tenants the right to ask for a property to be let without furniture or white goods.
- Provide for model tenancy agreements from the RTB and stop the prohibition on pet ownership and hanging clothes to dry in a garden or balcony.

## **OBLIGATIONS AND INCENTIVES FOR LANDLORDS**

- Provide for an obligation to declare that a rental property complies with regulations, and a right to information for tenants on any refurbishment or renovation that led to an eviction or rent increase.
- For HAP tenancies allow applications for the SEAI Warmer Homes scheme on condition of a minimum five-year lease, with clawback clauses.

## **MINIMUM STANDARDS**

All too often, homes in the private rental and public sector do not receive sufficient maintenance, leading to issues like mould or infestations that can pose a genuine health risk for tenants. Labour will introduce statutory minimum standards for housing quality and:

- Strengthen RTB powers to investigate standards and increase the number of housing inspections.
- Introduce an NCT-style system of certification to ensure minimum standards are met in private rental and social housing accommodation.
- Legislate to adopt a legal definition of sustainable, quality housing that includes each element of adequate housing identified by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Include a legal definition of 'overcrowding' in private rented accommodation.

## **STRUCTURAL CHANGES**

Labour will phase down the HAP, RAS, and other current expenditure delivery streams over time through provision of enough social housing, and we will:

- Ensure those availing of HAP and other schemes remain on social housing lists and are not deemed as having their needs met.
- Empower the RTB to regulate local authority tenancies.

## **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES BOARD**

Labour will ensure the RTB is adequately resourced to reduce delays in decision making and ensure that future cases are resolved in a timely manner. We will:

- Strengthen RTB determination orders by making these legally enforceable to avoid lengthy court proceedings when one party fails to comply with the order.
- Empower renters with a public information campaign on their rights.

## **STOPPING ILLEGAL EVICTIONS**

Labour will legislate to make forceful eviction a criminal offence where the RTB has deemed the eviction to be unlawful.