

# **LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE 2023**

*Final Agenda for Conference*



The 72nd Labour Party National Conference  
**Friday 24th March – Sunday 26th March 2023**  
Clayton Silver Springs Hotel in Cork.



# Final Agenda for Conference

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# FINAL AGENDA

## Climate

### **Motion 1 – Composite No. 1**

Conference affirms its support for the 2021 Shared National Vision for Trees and Forests aimed at supporting a sustainable and thriving economy and society and a healthy environment.

Conference underlines the need for this vision to be delivered as a compatible element of wider farming and biodiversity objectives and policies aimed at sustainable decent work for rural communities and public, educational and recreational amenities for all citizens.

Conference expresses its deep criticism of the recent deal concluded by the semi-State forestry company, Coillte with the investment-fund company, Gresham House.

Conference calls on the government to legislate to prevent any further privatisation of state-owned woodlands and maintain Coillte in public ownership.

Conference mandates the Labour Party to promote legislation and Constitutional change to ensure that biodiversity and positive ecosystem services are core objectives for Coillte.

*Meath West Constituency,  
Clare Constituency*

### **Motion 2**

Reckless planting of commercial forestry can cause permanent damage to our local environment and ecosystem.

In addition, the government's plans for managing and developing our woodlands and forests run the risk of falling far short of targets necessary to tackle climate change. The involvement of large institutional funds in the acquisition of lands for planting has caused alarm and must raise serious questions. For the sake of our farmers and our environment, we must get this right.

Conference calls on the Labour Party to review the basic premise of the Coillte project and to implement a realistic, achievable and transparent national woodland and forestry strategy which will safeguard the futures of farmers and local communities, while providing certainty in planning for environmentally and climate-friendly planting.

*Gralton Leitrim Branch, Sligo-Leitrim*

### **Motion 3**

Conference notes Labour's support of the polluter pays principle which would require net polluters to contribute toward damages for the countries most harmed by their actions.

Conference also notes that it is important to ensure that wind energy supply is taken into ownership by the state, to ensure that the resource is accessible to everyone, not just those who can pay premiums and that in the case of a crisis in supply or distribution, the state can act swiftly without profit incentive to resolve the issue.

Conference further notes that to protect the workers involved in these industries, it is essential that we implement a just transition which includes a job guarantee and retraining schemes to bring workers from the fossil fuel industry into the wind a renewable sector.

Conference commits Labour to the polluter pays principle, state ownership of utilities and a just transition for workers.

*Ballymun/Meakstown, Dublin North West*

**Motion 4**

Climate Change is leading to an ever-increasing rate of coastal erosion across the country. Protective measures should be put in place to protect land, houses and other property.

However, there will be situations where land, houses, and other property is lost to the sea. Legislation is urgently required. Conference calls on the PLP to table legislative measures to ensure that, in such situations, the owners of land, houses and other property, will be compensated in a fair and reasonable manner.

*Donabate Branch, Dublin Fingal*

**Motion 5**

Recognising the vital importance that our native hedgerows play in preserving biodiversity, Conference calls for the revision of current wildlife protection and planning legislation to provide for greater protection of hedgerows in relation to proper and sustainable land use management and development.

*Dublin Rathdown Constituency*

**Motion 6**

Conference notes the EU's recognition that the west coast of Ireland has one of the best sources of wind energy in the world. The benefits to Ireland and the Europe are vast.

Conference acknowledges that the scale of offshore turbine infrastructure required to harness this energy is enormous, and will require a multi-seaport solution.

Conference believes that long-term government funding for seaport infrastructure is needed, and must be focused toward the west of Ireland, where the resource lies, to take advantage of this opportunity.

*Oughterard-Moyculen Branch, Galway West*

**Motion 7**

Conference notes the value inherent in Irelands' natural resources including forestry, wind energy, solar energy, and other renewables and recognizes the urgent need for robust protection of those resources from excessive commercial exploitation. Therefore our government must take responsibility for our energy security not hand it over to private enterprise without guidance or leadership in what we want as a country and society in return.

Conference reaffirms the Labour Party's strong positions on Climate and the future prospects of renewable energy in Ireland, and that our values and vision of a just transition and as a party of the Left, call for these natural resources all the people of Ireland now and in the future.

Conference mandates the Labour party to develop and adopt robust policies to establish a suitable 'Critical Infrastructure Board' and Sovereign Wealth Fund specifically for the protection of the current and future commercial potential of Irelands' renewable natural resources both on land, airspace, and in our territorial waters. This policy will require the state to value these assets, assess opportunity costs and develop policy on how they are used with respect to our climate targets so we can fund ourselves and our country into the future.

*Laytown Tully Branch, Louth & East Meath*

## Transport

### Motion 8

Conference calls for the introduction of extensive networks of cycle lanes and free access to public transport within designated areas of our main urban centres (between the two canals in Dublin, and designated areas of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford cities) for all public transport service users, 24 hours a day, as one part of a radical climate action package of measures aimed at reducing reliance upon private cars in urban centres and communities; to include also the flagship €9 monthly climate ticket proposed by Labour in Budget 2023.

*Fitzgerald Kearney Branch, Dublin Bay South*

## Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

### Motion 9

Conference notes the continued commercial and cultural successes of the Irish arts sector, including in Film, Drama, Literature, Music, Electronic Arts, and beyond;

Confirming the centrality of the arts to society;

Further notes the ongoing resourcing challenges faced by the sector, including access to venues and funding;

Conference acknowledges the work that has been done in recent years tackling issues of inequality, in particular around gender and ethnicity, in the sector; and

Conference recalls the work of Michael D Higgins, as minister, in funding a regional network of performance spaces, which was pivotal in invigorating the regional performing arts in Ireland;

Therefore Conference calls for targeted investment in venues and other resources that will support the development of the next generation of creators across the country; and further

Calls for such investment to be particularly targeted at projects that will address historical imbalances and inequities in the arts ecosystem.

*Connemara Branch, Galway-West*

### Motion 10

Conference recognises the immense role of the arts and cultural institutions in ensuring the vibrancy of our villages, towns and cities. It also recognised that there is a growing shortage of appropriate space and a loss of long-standing arts studios and night club spaces across many urban areas.

Conference further notes that the price of land in many urban areas has become unsustainably high and has been out of reach by institutional investors and other deep pockets, facilitated by a lax planning system and that it is becoming more and more difficult to source and sustain affordable creative and performance space in the main urban areas in this country.

Conference calls on the Labour Party to develop policies and campaign for the State to play an active role in funding the development of small-scale artist led and community creative and performance space.

*Dublin Central Constituency*

### Motion 11

Rún do Chomhdháil Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre 2023

Motion for 2023 Labour Party Conference

Fáiltíonn an chomhdháil seo roimh roinnt dul chun cinn atá déanta ó thaobh teanga na Gaeilge de le bliain anuas. San áireamh anseo, tá:

1. Tús a bheith curtha sa phoblacht le Stráitéis nua don Oideachas Ián-Ghaeilge Iasmuigh den nGaeltacht, ag tógáil ar an feabhas mhór a d'éascair as an Polasaí Oideachas Ghaeltachta le sé bhliana anuas.

2. Glacadh, faoi dheireadh, leis an mBille Féiniúlachta agus Teanga i bPairlimint na Ríocht Aontaithe le déanaí.
3. Feabhas air an méid fógraíocht poiblí agus fostú oibrithe le Gaeilge san státseirbhís agus in údaráis stáit agus údaráis áitiúla le déanaí.
4. Tús a bheith curtha le cúrsaí nua Olscoile I gColáiste Mhuire, Marino agus in Ollscoil na Gaillimhe chun múinteoirí le ard-scileanna teanga sa Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil do scoileanna na tíre.

Fáiltíonn an chomhdháil chomh maith leis an tús ata curtha ag ár n-urlabhraí Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta, An Seanadóir Marie Sherlock, le grúpa plé agus polasaí ar an nGaeilge a thosú sa pháirtí, mar thoradh air an bpolasaí a ritheadh ag ár gcomhdháil deireanach.

Iarraimid go leanfaidh Páirtí an Lucht Oibre ag iarraidh polasaí chuimsitheach I dtaobh na Gaeilge agus an Ghaeltacht a bheith réidh d'ár gcéad chomhdháil náisiúnta eile, go mbeidh na bunclócha seo mar chroí-láir:

1. Go dtroidfidh ár bpáirtí chun Éire fíor-dhátheangach a bhaint amach.
2. Go gcinnteoidimid go leanfaidh an fás ar an nGaeloideachas a bheith mar rogha ag gach páiste in Éirinn, thuaidh is theas.
3. Go lorgóimid go gcuirfidh an rialtas go leor múinteoirí le hard-chumas teanga ar fáil chun seo a chinntiú agus nach ndéanfar aon íslí ar an gcaighdeán teanga atá leagtha síos faoi láthair.
4. Go gcleachtóimid, mar pháirtí, na prionsabail seo tríd ár bhfógraíocht, cáipéisí agus láithreach ar-líne a bheith ar fáil trí Ghaeilge chomh maith le Béarla.

#### *Dáilcheantar Ceatharlach/Cill Chainnigh*

Conference welcomes a number of important progressive improvements in relation to the Irish language in recent years. These include:

1. The beginning of the process to draft a new strategy for the in Irish medium education outside of the Gaeltacht, arising out of the successes of the Policy for Education in the Gaeltacht over the past six years.
2. The passing, at last, of the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act in the UK parliament recently.
3. The improvement in the amount of public advertising and employment of staff with adequate Irish language skills in the civil service, state agencies and local authorities recently.
4. The beginning of new university courses in Marino Institute of Education and University College, Galway, to provide teachers with excellent standards in the Irish language to cater for the needs of Irish medium schools in particular.

Conference welcomes the start that has been made in recent weeks by our spokesperson for The Irish Language and the Gaeltacht, Senator Marie Sherlock, to establish a discussion and policy group on the Irish language, arising out of the motion passed at our last party conference.

Conference urges the Labour Party to draft a comprehensive policy on the Irish language and the Gaeltacht in time for adoption at our next party conference, in which the following principles would be at its core:

1. That our party will fight to achieve a truly bilingual society.
2. That we will fight to ensure the continued growth of Irish medium education to a point that this option is available to every child and young person, North and South.
3. That we will seek that the Government will ensure that enough teachers with excellent standards of Irish are made available through the education system to ensure this level of provision and that there will be no lowering of the entry requirements currently required.
4. That we will practice, as a political party, the principles of bilingualism, through our advertisements, documents and online platforms being available and visible in both English and Gaeilge.

*Carlow/Kilkenny Constituency*

## **Motion 12**

Conference recognises the crucial role that local media play in the support of local democracy; the maintenance of transparency and accountability in the institutions of local government; and in its unique capacity to give life to stories that reflect Ireland's regional diversity.

That we recognise the societal challenges brought by the closure of many local media outlets and the increased concentration of ownership in the hands of a few large operators.

That the Party supports the designation of qualifying local media as "community assets", with public funding to maintain them on a sustainable financial footing, per the recommendations of the National Union of Journalists.

*Mayo Constituency*

## **Work**

### **Motion 13**

Conference notes the publication of the Final Report of High Level Group on Collective Bargaining in October 2022.

Conference further notes the findings from the 2021 UCD Working in Ireland Survey which highlights the positive disposition of women and young people to be represented by trade unions.

Conference welcomes the Labour Party's stance in welcoming the publication of the report of the High Level Group on Collective Bargaining, calling for its full implementation without delay; and recognising that the recommendations within the report have the potential to improve the livelihoods of low wage workers with no viable mechanism to negotiate better terms and conditions.

Conference mandates the Labour Party to continue to use its political capital to push for the implementation of the report; and to continue to support the work of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in having the EU Directive on Collective Bargaining transposed into Irish law.

Conference further mandates the Labour Party to campaign on the above with a view to creating the best possible conditions to allow our trade union partners to organise as many workers into unions as possible.

*Labour Trade Unionists*

### **Motion 14 – Composite No. 2**

Conference notes the significant disparity in pay and terms and conditions that exists between public sector workers and those employed through myriad non-state agencies who also provide vital care and community based public services.

This conference calls for the Party to develop a comprehensive policy and a campaign to raise the professional status of careworkers (including early years, elder care, homecare, and special needs). The campaign should aim at improving the resourcing of the care sector as well as fighting for better pay and conditions for all these essential workers.

Conference further fully supports the objectives of the ICTU campaign Valuing Care Valuing Community in re-aligning pay and terms and conditions of these workers with their public servant equivalents. Conference further commits the Party to the implementation of the objectives of this campaign when returned to office.

*Cork South Central Constituency,  
Meath East Constituency*

### **Motion 15**

Conference notes the shortages of key workers in multiple sectors of the Irish economy and the abnormal working conditions many people have had to endure in their daily working lives.



Conference commits Labour to producing a comprehensive integrated labour market strategy that includes the expansion of the apprentice programmes, expanding the range and funding for Springboard courses, a commitment to continuous and lifelong learning, a commitment to training programmes for upskilling of public and private work forces and the commitment of training or a job for all. Labour also commits itself to developing career paths in key sectors that allow for progression and retention of key staff.

*Whitehall Santry Branch, Dublin North West*

### **Motion 16**

Conference recognises the importance of protecting workers mental health in an ever changing and faster pace society.

Conference also recognises the varied manifestations and impacts of mental health challenges, such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders and many more. Conference also acknowledges the range of sources contributing to mental health challenges, from stressful workplaces to bereavements, homelessness and many others.

Conference also recognises that mental health challenges is a medical issue which affects all aspects of citizens lives, which can require simple interventions such as rest, recuperation and sleep to recover and avoid building up issues that may require hospitalizations.

Conferences therefore proposes the introduction of mental health days for workers to be provided, separate to annual leave and sick leave, to help overcome the stresses and anxieties of modern life.

*Galway City Central, Galway-West*

### **Motion 17**

Conference notes that research shows that lack of open information on pay and salary expectations can be a barrier to pay equality, particularly for women, minorities, and other disadvantaged groups. Asking job candidates for previous salary history can also perpetuate wage inequalities.

Conference calls on the party to support calls for businesses to include salary figures or ranges on all job advertisements and add this issue to our campaigns on the gender pay gap and improved workers rights.

*Ballyfermot/Drimnagh Branch, Dublin South Central*

### **Motion 18**

Conference notes that the strength of the Permanent Defence Forces has fallen below 8,000 personnel and without urgent action will continue to fall further, with the Naval Service now having taken the LÉ Róisín and LÉ Niamh out of service this year.

Conference further notes that the Labour Party has for many years warned of the recruitment and retention crisis and the need for improvements to pay, terms and conditions. Similar recruitment and retention issues are now also a critical issue for An Garda Síochána.

Conference welcomes the work done to date by the Review Group's report on Dignity and Equality issues and commends the bravery of the Women of Honour group, and calls on the swift publication of the report so that the recommendations can be considered. This is essential to meet the recommendation of the Commission on the Defence Forces for a target of 35% participation by women.

Conference calls for the swift implementation of the findings of the Commission on the Defence Forces as agreed by government, especially the Working Time Directive, and further calls for an independent review of pay, terms and conditions of Defence Forces personnel to identify what improvements and increases are needed to increase force strength.

*Kildare South Constituency*

### **Motion 19**

Conference notes the ongoing cost of living crisis, the rise in poverty and spiralling cost of food, heating and housing.

Conference further notes the urgent need for increases to wages and social protection payments. Conference reiterates our support for the introduction of a living wage, pledges to support campaigns by workers and their unions for wage increases, and calls for the indexation of social welfare increases to the rate of inflation as a minimum measure.

The Labour Party further calls for an end to the exclusion of young people and apprentices from the full rate of the minimum wage, which at €11.30 is already too low, and has not kept pace with inflation.

Conference therefore mandates the Labour Party to continue to campaign for a real living wage, and for social welfare rates to be in future benchmarked to a minimum essential standard of living.

*Central Council*

## **Social Protection**

### **Motion 20**

Conference notes the level of wealth that currently exists right across the Irish economy with huge tax revenue intake taking place. There is also a huge level of personal and individual wealth that also coincides with the current status of revenue intake for the Irish state, in addition to wealth held by companies, subsidiaries and multinational corporations.

Despite holding the status of one of the wealthier nations in the OECD, we know there are large levels of poverty, inequality and disadvantage which coincides with the enormous wealth that also exists. While the cost of living crisis, housing and health crisis has compounded income inequality, Ireland experiences entrenched and deep-rooted poverty with vulnerable groups particularly affected.

In order to address income poverty, social disadvantage and deep-rooted socio-economic inequality, and to build “An Ireland that Works” The Labour Party must implement measures that will ultimately end up in the redistribution of wealth. These include:

- Core social welfare rates should increase, in one step, in line with inflation and bench marked against median earnings of full-time workers
- Targets aimed at reducing poverty among particular vulnerable groups such as children, lone parents, jobless households and those in social rented housing should be introduced by the Dept of Social Welfare
- Introduce a cost of disability allowance to address the poverty and social exclusion of people with a long-term illness or disability, in line with Social Justice Ireland’s recommendations
- Given the reality of poverty among migrants, there’s an immediate need to adopt policies to assist this group. Including the full implementation of the White Paper on the Elimination of Direct Provision.
- Immediate implementation of the Living Wage
- A Wind-fall tax should be introduced
- Introduce a third band of taxation aimed at the wealthiest

Measures should be targeted to ensure we meaningfully look at how wealth is distributed across Irish society.

*Central Council Member*

### **Motion 21**

Conference calls on the Labour Party to carry out a detailed research and review of the Pension System in Ireland. The purpose of this review is to develop proposals for the introduction of fair, equitable and properly funded system.

Following the review, the Party should seek to enlist the support of all stakeholders to bring into existence a new and improved Universal Pension System within Ireland.

*Wicklow Liam Kavanagh Branch, Wicklow*

## **Finance**

### **Motion 22**

Conference calls on the PLP in conjunction with the Policy Unit to develop a comprehensive updated progressive taxation policy that rewards work. The number of tax bands should be increase to produce a more equitable rate of individual tax contributions. The policy should also address the issues of tax avoidance for corporations and high earning individuals, reform property tax, remove the cap on USC for high earners and address the issue of Capital Gains Tax for developers flipping land with planning permissions without having developed them.

*Glasnevin North, Dublin North West*

### **Motion 23**

Conference is clear that the transfer of generational wealth and privilege is an entrenched issue in Irish society that must be overcome to build a more equal and fairer Ireland.

To work towards building that fairer and more equal Ireland, conference endorses the recommendation of the Commission on Welfare and Tax to “substantially reduce” the Capital Acquisitions Tax Group A threshold, which is currently set at €335,000—meaning people can transfer this huge sum tax free to their children—and to “bring the Group A threshold closer to the Group B (€32,500) and Group C (€16,250) thresholds.

*Dublin South Central*

### **Motion 24**

Conference recognises the strong public demand for public sector engagement and investment to face the immense challenges relating to the climate crisis, housing supply and public healthcare.

To meet these challenges the State requires a secure funding basis for such investment through significant tax reform and wealth sharing that eliminates excessive avoidance mechanisms and pursues a more just spread of wealth, in contrast to the ever-widening inequalities that currently exist both nationally and globally.

Conference requests the Party Policy Forum to bring forward a Tax Justice & Wealth Share manifesto and to promote this philosophy both for national elections and the European elections.

*Clonsilla Branch, Dublin West*

### **Motion 25**

Having regard to the current landscape of Irish Banking, with two main pillar banks left in Ireland and the proliferation of non-Irish domiciled (or Irish regulated) electronic banks and the constant erosion of the public's banking services allied with unethical fee increases and the Bank led societal changes towards online and electronic banking, which is having no regard to rural Ireland and urban communities, elderly and business who do not have access to a main bank or electronic / broadband, we call on Conference to commit to the establishment of Community Banks and continue support of the Public Banking Alliance in pursuit of this achievable goal.

*Longford Westmeath Constituency*

## **Housing**

### **Motion 26**

Conscious of the urgent need for many across the country to upgrade energy systems and retrofit their homes, Conference calls on the government to introduce a 'Fair Deal' style scheme for people seeking to benefit from retrofitting their homes. Whilst the current Home Energy Grants Scheme offers up to 50% of the cost of retrofitting, securing and matching funding is often a serious and insurmountable impediment to many who wish to avail of it.

*Wexford Town Branch, Wexford*

### **Motion 27**

Conference notes that the rental market is in total crisis and that the government have not acted to address this, and that current earnings limits for those on Local Authority housing lists have a detrimental effect on families in need of adequate accommodation.

Conference calls on the Party to support further increased to the eligibility thresholds, and as part of Labour's housing plan to ultimately implement the total abolition of these thresholds in a stable, public led housing model.

*Wexford Constituency*

### **Motion 28**

Conference calls for an end to arbitrary evictions caused by extortionate rent rises. Those shameful scenes should not occur in our proud republic. Conference calls for rent control across the country until the housing shortage has been sorted. The government must assist tenants and mortgage holders who have been exploited by landlords and banks. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) goes to grasping landlords, instead of struggling tenants. The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) must be replaced by a more effective body.

*North Clare Labour Branch, Clare*

### **Motion 29**

Conference proposes a setup of a central government body, with constitutional powers to purchase land/housing (including vacant housing), for the purpose of social housing and giving citizens a legal right to quality homes at a fair price.

*Ennis Branch, Clare*

### **Addendum**

This objective could be achieved by implementing policy, accepted by Party Conference 2021, which agreed to the setting up of a National Housing Authority, thereby replacing The Housing Agency, The Land Development Agency and NAMA.

*Clondalkin/Rathcoole Branch, Dublin MidWest*

### **Motion 30**

For the purpose of administering Residential Property Tax, Revenue has knowledge of:

1. Valuation bands for residential properties in each landlord's portfolio.
2. Rental incomes for each residential landlord's portfolio.

Conference proposes that this information be used to set a recommended Rent for each property by applying a set percentage to the upper range of its valuation band.

From this:

- Rents at the recommended rate be taxed at the landlord's marginal rate.
- Rents lower than recommended be taxed at a rate lower than a landlord's marginal rate.
- Rents higher than recommended be taxed a rate higher than a landlord's marginal rate.

*Togher, Cork South Central*

### **Motion 31**

Conference calls on The Labour Party to seek an amendment to planning legislation to ensure that developers, whether public or private, must provide play areas for every 25 dwellings built and will examine the possibility of retrospectively applying such a condition to estates of that size and more under a Review Group to be established by the Party Spokespersons on Housing and Children and Youth Affairs and to report back on such provisions to the next Conference.

*Blackrock/Mahon Branch, Cork South Central*

### **Motion 32**

Conference reaffirms the integral role of the State in the provision of secure, affordable, and energy efficient housing for all people.

Conference notes with concern the overreliance by the Government on private developers, which receive in excess of €800 million in public exchequer subsidies per annum through rent supplement, the rental accommodation scheme, and the housing assistance payment, despite their demonstrated inability to meet established Irish housing need.

With the combined population on the island of Ireland already exceeding 7 million, and with a projected growth over the next 25 years of 1.7 million, Conference reasserts the need for a structural revolution in how Irish housing is financed, built, managed, and Conference calls for 1 million additional homes to be provided through a 10-year integrated programme providing 500,000 New Build and 500,000 Deep RetroFit dwellings designed to liberate housing provision in Ireland from inefficient private interests.

*Dublin Bay South Constituency*

### **Motion 33**

Conference calls upon the government to provide for the introduction of 100% mortgages to house purchasers (first time purchasers) or those building their own homes, where there is documentary evidence available to prove that the applicants for such mortgages have been paying rent for the previous two years without default in respect thereof, and ensure that same is recognised by the lending institutions.

*Ballynacargy Branch, Longford Westmeath*

### **Motion 34**

Conference notes with alarm that the number of people in emergency homeless accommodation increased at an unprecedented rate during the past 12 months to new record levels, that the Government has again failed to deliver on its targets for social housing and that it is increasingly clear that the housing targets are inadequate to meet the level of housing need.

Conference calls on the party to continue to make solving the housing and homelessness crisis a priority in its work and specifically calls on the party public representatives to:

- re-submit Jan O'Sullivan's earlier Private Members Bill which would require local authorities to take into account the best interests of children when responding to families that are homeless.
- as a once off measure to tackle long-term homelessness, promote measures which ensure all households that are currently homeless for over 18 month are allocated social housing
- promote measures which would increase the number of 1-bed units in public housing stock
- support the further extension of the Housing First programme, and the application of Housing First principles to other disadvantaged groups such as young people and families with complex support needs

*Skerries Branch, Dublin Fingal*

### **Motion 35**

Conference recognises there are 11,542 people in homeless accommodation across Ireland, Jan 2023.

These figures have reached a record high, even though a temporary eviction ban is in place.

Conference proposes that the "Housing First" initiative in place to be fast tracked as an emergency measure to provide people experiencing homelessness with immediate, independent, permanent housing, rather than temporary accommodation.

Conference calls for the implementation of emergency assistance with the supply of rentals or government housing with the aid of HAP to host previously homeless people, by using residential buildings, independent apartments supplied by a government agency.

Conference acknowledges the current homelessness emergency and recognises innovation in housing provision is needed in 2023, therefore conference moves that the Housing First scheme be prioritised with its swift implementation, to deal with the Homelessness crisis.

*Labour Equality*

### **Motion 36**

In order to vindicate our support for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to housing as a matter of fundamental human well-being, the Labour Party commits to decoupling and de-commodifying a substantial amount of housing stock from the vagaries of the market, with its boom and bust cycle and profit maximisation by developers, landlords (whether private or institutional) and others.

Labour will commit to achieving substantive level of affordable housing for purchase to accommodate the desire for private ownership for citizens.

Labour will commit to provide access to the model (as originally conceived by the O Cualann project in Ballymun) where ownership of the land is retained by the Local Authority or State agency and this will not be sold on to the private market.

*Finglas Branch, Dublin North West*

### **Motion 37**

That conference:

Welcoming the commitment in the Party's 2020 manifesto to establish a 'National Housing Development Agency' to act as a non-profit public developer, building up capacity for direct build by public agencies;

Recalling our Party's long history of advocating for and implementing public housing programmes; Recognising the central role of affordable, stable, accommodation in the development and sustenance of healthy communities;

Decrying the Government's failure to meet its own target for social housing construction;

Acknowledging the continuing worrying increase in those reliant on emergency accommodation, and in particular the number of children living in such accommodation;

Concerned by the crises in rental accommodation; and

Conscious of attempts by far-right factions to leverage these crises to fan the flames of hate, intolerance, and social division

THEREFORE

Reiterates our commitment to establish a national public agency to lead a significant building programme;

Calls for adequate investment in such a programme to be an urgent priority of Government; and further

Calls for strategic cooperation between the housing agency, local authorities, and state training agencies, to develop apprenticeship schemes that will address the staffing challenges in the sector, ensuring the public sector has the capacity to engage in construction and maintenance of housing stock adequate to our needs.

*Galway-West Constituency*

### **Motion 38**

Conference views the current housing crisis with extreme concern and regret, that the Governments "Housing For All" is not solving this crisis, given that recent homeless figures indicate over eleven thousand people without homes.



Conference resolves that a change in policy direction is now urgently needed in how this crisis is being addressed including an extension of the ban on evictions, a freeze on further rent increases, to help people living in private rented accommodation from becoming homeless.

Conference further resolves an immediate review of policy of over-reliance on the private sector, approved and voluntary housing bodies to deliver housing to those most in need. Conference calls for Local Authorities to be empowered to drive a new policy approach as how best social housing can be delivered into the future to include the establishment of a programme of apprenticeships and that Councils be given the necessary funding and staffing to carry out this task.

*Dun Laoghaire Constituency*

### **Motion 39**

Conference recognises that there is a housing emergency in Ireland.

Conference believes the current government policy, Housing for All, is a failed policy and needs to substantially change in line with Labour policy to provide the homes we need.

Conference reaffirms support for proper regulation of the rental market, more state involvement in providing rental properties that people can actually afford and a massive state building programme of social and affordable housing.

Conference calls for an independent body to be set up to consult on and agree what constitutes homelessness, to include people 'sofa surfing', living in cars and living in sub-standard accommodation.

It is also important to include disabled people inappropriately housed in nursing homes or unable to leave the family home. All persons with a disability must be supported to live as independently and with as much dignity and autonomy as possible. The definition must also include members of the Travelling community who feel they have no access to culturally appropriate accommodation.

*Cabra and District Branch, Dublin Central*

### **Motion 40**

Conference deplores the government's reliance on the private construction sector which has failed to provide an adequate supply of social and affordable housing has failed. Central to a new approach to housing must be recognition of the need to prioritise housing as a social necessity and human right rather than a speculative investment asset and financialised commodity. A state-led approach could be achieved through the establishment of a semi-state, public construction company, which would operate on a mandate of home provision as opposed to one of profit, meaning homes could be offered on an affordable, cost-purchase or cost-rental basis.

State-owned land should no longer be sold off to private developers, as the state could directly build on its land via the company. Homes would be built to a high standard and sustainably, in line with Ireland's climate goals.

Conference asserts this approach would also address employment and training issues within the construction sector by directly employing workers and providing quality, secure jobs to builders and other sectoral workers and apprentices. This approach would also lead private construction companies to increase their own employment standards.

Labour has previously proposed the establishment of a National Housing Development Bank (NHDB) and the our semi-state construction company would fall under the remit of NHDB, which would in turn oversee its financing and administration. The NHDB would be given the powers, the land, the expertise and the money to deliver housing. This would replace the existing Housing Agency and the Housing Finance Agency, and will take resources, including land and expert staff, from NAMA.

*Dublin South West Constituency*

#### **Motion 41**

Conference notes that the housing crisis is exacerbated by the failure of developers to commence housing on sites which are zoned for housing and have full planning permission.

Conference condemns hoarding of zoned, serviced land for speculative purposes and the introduction of new tax incentives which effectively reward developers for failing to build homes.

Conference calls on the Government to take urgent measures to ensure that existing planning permissions are activated and to require development of non-active sites within a designated timeframe.

*Dublin West Constituency*

#### **Motion 42**

Conference recognises that ensuring access to safe, secure, and suitable accommodation is a core function of the State;

Conference notes that we are in the midst of multiple overlapping crises which demand a whole-of-government response;

Conference calls for immediate provision of increased resources for local authorities, to support them in the goal of providing sufficient, appropriate, high-quality housing, and developing sustainable and healthy communities; and

Conference calls for local authorities and government agencies to be mandated to cooperate in these goals, and for such resources as are needed to be provided in support of such collaboration.

*Galway City West, Galway-West*

### **Local Government**

#### **Motion 43**

Conference recognises the vast majority of dog owners are responsible people, but believes there are concerns that some are not acting responsibly or within the law when it comes to their pets.

Conference calls for additional investment within local authorities to employ additional dog wardens who can engage in awareness raising activities with dog owners, the wardens should have the authority to issue a notice/warning for a first offence and issue increasing fines for repeat offenders.

*New Ross Branch, Wexford*

#### **Motion 44**

Conference recognises the immense importance of strong democratic local government that has the capacity, both in terms of human and financial resources and autonomy of decision making, to adequately meet the needs of local communities relevant and indeed beyond their legislated competencies as they currently stand.

Conference recognises that Ireland lacks such strong, well-resourced and decisive local government and therefore tasks the Labour Research and Policy Unit with drafting a new Labour Policy on local and regional government and presenting it to its next conference in 2024 for adoption. This new policy should draw on best practice internationally, particularly among our European colleagues, and should envisage an empowered local government and regional government structures with comprehensive on the ground local competencies and strong finance raising capacities.

*Dublin North West Constituency*

#### **Motion 45**

Conference notes that many studies have shown the poor health status of members of the Traveller community, and significantly lower life-expectancy for Travellers than the general population.



Conference also notes that research by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Council found that local authorities do not draw down their full budgets for providing Traveller accommodation, despite poor housing being a key driver of poor health outcomes.

Conference calls on all Labour Councillors to actively engage in the planning and delivery of improved Traveller accommodation in their communities.

*Crumlin-Kimmage Branch, Dublin South Central*

#### **Motion 46**

Conference calls on Labour in government to initiate a Citizen's Charter for local government to ensure services are accessible and available to all. This conference calls on the government to stop the down grading and winding up of Citizens Information Centres and to prioritize capacity building in disadvantaged community. In the 15years since the Combat Poverty Agency was shut down by Fianna Fáil progress in advancing participating in local democracy by disadvantaged communities has been stalled and in some cases reversed. Conference commits to developing a new Combat Poverty Agency and to reinvigorate capacity building in disadvantaged communities in order that every citizen and every community has an equal voice.

*Sligo-Leitrim Constituency*

#### **Motion 47 – Composite No. 3**

Conference believes that the enactment of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 has had an unintended and chilling effect on local government and democracy. The then programme for government promised reform and rationalisation of local authorities, both to enhance democratic accountability and local power, and as part of a broader range of spending cuts in response to the state's ongoing financial crisis. However, in reality it has led to a further widening of the gap between local enterprise, business and residents of the towns formally served with Town Councils of accessibility to elected citizens. It has added myriad levels of bureaucracy, to which there is no apparent accountability.

Conference reiterates its opposition to the abolition of Town and Borough Councils in 2014, leaving Ireland as the only country in the EU without functioning urban local Government.

Conference notes the commitment in the Programme for Government 2020 to examine the re-establishment of urban authorities but condemns the total lack of progress on the matter to date.

Conference acknowledges that the fiscal landscape has changed and that it is time to reconsider the need for democratic and accountable local elected officials to have a say regarding issues effecting people in business, working, providing employment, and living in Irelands towns.

Conference commits to continuing to campaign for the re-establishment of urban local Government as a top priority for any Government in which Labour would participate.

*Longford Westmeath Constituency,  
Carlow Town Branch, Carlow-Kilkenny Constituency*

#### **Motion 48**

Conference calls for the adoption of a system of democratically elected mayoralties with executive functions for the Dublin Region and the City and County of Limerick. The reform of this important branch of Government should be based upon the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly for a democratically elected mayor for the Dublin region and on the report and recommendations of the Implementation Advisory Group for such reform in Limerick City and County.

*Limerick City Constituency*

#### **Motion 49**

Conference recognises the right to impartial public information and access to services, and the importance of Citizens Information as a vehicle to vindicate that right.

Conference rejects the Government's systematic closure of face-to-face Citizens Information Centres across Ireland.

Conference condemns the Citizens Information Board's policy of shifting the service online without maintaining in-person services.

Conference recognises the invaluable contribution of volunteers who have provided an excellent service for decade.

Conference notes that a Citizens Information service which exists solely online is inaccessible to many people with literacy challenges, neurodiverse people, people who do not have computer access or skills, and non-native English or Irish speakers.

Conference condemns information poverty, and calls on the Government to reinstate face-to-face Citizens Information Centres, and to halt all planned closures.

*Rathgar, Rathmines, Harold's Cross Branch, Dublin Bay South*

### **Motion 50**

Conference notes the indispensable contribution of local decision-making for a healthy democracy, and the imperative to support the work of local county councils throughout Ireland.

Conference further notes that a joint-study by United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) from 2016 states that Ireland is one of the most centralised countries of the OECD, with one of the lowest ratios to GDP and public spending among OECD countries. The role of local councils as public employers is also very low. However, they are key public investors, carrying out more than half of public investment. Investment is one of their main functions, even though they often act on behalf of the central government to implement national investment programmes.

Conference believes that the Labour party is committed to securing social justice at the local level, and that local government should be empowered accordingly to carry out this function.

Conference calls the Labour Party to hold the Government to remedy the fundamental flaws in the relationship between local and central government, by decentralizing more functions to the local level, and increasing the funding to local county councils. Following the Local Government Reform Act (2014), local governments were granted new responsibilities, in particular in planning, local and community development and support economic development and enterprise at a local level. And yet local councils have very limited spending responsibilities, only 4% of GDP.

Conference further calls on the Labour Party to endorse the economic model of Community Wealth Building which ensure more of our economy is democratically and socially owned, giving people greater ownership of their local economy.

*Cork North Central*

## **Rural Ireland**

### **Motion 51**

Rural Ireland, the development of rural Towns and villages and the role of agriculture are critical to the future of Ireland's social and economic fabric. Labour is committed to supporting agriculture in its transition to carbon neutral activities and is committed to positive and constructive engagement with the agriculture sector on this and the sectors future development with the objective maintaining a strong vibrant sector drawn from a network of family farm units . Labour is committed to the renewal and development of rural towns and villages, supporting rural communities and the expansion of the rural transport initiative.

*Central Council*

## **Education**

### **Motion 52**

Conference recognises the increasing burden on parents of the cost of second level education in many cases in public schools this can amount to €2,000, Conference calls for a major review of the need for school books as well as iPads and special programmes and uniforms and to include looking at ways to reduce costs where possible ie generic uniforms and more use of photocopying in schools.

*Tom Johnson Pembroke Branch, Dublin Bay South*

### **Motion 53**

In order to vindicate the rights of people with disabilities as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the rights of people with disabilities ratified by Ireland in 2018, Conference calls for updating and amending of the Disability Act 2005 and the education for persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2014 and other associated acts to allow for not only the right to assessment of needs, but also the right to an individual care and educational plan to be implemented with appropriate resources within a reasonable time frame along with adequate communications on such timelines.

*Labour Disability*

### **Motion 54**

Conference calls on the Department of Education and Skills to provide full funding for the teaching of Home Economics in Secondary schools, to cover the cost of all ingredients, materials and equipment.

Currently, Science subjects, Wood Materials Technology / Construction Studies and Metalwork / Engineering are all fully funded. Home Economics should be treated in the same manner, in order ensure best practice in teaching and learning in the subject.

*Blackrock Branch, Dun Laoghaire*

### **Motion 55**

Conference recognises the necessity, as a matter of urgency, of dedicated public funding to cover the cost of training and qualification for Early Childcare professionals as part of our drive for universal childcare.

*Galway City East Branch, Galway West*

### **Motion 56**

Conference welcomes with caution the current review of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 being undertaken since 2021 and which is due to complete soon.

Conference notes that a number of core aspects of the EPSEN Act are yet to be commenced almost 20 years since its inception and that vague and general language within its text has permitted the spirit of the legislation to allow for a piecemeal and incomplete implementation of its provisions.

Conference condemns the lack of sufficient person-centred supports available to students and schools, and the failure to implement international best practices such as the provision of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), person-first allocation of resources and assistance such as Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), Special Education Teachers (SETs), and other resources children may require to participate fully in education and school life.

Conference mandates the PLP to work to ensure that amendments or new bills coming before the Houses following the review of the EPSEN act are robust in the requirement for person-centred adherence to international best practices, proper provision of resources to each individual child who requires them which follow the individual child throughout their education, and complete wrap-around service provision for professionals working with students with additional educational needs.

*Louth & East Meath Constituency*

### **Motion 57**

Conference demands that as part of Ireland's digital transformation, in order to ensure an inclusive and productive future, creative media and information literacy skills – and in particular computer coding - should be integrated as a core subject in the junior cycle curriculum rather than being an optional short course.

*Noel Browne Branch, Galway West*

### **Motion 58**

Conference notes:

That a Postgraduate Researcher is any postgraduate whose main programme output is original research, including but not limited to PhDs and those on a Masters by Research programme.

Conference further notes:

Postgraduate researchers in Ireland receive a maximum stipend of 19k per annum, with some stipends as low as 6k and many with no funding. In addition to carrying out research, many Postgraduate Researchers have teaching and lecturing duties, demonstration and supervisory work for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and assist in other tasks not solely related to their research work. They are workers in all but name and do not have any of the protections that come with worker status.

Conference calls on Labour:

To recognise Postgraduate Researchers as workers and lobby for recognition of all Postgraduate Researchers as employees under Irish law, including a commitment to at least a living wage, equitable treatment and fair working conditions, and an employment contract stating the terms of the employment. And to engage with the Postgraduate Workers Organisation (PWO) on their campaign for worker status for Postgraduate Researchers.

*Central Council*

## **Health**

### **Motion 59**

Conference believes that years of under investment in every area of health care in rural Ireland has led to an all-out system failure in our regional hospitals. For too long people living in the North West of Ireland have been forced to accept and put up with the leftover crumbs of a national healthcare budget but this doesn't mean that we don't experience the same kind of health care needs as those living in larger urban areas.

Conference acknowledges the lack of appropriate and essential health care services in the North West accentuates the already existing East- West divide in terms of the provision of other essential public services (e.g. public transport).

Conference commits to balanced investment in the areas of cardiology, oncology, A & E, women's health and mental health services in primary health care settings and in Sligo University Hospital.

*Sligo- Strandhill Branch, Sligo Leitrim*

### **Motion 60**

Conference calls for a concentrated and designated scheme to ensure that there is GP care available across the State for all persons, including if necessary a dedicated scheme to entice Irish qualified GPs to return to the State, provision of accommodation in State owned buildings for young GPs to operate from, and increased training. The lack of GPs is a nationwide difficulty, and must be tackled.

*Shelbourne Branch, Dublin Bay South*

### **Motion 61**

Conference recognises according to the Directive 2011/24/EU on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare any EU citizen has the right to travel abroad to another member state for healthcare and the right to be reimbursed. They also have the right of free choice of healthcare provider and or hospital. The Directive also states that it shall apply to patients, regardless of how it is organised, delivered or financed.

As confirmed by the Court of Justice of the European Union on several occasions, while recognising their specific nature, all types of medical care fall within the scope of the Directive. However, according to the HSE and the Cross-Border Directive Office in Kilkenny any procedure deemed to be "medical tourism", despite having no list of specified health care, does not attract the same right of reimbursement. There is a derogation, that permits many Irish citizens, suffering from illness, to be excluded from this funding because they are seeking relief from drug therapies that are not currently provided publicly in Ireland.

Conference calls for a review of this practice to include these other drug therapies into the Cross Border Directive Scheme to alleviate the effected Citizens suffering.

*Athlone Branch, Longford-Westmeath*

### **Motion 62**

Conference notes the recent HSE admission that over 6000 people in Ireland have been assigned carer hours but are not yet receiving them. Conference acknowledges that this can often mean people abandoned for months on end in hospital unnecessarily.

Conference notes people needing home support care packages are amongst the most vulnerable in our society. They include elderly, people with dementia, people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Conference explicitly calls out this failure as a national crisis. Over 6,000 people who badly need social care supports in Ireland are not receiving any care support hours.

Conference explicitly calls for an immediate action plan addressing the many issues in this crisis including social care recruitment, retention and pay from the HSE and Minister for Health to address this national crisis.

*Bray James Connolly Branch, Wicklow*

### **Motion 63**

Conference acknowledges and supports the need for the purchasing of Barrington's Hospital or to otherwise create a publicly owned elective hospital serving the Midwest Region. It further calls for the resourcing of Nenagh, Ennis and St. John's Hospitals as Medical Assessment Units and preliminary Triage and for the provision of additional beds at UHL to alleviate pressure on the A&E Dept. at University Hospital Limerick.

*Michael Keyes Branch, Limerick City*

### **Motion 64**

Conference notes that Ireland has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world (Irish Maternity Indicator System national report 2019). Whereas parents have the right to choose whether to breastfeed or to use formula, it is important to ensure they can make this decision in an informed and independent manner.

Conference therefore expresses concern about recent findings from the Lancet that: "For decades, the commercial milk formula industry has used underhand marketing strategies, designed to prey on parents' fears and concerns, to turn the feeding of infants and young children into a multi-billion dollar business – generating revenues of about \$55 billion each year".

At the same time, the economic benefits of breastfeeding are ignored. The environmental benefits of breastfeeding are also underplayed, despite obvious sustainability gains. The health benefits of breastfeeding for both baby and mother are also considerable but undervalued.

Women in Ireland too often find themselves without sufficient supports, at hospital and in the community, to initiate and/or continue breastfeeding. Old-fashioned societal views leave some reluctant or embarrassed to feed their babies/toddlers in public. And households who are struggling with the current cost-of-living crisis are paying for the big advertising budgets of formula companies. Labour has a strong record of progressive policy to improve breastfeeding rates in Ireland, having made a series of recommendations in a 2017 document, 'Supporting Mothers and Babies: A New Approach to Breastfeeding'.

Labour believes more proactive steps must be taken to normalise breastfeeding in this country. Conference mandates the Labour party to campaign for and, if in government, to implement the following measures:

1. In line with the 2023 recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), ensure that Ireland implements the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and the baby-friendly hospital initiative. This would mean, for example, tackling the marketing of so-called 'follow-on' formula and properly resourcing our hospitals to prioritise breastfeeding.
2. Awareness-raising campaigns in schools and in the public about the benefits of breastfeeding.
3. Increased funding for breastfeeding support groups such as Cuidiu, La Leche League and Friends of Breastfeeding.
4. Ensure breastfeeding-friendly workplaces.
5. Increase availability of IBCLCs (breastfeeding consultants) both in maternity units and the community.
6. That time limits on breastfeeding protection in the workplace be abolished.

*Central Council*

## **Equality**

### **Motion 65**

Conference commends the work of the Joint Committee on Gender Equality as chaired by Ivana Bacik TD and their comprehensive assessment of the 45 recommendations provided by the Citizens Assembly.

Conference welcomes the recommendations of the committee in their report "Unfinished Democracy: Achieving Gender Equality" such as those which propose amendments to the Constitution. In particular, conference welcomes and recognises the report's call for the State to assume full responsibility for the remuneration of employees in the childcare and early years sector in line with primary and secondary sector; the call to reduce childcare fees by at least two-thirds; and other measures to improve the terms and conditions of those in paid employment as carers for children and adults.

Conference further recognises that the reports call for detailed reforms of social protections such as Carers Allowance, Parental Leave, and Maternity Leave.

Conference acknowledges the report's call for "a fully individualised social protection system to reflect the diversity of today's lives and to promote an equal division of paid work and care" and calls upon the PLP to bring this to the fore of a campaign to remove Article 41.2 from the constitution.

*Labour Women*

### **Motion 66**

Conference recognizes that socioeconomic status can be a cause for discrimination which can be harmful and detrimental to individuals and communities and as such, ought to be considered as a tenth ground for discrimination in Irish law.

Conference notes that the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth commenced a review of Equality legislation in 2021 which is due to report at some time in 2023, and further notes that the fallen Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 was a lost opportunity to address discrimination on the basis of a persons socioeconomic status and that more must be done to address discrimination faced by many in Ireland based on perceptions about where they live, their accent, or where and how much income they may receive.



Conference holds that it is a matter of the Labour Party's fundamental values to fully embrace the inclusion of socioeconomic status as a tenth ground of discrimination in all our work and to endeavour to ensure its full inclusion in any legislative recommendations which might arise from the current review process.

*Labour Equality*

#### **Motion 67**

Conference notes that simply being a female means that we will experience gender-based discrimination particularly for female workers regarding pay and we know this as being fact from the very recent figures published in the Gender Pay Gap report whereby the National gap stands at 11% on average and for many female workers the gap is much wider.

When a couple plan a family it is the female in the relationship "the birth mother" that is immediately financially disadvantaged, the mother by law is only entitled to receive that state social welfare maternity benefit. There is no statutory right to receive full wages and places women in a precarious financial situation and can impact greatly on family planning options.

Conference is fully supportive of equal rights for all and therefore it is our strong position that paternity leave should be paid at full wages for two weeks to encourage the uptake of this important opportunity at the early stages of birth. Currently the uptake in Ireland is very low as the state paternity benefit is a maximum of €250 per week which means new fathers are financially at a loss if they avail of this right.

Conference calls on the Labour Party to continue to promote equality in a progressive manner.

*Charlie Smyth Branch, Carlow-Kilkenny Constituency*

#### **Motion 68 – Composite No. 4**

Conference notes the ongoing campaign by the Party to address the serious and significant issues autistic people and children face accessing appropriate education, healthcare and other supports.

Conference further notes the findings from the 'National Irish Study on the Economic Costs and Unmet Needs of Autistic Children' that the annual cost per child for families amounted to over €28,000 covering private healthcare costs, lost income and informal care, with a third of families incurring an average debt of €3,260 per year.

Conference therefore calls for the government to urgently adopt and resource a National Autism Strategy, with a person-centred approach and personalised care pathways, combined with sufficient funding allocated to address the needs of autistic people across their lifespan and across all sectors of society.

Such a strategy would be based on international best practice especially in Malta and would be delivered on a cross departmental basis with a named Minister responsible for its delivery.

The strategy would ensure that autistic and neurodivergent young people and children have equal access to education, transport, employment and housing and best meet their needs and as of right.

*Athy Branch Motion, Kildare South  
Dublin Bay North*

#### **Motion 69**

Labour Party Conference asserts that Bunreacht na hEireann (the Constitution of Ireland) should respect the separation of church and state and it should be inclusive of people of all religions and none.

Conference recognises that the current constitution was drafted in times when Ireland was heavily influenced by Christian faiths, particularly the Roman Catholic Church.

Conference also accepts that it is important at this time, when, some on the island of Ireland are

looking at the possibility of a different constitutional position in the distant future, that our constitution is seen to be secular and inclusive.

Conference therefore supports:

1. The removal of all references to God from the Constitution.
2. The removal of the preamble and closing words from the Constitution, or their replacement with an inclusive secular statement.
3. Amending Article 12 (section 8), Article 31 (Section 4) and Article 34 (Section 6) so as to remove the requirement to swear a religious oath on assumption to senior positions in public office.

The most inclusive and effective way of achieving these changes may be by referring this proposal to a Citizen's Assembly.

*Dublin Fingal Constituency*

### **Motion 70**

Conference notes the generous and unprecedented response by communities across Ireland in welcoming the tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing war in their country and recognises that Ireland must continue to meet our international obligations for those seeking refuge, asylum and protection.

Conference recalls the millions of Irish emigrants over generations who sought new opportunities in countries across the world and expresses our solidarity with those who now need our support.

Conference condemns the actions of the far right and other groups seeking to sow division and exploit fears in our country, and the failure of social media companies to tackle the use of their platforms for disseminating misinformation and hate speech.

Conference calls for a dedicated Minister for housing refugees and the full resourcing of the International Protection Accommodation Service; additional community resources for education and healthcare services, and a comprehensive Covid-style communications campaign to tackle misinformation and ensure people are informed of both the facts and supports in place.

Conference further welcomes the call by the Labour Party for those seeking international protection to be allowed work from three months and reiterates our call for the abolition of Direct Provision.

*Central Council*

### **Motion 71**

Conference calls on the Labour Party to initiate a policy on asylum and immigration, to ensure that immigrants are treated with respect and dignity and which allows them to live life to its full potential in Ireland.

*Clondalkin-Rathcoole Branch, Dublin Mid-West*

### **Motion 72**

Conference declares full support to and solidarity with trans, non binary and gender non conforming people living in Ireland and internationally.

Conference fully supports overarching fundamental human rights based gender recognition policies that are based on self determination and depathologisation.

Conference expresses concern, alarm and regret that the trans community in the UK is subjected to intense political, mainstream media and social media hate and vilification. Conference expresses deep abhorrence that the UK government is using trans rights against the Scottish government.

Conference reaffirms Irish Labour Party full support for the Gender Recognition Act 2015 introduced by Ministers Kevin Humphreys and Joan Burton.



Conference supports all of the recommendations of the Review group which reviewed the Act in 2018 and of the report published by Minister for Social Protection in November 2019.

Conference calls for legislation based on these recommendations to be brought forward by the government.

Conference notes that Ireland is ranked worst for Trans Healthcare in the EU 27 Nations. Conference calls on Minister for Health to address this with a comprehensive plan for improved trans healthcare in Ireland. Conference commits to working with interested parties in Northern Ireland on this issue.

*Labour LGBT*

## **Justice**

### **Motion 73**

Conference notes the failure of the government to meet its recruitment targets for An Garda Síochána with just 92 taken on through 2022 despite a target of 800, and that the size of the force is at its lowest level since 2018.

Conference further notes that one in four garda stations had fewer gardaí at the start of 2023 compared to last year, and 42 stations had no full-time officer, leading to a reduction in frontline policing, and calls for increased resources for community policing.

Conference calls on the Minister for Justice to address the working conditions and career progression opportunities for Gardaí and carry out a review of the reasons for the failures in recruitment and retention and put in measures in place to address it.

*Central Council*

### **Motion 74**

Conferences welcomes the commitment to establish a new statutory agency on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

Conference notes again that there remains a chronic shortage of refuge spaces in Ireland, well below our commitments under the Istanbul Convention, and that there are waiting times of up to four months in some locations for family law domestic violence applicants seeking permanent safety orders.

Conference calls for the full implementation of the Zero Tolerance Strategy, a target of at least 480 refuge places, and the appointment of more Circuit and District Court Judges to ensure timely access to justice for communities across the country.

*Central Council*

## **International Affairs**

### **Motion 75**

In the event of a referendum concerning the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), between Canada and the European Union, in its current form, Conference calls on the Labour Party opposes this Trade Agreement, and will campaign against its ratification.

*Dublin Mid-West Constituency*

### **Motion 76 – Composite No. 5**

Conference notes and condemns the further hardening of apartheid conditions in Palestine since the recent general election outcome in Israel.

Conference seeks to draw attention again to the suffering of the Palestinian people, particularly families with the demolition of homes and children through the denial of access to an education due to the daily actions of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF), delaying children travelling to school at

checkpoints, the detention of children in a military judicial system without representation or access to bail and forcibly demolishing their schools such as recent events in the Masafer Yatta area in the Southern West Bank. In this case more than 500 school-aged children are facing no access to education following plans to demolish their schools, both primary and secondary.

Conference recognises the plight of the Palestinian people, rejects all punitive actions against its leadership and civil society and calls for the cessation as per the UN Assembly's decision pertaining to these actions being in breach of the rights of Palestinian Civil Society.

Conference decries the ongoing senseless loss of life almost every day in Palestine, due to IDF incursions into refugee camps, raids on individual homes and harassment at checkpoints, all creating high tensions and driving young Palestinians to violent reactions. Conference does not condone violence any way but understands it may be seen by some Palestinians as the only recourse when non-violent means achieve no change.

Conference calls on the Irish Government and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Party to:

- (a) strongly condemn the many unprovoked violent actions of the IDF and recent statements from various Israeli Government Ministers claiming Israel's jurisdiction over Palestinian territory
- (b) recommence the work of passing the Occupied Territories Bill into legislation before the end of 2023.

Conference calls on the Irish Government and all Irish MEPs to campaign at European Union level to counter the narrative of denying the proven crime of Apartheid by the Israeli State, to condemn the clear plan by the Israeli State to annex Palestinian territory either by force or through the sponsorship of illegal settlement, and to counter the promotion, outlined by many, that to criticise Israeli Government actions is antisemitism.

*Drumcondra-Glasnevin Branch, Dublin Central  
Rush Branch, Dublin Fingal*

### **Motion 77**

Labour Is committed to ensuring that Ireland continues to play a positive and engaged role at the centre of the European Union where it will seek to move the Union more towards an engaged Social Europe policy aimed at eliminating poverty, regional imbalance, and widening the rights of workers.

*Central Council*

## **Internal Party Affairs**

### **Motion 78**

That Article 7 (4) of the Party Constitution be amended by deleting "Article 8 (4) (f)" and substituting "Article 8 (4) (d)".

*Executive Board*

### **Motion 79**

That the Party Constitution be amended –

- (a) in Article 5 (1), by the substitution of the following for paragraphs (f) and (g):

“(f) Labour LGBT comprises all party members who identify as LGBT and who opt to participate in the section.

(g) Labour Intercultural (previously Labour Equality) comprises all party members who opt to participate in the section and who share a commitment to promoting equality of respect, status and opportunity for all persons regardless of colour, religious or cultural background or national or ethnic origins, including membership of the Traveller Community.

(h) Labour Disability comprises all party members with disabilities, or with an interest in disability policy, who opt to participate in the section.”

and

(b) in Article 7 (2), by the substitution of the following for paragraph (d):

“(d) the Chairpersons of the Association of Labour Councillors, Labour Youth, Labour Women, Labour Intercultural, Labour Disability and Labour Trade Unionists, and one of the two Co-Chairpersons of Labour LGBT.”

*Executive Board*

**Motion 80**

That the Party Constitution be amended –

(a) in Article 6 (5) (b) by deleting “a Unit attached to the Central Council”, and substituting “the Policy Research Unit”,

(b) in Article 7, by inserting the following section after section 11, and redesignating subsequent sections accordingly:

“12.(a) The Executive Board shall appoint one of its members to be International Secretary, with responsibility for fraternal relations with the international organisations of which the Party is a member or to which it is affiliated and with the other members and affiliates of those organisations.

(b) The chairperson of Labour Trade Unionists shall act as Trade Union Liaison Secretary, with responsibility for fraternal relations with the trade union movement from which the Party emerged.”,

(c) in Article 8 (4) –

(i) by deleting paragraph (c) and substituting –

“(c) the chair of the Policy Research Unit, if not otherwise a member of the Council, and”, and

(ii) by deleting –

“The ordinary members of the Policy Research Unit, the Campaigns Unit, the International Affairs Unit and the Trade Union Liaison Unit, if not otherwise members of the Council, are non-voting members of the Council.”,

and substituting –

“The ordinary members of the Policy Research Unit, if not otherwise members of the Council, are non-voting members of the Council.”,

(d) in Article 8 (8), by deleting “, the Campaigns Unit and the International Affairs Unit”,

(e) by deleting Article 8 (11) to (13),

(f) by substituting the following for Article 8 (14):

“11. The Policy Research Unit –

(a) is attached to and answerable to the Central Council,

- (b) must report to the Council as required on the performance of its functions,
- (c) is staffed by Party staff,
- (d) shall establish and maintain participation channels for the Party membership and Sections, through regional forums and online.

A representative of a Party Section shall be added as a voting member of the Policy Research Unit if the Section is not otherwise represented in the Unit's membership.”,

- (g) by redesignating Article 8 (15) and (16) as Article 8 (12) and (13) respectively,

and

- (h) in Standing Order 5 (2) of the Party Conference Standing Orders, by deleting “the Units attached to the Central Council” and substituting “the Policy Research Unit”.

***Executive Board***

### **Motion 81**

That Article 2 of the Party Constitution be amended by substituting the following for sections 2 to 5:

#### ***“Members outside the State***

2. The Party acknowledges and endorses its obligations as a member of the PES and the PA to develop close working relationships with its sister parties and to support them to at elections. Save as provided by sections 3 to 6, the Party shall not establish or maintain branches or organise itself politically outside the State.

#### ***Members outside the island of Ireland***

3. A Party member who lives in another state may also be a member of a political party in that state belonging to the PES or the PA. Similarly, a member living in the State may also be a member of a party belonging to the PES or the PA, organised in a state with which the member has a bona fide connection.

4. Persons who were party members in the State and who move to live outside the State may continue as Head Office members only.

5. The Executive Board may convene area meetings of Party members living outside the island of Ireland. It may also establish support groups of those members, with power to hold meetings and elect officers on the same basis as branches. A support group shall support the activities of the party within the State. It shall not put forward candidates to contest elections in the state in which it is based, and it shall support in those elections only the candidates of parties belonging to the PES or the PA.

#### ***Members in Northern Ireland***

6. (a) A party member who lives in Northern Ireland may also be a member of a Northern Ireland political party belonging to the PES or the PA. And anyone belonging to such a party is entitled to Party membership.

(b) The Party may organise in Northern Ireland on the same basis as in the State, and members in Northern Ireland shall be entitled to participate either as head office or constituency members accordingly.

(c) The approval of the Party Conference, which can be given only on foot of a recommendation of the Party Leader, is required for the Party to contest elections in Northern Ireland.

(d) In Northern Ireland elections Party members shall only support candidates of parties belonging to the PES or the PA or otherwise belonging to the democratic progressive left.”

***Executive Board***

## **Motion 82**

Conference notes the considerable progress that has been made on LGBT+ issues over the last several decades and further acknowledges that the Labour Party has played a significant role in advancing the vast majority of the positive changes that have been made—spanning from the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the Gender Recognition Act, Marriage Equality, and more recently, to the scheme to ‘disregard’ pre-1993 convictions of gay and bisexual men.

Conference further notes that this year marks several important anniversaries for the LGBT+ community in Ireland. It has been 50 years since the Sexual Liberation Movement was formed, the first LGBT+ group in Ireland. It has been 40 years since the famous march to Fairview Park, the site of the homophobic murder of Declan Flynn, and 30 years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality. It has also been 20 years since the founding of Labour LGBT, making Labour the first political party in Ireland to have an internal LGBT+ group.

Conference recognises that Labour LGBT, as currently constituted as a sub-section of Labour Equality, acts for all intents and purposes as a full Party Section but without representation on the Executive Board of the Party.

Conference therefore calls for Labour LGBT to be made a full Party Section by amending the Party Constitution as follows:

Add the following to the end of Article 5.1:

“h) Labour LGBT comprises all party members who identify as LGBT who opt to participate in the section.”

Add the following directly after Article 7.2 d):

“e) One of the two Co-Chairpersons of Labour LGBT, as decided by members of Labour LGBT at Labour LGBT Conference”

*Labour LGBT*

## **Motion 83**

Amend Article 2.13 to:-

At an election for Party Leader, those entitled to vote are members whose membership was registered for at least 12 months prior to the date of the close of nominations and who were registered as paid up members at least 21 days prior to the election day.

*Labour Youth*

## **Motion 84**

Conference agrees that at each National Conference a Report/Reports shall be presented on progress made and actions taken to implement/give effect to motions carried at the previous National Conference.

*Lucan/Palmerstown Branch, Dublin Mid-West*

## **Motion 85**

Conference acknowledges the important contribution of the Labour Party to the creation of the tolerant, pluralist society that exists today. The Labour Party is older than the state. The Labour Party has always provided constructive opposition. When it first went into government, Labour ensured an extensive building programme as part of the Inter-party Government of 1948. As part of coalition governments over many years, the Labour Party secured increases in welfare payments and progressive social legislation which included the marriage equality referendum. This would not have happened if the party had not been in government from 2011 to 2016. During that government the role paid by the party in saving the State from financial disaster and serious social and industrial unrest has to be acknowledged. Therefore, in light of the forthcoming Local, European and General Elections, the Jack Fitzgerald Branch calls on Head Office to incorporate and promote this important message in all election communications and material.

*Jack Fitzgerald Branch, Dun Laoghaire*

**Motion 86**

Conference recognises that the Labour Party's core value of equality must be central to our own party's action and organisation.

Labour Women applauds the role of Party Leader Deputy Ivana Bacik TD shaping the gender quota legislation in effect since 2016. In the next General Election all parties will need to present 40% female candidates.

Conference further notes that evidence shows women need to be asked to become candidates an average of 6 times to each time a male candidate is asked to run. As such additional support and preparation is needed to ensure sufficient female party members become candidates in the local and European elections in 2024.

Conference mandates the Organisational Committee, the National Organiser and the General Secretary to work with Labour Women to ensure that diverse candidates are encouraged to run in 2024, to establish a fully funded training programme for female candidates, and to develop a roadmap to achieving full gender equality within our party's future pool of candidates of 50% female and male candidates.

*Labour Women*





# Labour Party Conference 2023

Friday 24th March – Sunday 26th March 2023  
Clayton Silver Springs Hotel, Cork.

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