

Social
Democrats



NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026



Contents

Introduction	3
Conference Guide	4
National Conference Agenda	6
Standing Orders Report	10
National Executive Report	18
Parliamentary Party Report	20
General Secretary's Report	34
Treasurer's Report	38
Conference Sessions	40
Party Officer Nominations	57
Conference Motions	90

Party leader Holly Cairns welcomes you to the seventh National Conference of the Social Democrats

As our National Conference takes place this weekend, it offers us the opportunity to reflect on our growth so far and chart our way forward for the future.

When we last gathered in 2024, I wrote that it would be a defining year for the party – and so it proved to be. Following our most successful elections ever that year, today we have 11 Social Democrats TDs, one Senator and 33 councillors.

This electoral success is down to the hard work and dedication of every single person involved with the party: our elected representatives; our election candidates; members of the National Executive and National Council; the standing orders committee; those on the policy committee and policy groups; our project teams and work groups; our college and branch officers; our HQ and parliamentary staff; and our growing number of members around the country.

In July last year – as we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Social Democrats – our parliamentary party pledged the first – and decisive – 12 of 20 nominations needed to put Catherine Connolly on the ballot for the Presidential election. Catherine's election to the office of President was a watershed moment and a concrete manifestation of what the parties of the left can achieve when we work together. I am very proud of the role our members and public representatives played in her successful campaign.

The Social Democrats do things differently. We are all here because we want to see the introduction of progressive policies that will have a positive impact on people's quality of life.

We want to see a radical reset of housing policy; the full implementation of Sláintecare; increased investment in disability and mental health services; access to genuinely free education; and an accelerated transition to renewable energy.

In the coming months, the Social Democrats will contest two by-elections in Dublin Central and Galway West. With your support, I believe we have a strong chance of increasing our Dáil representation when voters go to the polls.

When I took over the leadership of the Social Democrats in 2023, I said that I was unashamedly ambitious about the future of this party. That has not changed.

If anything, the best is yet to come.

Holly



Conference Guide

We are delighted to welcome you to the Social Democrats 2026 National Conference. We have a full schedule of events during the conference, beginning at 6pm on Friday, February 6th, and concluding at 7pm on Saturday, February 7th. There will also be a social event on each evening.

We particularly value your attendance for **Holly's Leader's Speech** which will be **broadcast live on RTÉ One at 6:30pm on Saturday, February 7th**. The sessions between 12 and 1pm on Saturday will also be streamed live on the RTÉ News Channel and we would love to see you there.

Location

The event is being held at the Clayton Silver Springs Hotel, Tivoli, Cork T23 E244. If you are driving and NOT staying at the hotel overnight, on entering the hotel grounds, turn left up the hill and follow the road to the Conference Centre. If you are staying at the hotel overnight, on entering the hotel grounds, turn right into the hotel car park.

Timetable of Events

A full conference agenda is available overleaf. Please do not hesitate to contact the staff at the check-in desk if you have any questions.

Evening Events

In appreciation of your tremendous and ongoing efforts to support the party, we are delighted to host two social events in the main hotel. Finger food will be provided and attendees will be responsible for covering the cost of their own beverages.

Check-in

On arrival, please go to the check-in desk to collect your badge which must be worn at all times. Members with more than six months of continuous membership will receive a badge with a purple background, indicating their right to vote in elections for party positions and structures, and on conference motions. Members with fewer than six months of membership will receive a white badge and will not be entitled to vote on motions or in elections on this occasion.

If this is your first conference, please let us know at the check-in desk if we can assist you in any way.

Meals

Complimentary food and beverages will be available during the conference. Should you have any special dietary needs, please inform the catering team.

Conference Venue Layout

The venue has two floors. On the ground floor you will find the check-in desk which is in the main lobby where refreshments and food will also be served. The main hall, known as the Tivoli Suite, is also on the ground floor. Upstairs (only accessible on Saturday) you will find the breakout sessions in Harbour 4 and Harbour 7, the voting room (Harbour 6), a delegate lounge/rest area (Harbour 5), exhibition tables, and our merchandise stall. There is also a Quiet Room upstairs if you need a quiet break. Ask at the check-in desk for details. There is a lift to the upper floor by the check-in desk.

Duties of the National Conference

Firstly, we would like you to enjoy the event and meet with fellow delegates as we discuss how to make the most of the political opportunities that lie ahead of us. The conference will be a pivotal two days of constructive debate, energising speeches and practical workshops - to help us shape the future direction of our party and our country.

There are also official duties and powers of our National Conference to engage with, namely:

- **Accountability and Reporting:**
To receive and review reports on the activities of the National Executive, Parliamentary Party, National Council, General Secretary, Treasurer and Standing Orders Committee.
These reports will be presented on Friday evening.
- **Governance and Elections:**
To elect fundamental party roles and structures including the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, National Executive members and the Standing Orders Committee.
These positions are all crucial for strong party governance. You can cast your vote upstairs on Saturday from 9:30am to 2pm in room Harbour 6.
- **Constitutional Review and Party Direction:**
To debate and make decisions on proposals, submitted via motions to amend the Party's

Constitution and decide upon the future direction of Party policies through motions submitted by both branches and the National Executive.

These motions will be discussed and debated during the conference and you will be invited to vote on each motion, and amendments, as presented throughout the two days. Please check the timetable for the time and location for each motion.

National Organisers Team

Be sure to say hello to our National Organisers team—Ruairí, Deirdre, and David—who will be situated next to the check-in desk. They are dedicated to supporting and growing local branch engagement and will be at the conference specifically to strengthen relationships with branches and members, and offer any assistance needed. If you are new to the Social Democrats, or this is your first conference, they can help connect you with other members.

Exhibitors

We will have a small number of exhibitors at the event on Saturday. They will be located in the upper floor corridor. Please take a moment to check them out.

Party Merchandise

The National Conference is the perfect opportunity to pick up your Social Democrats accessories. From our popular **More Mná sweatshirts** and **More Grá t-shirts** to **Social Doggocrats bandanas** for your pup, or a Public Services mug for your next Zoom call, there is something for everyone. And carry it all home in a new **Tote Bag Merchant tote bag**. Every purchase helps support our candidates in future elections.



Accessibility and Additional Needs

A lounge with priority seating is located upstairs in Harbour 5, which may be particularly helpful during mealtimes. A Quiet Room is also available on the upper floor should you need a bit of quiet space. Lift access to the upper floor is beside the check-in desk. Please do not hesitate to contact the staff at the check-in desk if there is anything further we can do to assist you.

Security

The safety of our members, staff and elected representatives is extremely important to us. While we have security measures in place, please report any unusual or suspicious activity directly to the staff at the check-in desk. This will help ensure the security of all our attendees at all times.

Lounge

If you would like to chill out, unwind or chat with fellow party members, we have provided a lounge area located in Harbour 5 on the upper floor. We kindly ask that you be mindful of priority seating reserved for those with additional needs. This lounge will be open on Saturday only.

Filming Permission

The conference will be filmed and photographed by the Social Democrats for archival purposes and there will be media outlets taking photographs and filming at the event. Please read the CROWD PHOTOGRAPHY/DIGITAL RECORDING RELEASE NOTICE displayed in the lobby. Should you have any queries regarding data protection, please contact gdp@socialdemocrats.ie.



National Conference Agenda

Friday, 6th February – TIVOLI SUITE (MAIN HALL)

TIME	EVENT
17:30 – 18:00	REGISTRATION with Tea & Coffee
18:00 – 18:10	CONFERENCE OPENING Colm Byrne (<i>Party Chair</i>)
18:10 – 18:30	REPORTS FROM STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE, NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, GENERAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER Elaine Hickey, Colm Byrne, Sabrina Ryan, Dave Quinn
18:30 – 19:15	PARTY PANEL 1 Meet the new Social Democrats Councillors Chaired by Cllr Nuala Killeen (<i>Kildare North</i>) Cllr Ann Bambury (<i>Cork SW</i>), Cllr Claire O'Rourke (<i>Kildare North</i>), Cllr Eamonn Horgan (<i>Cork East</i>), Cllr Jesslyn Henry (<i>Dublin Bay North</i>)
19:15 – 19:50	PLENARY SESSION 1 Five Policy Motions on Supporting Vulnerable Citizens & Fighting Discrimination Supporting Survivors of Institutional Abuse (PM11, PM16) Cost of Living Measures (PM18) Socio Economic Rights (PM3), Disability Rights & Employment (PM15)
19:50 – 20:40	PANEL A The Changing Landscape of Political Communications Chaired by Cllr Mary Roche (<i>Waterford</i>) Louise McSharry (<i>Podcaster, DJ</i>), Leon Diop (<i>Black & Irish</i>), Claire McGowran (<i>Catherine Connolly Presidential Campaign</i>)
20:40 – 21:00	GUEST SPEAKER The Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland Introduced by Holly Cairns TD
21:00 – LATE	SOCIALISING Music Bingo, organised by Cork South Central Branch

Saturday, 7th February – TIVOLI SUITE (MAIN HALL)

TIME	EVENT
08:45 – 09:15	REGISTRATION with Tea & Coffee
09:15 – 10:30	PANEL B A Seismic Shift? Examining Trends in Irish Politics Chaired by Gary Gannon TD Theresa Reidy (<i>UCC</i>), Gary Murphy (<i>DCU</i>), Aidan Regan (<i>UCD</i>)
10:30 – 11:30	PLENARY SESSION 2 Five Motions on Party Operations and Strategic Planning Candidate Selection Principles (PA3, PA5), Codifying National Exec Functions (CA3) Motion on Left Wing Govt (PA1), Ethics in Politics (PM10)
11:30 – 12:30	PARTY PANEL 2 Policy under a Social Democratic Government Chaired by Jennifer Whitmore TD And featuring the new members of the Social Democrats Parliamentary Party
12:30 – 13:00	INTERVIEW WITH OUR BY-ELECTION CANDIDATES Chaired by Cllr Niamh O'Connor (<i>Cork South Central</i>) Daniel Ennis (<i>Dublin Central</i>) and Míde Nic Fhionnlaoich (<i>Galway West</i>)
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH , provided by the Party
14:00 – 15:00	PANEL C Irish Unity Chaired by Sinéad Gibney TD Fintan O'Toole (<i>Irish Times</i>) and Sam McBride (<i>Belfast Telegraph</i>)



KEY TO EVENTS

PARTY BUSINESS	PANEL (EXTERNAL)
KEY NOTE SPEAKER	MOTIONS / DEBATES
REFRESHMENTS	WORKSHOP / TRAINING
PANEL (PARTY REPS)	SOCIALISING

Saturday, 7th February – TIVOLI SUITE (MAIN HALL)

TIME	EVENT
15:00 – 16:00	PLENARY SESSION 3 Six Motions on Topics re Party Operations and Rules Bilingualism in Party Structures (CA5) The National Executive and Election Preparation (CA1, PA4) National Council Reform (CA2, PA7, CA4)
16:00 – 17:00	PANEL E Housing Rory Hearne TD, Cllr Lesley Byrne (<i>Dublin South Central</i>), Frank O'Connor and Jude Sherry (<i>Derelict Ireland</i>) Featuring motions on Housing (PM14) and the Far Right (PA6)
17:00 – 17:30	PLENARY SESSION 4 Health Policy Motions (x4) On HIQA (PM1), Mental Health (PM9, PM17), Postnatal Care (PM19)
17:30 – 18:00	REFRESHMENT BREAK (with finger food)
18:00 – 18:30	PRESENTATION OF THE INAUGURAL KODZO SELORMEY AWARD Announcement of the National Exec and SOC Election Results Intro to the Party Leader's Speech – Cian O'Callaghan TD
18:30 – 19:00	LEADER'S SPEECH Holly Cairns TD
19:00 – LATE	SOCIALISING

KEY TO EVENTS

PARTY BUSINESS	PANEL (EXTERNAL)
KEY NOTE SPEAKER	MOTIONS / DEBATES
REFRESHMENTS	WORKSHOP / TRAINING
PANEL (PARTY REPS)	SOCIALISING

Saturday, 7th February – HARBOUR 4

TIME	EVENT
13:30 – 13:50	POP-UP GAELTACHT Tar anseo agus comhraigh le do chairde sa pháirtí.
13:50 – 14:50	PANEL D: MEMBER WORKSHOP (in Gaeilge agus Béarla) Promoting An Gaeilge in Politics and in the Party Jen Cummins TD, Cllr John Hurley, John Prendergast (<i>Conradh na Gaeilge</i>) Featuring two motions (PM8, PA2) on the Irish Language
16:00 – 16:50	PANEL F: REWILDING OUR SEAS Jennifer Whitmore TD, Cllr Joan Hopkins (<i>Fingal East</i>) Padraic Fogarty (<i>Ecologist</i>), Dolf D'Hont (<i>Save Our Sprat</i>)
16:50 – 17:30	PLENARY SESSION 5 Miscellaneous Policy Motions (x7) On Early Childhood (PM13) Traffic Safety (PM5) Rural Issues (PM6, PM12) Peacekeeping (PM7), SMEs (PM2) and the Circular Economy (PM4)

Saturday, 7th February – HARBOUR 7

TIME	EVENT
14:00 – 15:00	THE QUEER CORNER facilitated by Pádraig Rice TD A Gathering to Discuss LGBTQI+ Policy and Plan Future Events
16:30 – 17:30	MORE MNÁ? Space for Women Candidates and Campaign Team Members to Share and Reflect on Their Experiences of 2024

National Conference 2026

Standing Orders Report

Introduction

The Standing Orders Committee as elected at the National Conference 2024 are as follows:

Chairperson	Elaine Hickey	<i>Cork South Central</i>
Members	Brian O’Kane	<i>Cork North Central</i>
	Victoria Olukitibi	<i>Clare</i>
	Omar Ababneh	<i>Kildare South</i>
	<i>Illan Dunne</i>	<i>Dublin Central</i>

At the National Conference 2024 there were only five nominees for the Standing Orders Committee. The five nominees met the gender quota requirements. The nominees were therefore, automatically elected.

In accordance with the Party’s Constitution, the newly elected National Executive co-opted three members to the Standing Orders Committee.

One committee member was deemed inactive and was removed from the committee.

Standing Orders Committee

The full committee for this term are:

Chairperson	Elaine Hickey	<i>Cork South Central</i>
Vice Chair	Victoria Olukitibi	<i>Clare</i>
Members	Brian O’Kane	<i>Cork North Central</i>
	Illan Dunne	<i>Dublin Central</i>
Co-opted	Ken Curtin	<i>Cork East</i>
	Noel Dempsey	<i>Kildare North</i>
	Brian Lynch	<i>Sligo/Leitrim</i>
	Laura Lane	<i>Cork North Central</i>

Since the last Conference, members of the Standing Orders Committee acted as returning officers at Selection Conventions, Co-option elections, European alternate selections, Branch AGMs, and other party events where voting took place.

Most of the Standing Orders Committee work relates to Conference.

Full details of the work are provided within the published report.

In relation to motions and amendments I’d like to praise branch officers for working collaboratively with their members and liaising with other branches. I believe this resulted in a higher volume of motions being submitted across a wide range of topics. Similarly, I commend members for their active engagement. It is great to have elections for all the Executive positions and for Standing Orders. I also laud those, who reconsidered running but intend to contribute to the Party in other ways. In the spirit of positivity and to ensure smooth running of Conference sessions I would like to ask all attendees to follow some conventions.

- If addressing speakers from the floor, please state your name and branch (if applicable), before making your address.
- Please do not enter or exit the hall whilst a vote on a plenary session is happening.
- Please do not have side conversations whilst motions and amendments are being presented.
- If you perceive an error has occurred, please raise this point of order through the Chair as soon as practicable.

The chair for the Conference is Colm Byrne. Colm’s decision on any matter related to the running of this conference is final. Chairs for each individual segment of Conference are as described in the conference agenda.

The chair of each session is responsible for the timekeeping and ensuring each session starts and finishes on time. Should any session run over its allotted time, time will be deducted from the remaining sessions to compensate. Should any session finish ahead of schedule, the next session will begin as soon as possible.

Report on the work of the Standing Orders Committee

Per article 5.12.1 of the Social Democrats Party constitution, the Standing Orders Committee is responsible for:

- Managing and verifying nominations submitted for posts created by the Constitution.
- Checking the validity of all proposed motions and amendments submitted.
- Drafting composite motions, if appropriate.
- Compiling the valid motions and amendments for National Conference.
- Preparing a preliminary agenda and final agenda for Conference, in conjunction with the National Executive.
- Managing elections and voting on motions at National Conference.

Motions

The Standing Orders Committee conducted an informational webinar on 4th November, providing tips for submitting motions.

The Standing Orders Committee wrote to branches asking them to submit motions for consideration by the 1st of Dec 2025

26 motions in total were received from branches. A further, 5 motions were received from the National Executive. Meaning, 31 motions will be discussed at Conference.

Amendments

The Standing Orders Committee distributed the accepted motions to branches and sought amendments by the 14th of January. From this, the committee received 15 amendments. Of these amendments:

- 3 amendments were ruled out of order.
- 2 amendments were composited.

Meaning 10 amendments are going to Conference.

Nominations

The Standing Orders Committee sought nominations for: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Ordinary Member of the National Executive and Member of the Standing Orders Committee due by the 11th of January.

The Standing Orders Committee received:

- 2 Nominations for Party Chairperson
- 3 Nominations for Party Vice-Chairperson
- 21 Nominations for Ordinary Member of the National Executive
- 6 Nominations for Member of the Standing Orders Committee

1 candidate for Ordinary Member of the National Executive retracted their nomination, meaning 22 nominees will now be on the ballot.

Where a candidate is seeking multiple positions. The procedure for how this will be handled is laid out in the voting section of this report.

Appointment of Election Officials

Per article 5.12.2 of the Social Democrats Constitution the Standing Orders Committee will put forward in this report proposals for *“The appointment of a Chief Teller and Assistant Tellers, the appointment of a Returning Officer and Scrutineers as well as the conduct of elections”*.

In line with this, we are proposing:

Returning Officer	Ken Curtin
Chief Teller	Noel Dempsey
Assistant Teller	Brian O’Kane
Scrutineers	Laura Lane Brian Lynch

Conference Timetable

The conference timetable is included in your conference document pack.

Conference Procedures

Voting Procedures Outline

- All voting at the Conference will take place in person via the ballot.
- All members who have paid their membership at least six months prior to the Conference and are registered for the Conference are entitled to vote.
- The time that voting opens and closes on each motion and amendment will be clearly indicated by the Chair.
- The time that voting opens and closes on the elections to officer roles has been marked on the Conference Agenda.

Motions

Motion Procedures

- Motions will be addressed in the order outlined in the Conference Agenda
- All motions will have a Proposer.
- The Proposer of a motion will have 3 minutes to propose a motion to Conference.
- The Proposer will put the motion and relevant arguments to the Conference.
- A member will have 1 minute to speak to a motion.
- A member will only be permitted to speak to a motion once.
- If the Proposer of a motion or an amendment is unable to speak, the Chair may move the motion or amendment in their stead.
- Where there is an amendment to a motion, this will be voted on first. If the amendment is passed, the motion as amended will be put to the Conference. If the amendment is not passed, the original motion will be put to the Conference.
 - In the event where two or more amendments are deemed to be in conflict with one another then the passage of one of those amendments will by default result in the others falling.
 - Any instance where amendments are in conflict with one another will be brought to the attention of members both in the motions list and on the day prior to voting commencing.
- A motion put to a vote will be decided by a show of hands vote.
- If due to unforeseen events or insufficient time, a motion is not reached and not put to Conference, it will be deemed to have fallen.

- The Chair in consultation with members of the Standing Orders Committee will call proposers and speakers from the floor, with due regard to a balanced and informative debate.
 - The Chair may, at their discretion, opt to end debate early and proceed to voting on the issue after the Proposer has moved the motion.
- A Proposer of a motion will have 1 minute to respond to any amendments.
- A Proposer of a motion will have 1 minute to sum up if there are any speakers against the motion.
 - In cases where there are no speakers against the amendment, it will be at the discretion of the Chairperson to decide if the Proposer will sum up.

Motion Voting

- All votes for motions will be conducted via a show of hands (lanyards).
- Voting on motions may be grouped.
- All motions and amendments will be decided via a simple majority vote.
- When voting begins will be clearly indicated by the Chairperson.
- The Chair will announce the results of any vote on motions or amendments upon the closing of voting on that motion or amendment.
- In the event of a tie, the Chair shall cast the tie breaking vote in line with the principles laid out in the *Rules and Procedures for Chair*.

Amendments

- No amendments will be accepted from the floor – aside from PM17, PM18, PM19 and PA3.
- All amendments will have a Proposer and the Proposer of the original motion will be permitted to respond to the amendment.
- The Proposer of the amendment will put the amendment and relevant arguments to the Conference.
- The Proposer of the amendment will have 2 minutes to speak.
- A member will have 1 minute to speak to an amendment.
- The Proposer of the motion to be amended will have 1 minute to respond.
- The Proposer of the original motion will be afforded time to respond to the amendment.
- An amendment put to a vote will be decided by a show of hands vote in the same manner as voting on motions.

Election of Party Officers

Eligible Voters

All members who have six months or more paid continuous membership and who have registered for the conference are eligible to vote in the elections.

For National Conference 2026, eligible members are:

- those who have six months or more paid continuous membership

Voting

Voting for eligible voters will be by secret ballot. We have used the system several times for elections within the Party and are confident of its accuracy, security and privacy.

Voting is by single transferable vote. Each vote can only be cast once and cannot be amended.

Counting of Votes

The election counts will be completed in the following order:

A.	Chair
B.	Vice-Chair
C.	National Executive
D.	Standing Orders Committee

Should a candidate who is standing in more than one election be elected, they will be excluded in any subsequent elections in which they are candidates and any votes cast for them in those subsequent elections will be transferred to the next available candidate according to the ballot preference.

The STV system will be used in all election counts.

A: Party Chair

Two candidates were nominated.

B: Party Vice Chair

Three candidates were nominated.

C: National Executive

In this election there is a gender quota: a minimum of four elected must identify as female and a minimum of four must identify as male. Ten seats are used to calculate the overall quota.

Votes will be counted using the STV system, which, having counted all votes and managed any surplus transfers and eliminations, will produce a ranked list of candidates.

The first four candidates from this list identifying as female will be deemed elected to the National Executive. The first four candidates from this list identifying as male will be deemed elected to the National Executive. Should all the four positions for each gender not be filled from the ten highest ranked candidates as above then the last eliminated person of that gender will be deemed elected followed by the second last eliminated candidate if required and so on. This will continue until all four quota positions are filled. Having filled the gender quota as above, the candidates placed highest for the remaining two positions will be deemed to be elected.

D: Standing Orders Committee

As per article **5.10.1** of the party constitution:

The Standing Orders Committee shall consist of eight ordinary members, no more than five of whom shall identify as any one gender. Five of the ordinary members shall be elected at National Conference, and three shall be appointed by the National Executive.

Rules and Procedures for the Rules and Procedures for the Chair

- The role of the Chair of Conference is to facilitate debates and votes on the motions and amendments outlined in the Conference Agenda within the timeframe agreed.
- The Chair will be responsible for the timekeeping of the various sessions of the Conference.
 - The Chair may at their discretion bring the debate on a given topic to a close
- The Chair will in consultation with the Standing Orders Committee call on speakers from the floor with a view to a balanced and informative debate.
- If a Proposer of a motion or amendment is unable to speak, the Chair may move said motion or amendment in their stead.
 - If the Chair moves a motion or amendments on behalf of a Proposer, they may use the time that said Proposer would have to outline the motion in a balanced and fair manner, noting that the Chair is a facilitator not a Proposer.
- The Chair will also be empowered to cast tie breaking votes where required in accordance with the following principles:
 - In the event of a tie the Chair will vote for amendments favouring the *status quo* position.
 - In the event of a tie, the Chairperson will vote for motions favouring the *status quo* position.
 - * The sole exception to this is where not passing the motion in question would leave the party in position that is not legally permissible.

Points of Order

- A Point of Order can be called only in the case of incorrect procedures. It should be raised as soon as the perceived mistake takes place and addressed by the Chair of the session who will make a decision, in consultation with the Standing Orders Committee, and in accordance with the Party Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Conference.

Elaine Hickey
Chairperson,
Standing Orders Committee



National Executive Report

– Conference

Members of National Executive

Chair:	Colm Byrne
Vice Chair:	Sorcha O'Neill
Treasurer:	Dave Quinn
Parliamentary Party:	Gary Gannon TD Cian O'Callaghan TD
Councillor Representatives:	Jesslyn Henry Chris Pender
Ordinary Members:	Kieran Clarke Mark Khan Thérèse McKenna Ciarán Robert O'Donovan Lynn Tierney Susan Doyle Richard Scriven Cian Smart Rebecca Ryan Hilary Tonge
Resignations:	Martha Ní Ríada Sabrina Ryan Angela Flynn Jodie Neary Donnah Vumah David O'Reilly

The National Executive was elected at our last conference in February 2024 and served until February 2026. During this period, the National Executive met on 19 occasions, while the National Council met six times.

At the time of its election, the party was entering a particularly significant electoral cycle, with Local, European, Mayoral, General, and Seanad elections all scheduled to take place within the following twelve months. This presented both a substantial challenge and a significant opportunity to reshape the Irish political landscape. The party rose to this challenge, and in less than ten years the Social Democrats have grown to become the fourth-largest party in Ireland, with 33 councillors, 11 TDs, and one Senator. This is before mentioning the monumental success of Catherine Connolly's Presidential campaign in which the Social Democrats played a vital role.

This progress has been made possible through the dedication and commitment of members across the country, supported by an expanding staff team. As the party continues to grow, the staffing complement has increased accordingly and will continue to do so. In 2024, a number of key appointments were made which proved integral to the party's electoral success. We welcomed Vic Duggan as Director of Strategy, Sabrina Ryan as Interim General Secretary, and Hannah Loughlin as Social Media Officer.

To further support the organisation's continued growth, the Head Office team was expanded again in 2025 with the appointment of Ruairi Power as National Organiser, leading a new team of regional organisers, Deirdre McCormack and David O'Reilly. The communications team also grew with the appointments of Michael Dooley and, more recently, Claire McGowran. Sabrina Ryan was additionally appointed on a permanent basis to the role of General Secretary.

Further appointments are planned for 2026, following the party securing support from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for the recruitment of a Programme Manager. This role will focus on supporting gender balance and diversity among potential candidates in advance of the next local elections.

While the team has expanded, several staff members moved on to new opportunities during this period, including Andrew Byrne, Conor McHugh, Carly Bailey, and Gareth Moynan. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for their valuable work and contributions to the party.

Candidate identification, selection, and support were major areas of focus throughout 2024, not only for those contesting elections but also for the subsequent co-options required to fill vacant council seats. Candidate selection remains a critical and evolving aspect of the party's organisational strength. While the process has not been without challenges, particularly in relation to consistency, diversity of representation, and timely decision-making. It is important to recognise these issues as part of an ongoing learning and improvement process. Despite these difficulties, the party has achieved significant success through its candidate selection strategy, reflected in the calibre, commitment, and electoral performance of many candidates. These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of the process when it functions well, while also highlighting the need for continued refinement.

Fundraising initiatives formed an important pillar of the party's organisational and campaign capacity during the period. While these efforts required considerable coordination and were not without logistical and resource challenges, they delivered tangible results and meaningful engagement. A dedicated fundraiser in support of female candidates generated essential funding while reinforcing the party's commitment to increasing women's representation. In addition, the introduction of more diverse and inclusive merchandise broadened supporter appeal, and several national fundraising draws successfully raised funds while strengthening nationwide participation. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate the effectiveness of the party's fundraising approach, alongside opportunities for further development.

The Social Democrats also marked with deep sadness the passing of our Treasurer, Kodzo Selormey, in 2024. Kodzo was a central and deeply respected figure within the organisation, contributing at all levels with integrity, diligence, and a strong sense of responsibility. His work as Treasurer was characterised by a quiet commitment to the values and aims of the organisation, alongside a long-standing record of activism and service. In recognition of his lasting impact, the National Executive is proud to have established the first award in Kodzo Selormey's name, to be presented at this conference. This award serves as both a tribute to his contribution and a lasting reminder of the dedication and activism that defined his involvement and continue to inspire the organisation.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the National Executive for their work and collaboration during this term. It is both a challenging and rewarding role, and I am grateful to each member for their commitment. I also wish to thank everyone who serves on committees, the National Council, and as branch officers for the time and energy they give so generously. Finally, I would like to thank all members for your support throughout my time as Chairperson. It has been both an honour and a privilege to serve.

Colm Byrne
Party Chairperson



Parliamentary Party Report to the 7th National Conference

Our parliamentary party has doubled in size, from six to twelve, since our last conference. The 2024 general election saw the addition of seven first-time TDs to the four elected for the first time in 2016. Early 2025 saw the very first election of a Social Democrats Senator.

Our challenge as an enlarged parliamentary party is to build on the fantastic legacy of our founding leaders, Catherine Murphy and Róisín Shortall, who stepped down at the 2024 election. We are determined not only to hold what we have, but to continue to grow while staying true to our Social Democratic principles. We need to build critical mass to play a leading role in the alternative, social democratic government that Ireland so dearly needs.

Over the past year our parliamentary party members have worked tirelessly to get to grips with what, for most of them, were new spokesperson portfolios and to become advocates for a Social Democratic approach across all policy areas.

We take pride in being an evidence-based, solutions-focused, policy-driven Party. As well as using Oireachtas and media platforms to hold the government to account, we always look to propose viable, credible and constructive alternatives.

Ahead of the 2026 budget we produced a fully-costed alternative budget that would strike a balance between protecting our economic security, dealing with the long-term challenges we face as a society, and providing targeted support to hard-pressed households. Among the policy priorities set out were:

- Lifting up to 40,000 children out of poverty with a new second tier of Child Benefit.
- Increasing State-led supply of affordable homes.
- Abolishing the means test for Carer's Allowance.
- Investing to bring down the cost of education at all levels. This includes maintaining the €1,000 reduction in the student contribution fee at third level.
- Cutting childcare fees by more than €200 per month.
- Introducing a weekly cost of disability payment of €20.
- Energy credits worth €400, targeted at households in the lowest 40 per cent of incomes.
- Increasing pension and working age welfare payments by €15.
- Investing in Ireland's clean energy future, via the creation of a Wind Energy Fund.
- Increasing total paid leave for parents to cover the first 12 months of a child's life.
- A €100 Sports and Activity voucher for all children aged 6 to 18.

It is the privilege of a lifetime to be elected to the Oireachtas, to represent our communities. We take our role as legislators very seriously. Since the general election, we have used our private members' time in the Dáil to table motions or initiate legislation that would deliver affordable housing, increase parental choice in public education, protect neutrality, end the Central Bank's sale of Israeli war bonds, abolish the means test for carers, address the cost of living crisis and extend the voting franchise to 16 and 17-year-olds. In the Seanad, we initiated legislation that would establish a free travel scheme for victims of domestic violence.

Without doubt one of our proudest achievements since the general election was being the first political party to support Catherine Connolly's bid for the Presidency. Her election is proof positive that we can deliver the alternative social democratic government that Ireland so desperately needs. Our Oireachtas team has a laser focus on making that dream a reality over the remainder of our term.

See the following pages for a small sample of some of the work our TDs have been doing.



Holly Cairns TD

As leader of the Social Democrats, Holly has focused on holding the Government to account, while working to build the party across the country.

Housing has remained at the centre of Holly's work. She has consistently challenged the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Housing on their failure to deliver social and affordable homes, highlighting the growing gap between housing targets and real world delivery.

She has worked to expose the impact of Government policy on renters, first-time buyers and those experiencing homelessness – advocating for large-scale public housing delivery, stronger tenant protections and an end to over-reliance on the private market.

In her second term as a TD, Holly remains a dedicated advocate for disabled people. She has pushed for the introduction of a weekly cost of disability payment, alongside pay parity for disability workers and properly resourced services. She has repeatedly highlighted the need to enact a truly rights-based approach to disability, and the State's ongoing failure to meet its obligations in this area.

As the cost-of-living crisis has continued to put pressure on households, Holly has challenged policies that leave people struggling to meet basic needs. She has advocated for measures to reduce everyday costs, protect the most vulnerable, and ensure that economic growth translates into real improvements in living standards.

Holly has called out the Government's inaction on climate change, calling for investment in renewable energy, flood defences, retrofitting, and for the need to support farmers and fishers to move towards more sustainable practices.

Tackling domestic and gender-based violence has been a core priority. Holly has highlighted the proliferation of AI sexual abuse images, the ongoing crisis in refuge availability, gaps in specialist supports and the need for long-term, sustainable funding for services.

In the face of the continued genocide in Gaza, President Trump's erraticism, and growing instability internationally, Holly has spoken out clearly and forcefully. She has stressed the importance of ensuring our economy is not overly reliant on the US. She has also demanded accountability, sanctions and meaningful action from the Irish Government and the European Union in response to breaches of human rights and international law.



Cian O'Callaghan TD

Cian is the Social Democrats Deputy Leader and Finance and Public Expenditure spokesperson. In his Dáil brief, tackling the cost-of-living crisis and investing in infrastructure are his top priorities.

In October we published our Social Democrats Alternative Budget for 2026. Cian led the development of this fully costed plan which included measures to lift 40,000 children out of poverty; abolish the means test for carers; bring down the cost of childcare; provide a weekly cost of disability payment; turbocharge the delivery of affordable homes; and introduce targeted energy credits to benefit 800,000 households.

The rising cost-of-living has put relentless pressure on people all over the country. The costs of groceries have skyrocketed in recent years with Ireland now having the second highest food prices in the Eurozone. Food prices are increasing way beyond the costs of producing food, suggesting Irish households are being ripped off. Cian has pushed for the Food Regulator to be given the powers it needs to investigate price gouging in the food chain.

Drivers, homeowners, sports clubs, businesses, and community organisations have seen their insurance premiums continue to rise in the midst of an unprecedented cost-of-living crisis. Cian put forward practical solutions in a submission to the new Action Plan for Insurance Reform that would help bring down premiums. These include capping legal fees for personal injury claims, legislating for insurance companies to publish their calculations – justifying any increases to premiums and instructing the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) to examine the public liability market.

Cian has used his role as Finance Spokesperson to push for meaningful action against the Genocide in Gaza. The Social Democrats have campaigned to end the sale of Israeli war bonds. At the Finance Committee, Cian questioned the Governor of the Central Bank on its role in facilitating the sale of these bonds. He has also pushed the Minister for Finance to fully divest the Irish Strategic Investment Fund from companies operating in occupied Palestinian territories.



Jen Cummins TD

As Social Democrats Education spokesperson, Jen's first year in Dáil Éireann was heavily focused on creating a better education system, protecting the rights of children with additional needs and promoting education equality.

As the party's first TD in Dublin South Central, Jen has been working to end educational disadvantage and bring about a more equal education system. Her first Dáil motion focused on giving parents a choice of patronage when sending their children to school, and she continues to work on legislation to improve our education system.

Jen firmly believes in a free education system and has focused on issues such as hot school meals, uniform costs and so-called voluntary contributions – issues that all feed into educational disadvantage. She has challenged the Government several times in relation to children not having an appropriate school place. She has also called for additional supports for young people with dyslexia, such as the allocation of extra time during exams.

Over the past year, Jen has looked at how we can better support staff within our education system, focusing on teacher retention and recruitment. She was fully supportive of school caretakers and secretaries when they embarked on strike action last year.

Jen has worked to highlight the importance of all routes to further and higher education. She wants to see better investment in apprenticeships, Leaving Certificate reform, and Community Training Centres. She has also continuously raised the student accommodation crisis with the Government.

At a local level, Jen engages with constituents at her three monthly clinics, working on issues ranging from housing and school places to domestic violence and immigration. She regularly visits schools and liaises with principals to see how she can better support their needs. She also meets regularly with local groups in Dublin South Central.

Jen has a Doctorate in Education which focused on trauma and how it impacts retention in education. Prior to her entry to politics, she was the coordinator of Ballymun Anseo School Completion Programme for 18 years. This experience has shaped her politics and informed her approach to addressing real educational disadvantage across Ireland. Last year, she held a symposium for all education workers within the party.



Aidan Farrelly TD

Aidan Farrelly is the Social Democrats TD for Kildare North.

Aidan is married to Aisling and they have three children – Ella, Tadhg and Cillian. Before his election as a TD, Aidan had been a professional youth worker and community development worker in Kildare for 16 years. He also served as a councillor on Kildare County Council.

Since being elected to Dáil Éireann, Aidan has become a member of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Issues raised by Aidan at PAC have included failures in governance and serious financial issues within the Arts Council and Department of Arts and Culture; continuing cost overruns and further delays to the National Children's Hospital; the emerging issue across Departments and State bodies to deliver IT projects on time and within budget; controls around Seized Cash Management by An Garda Síochána and fees outstanding in respect of their role at non-public duty events.

Aidan is also a member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children and Equality. To date, over the course of his committee work, he has had ongoing and regular engagements with Tusla. Along with his committee colleagues, he regularly hears from stakeholders in the child and youth sectors and is passionate about ending child poverty and deprivation.

In terms of legislation, Aidan has introduced a Vote at 16 Bill. This bill, which is currently at third stage, provides for the right of persons aged 16 to 18 to participate in local, general and European elections.

Aidan has also brought forward Páistecare – the Social Democrats' vision for what childcare in this country can be. He firmly believes that a public model of childcare and early years services is the best way to address the endemic problems in the sector. Páistecare presents a progressive, pragmatic vision for how childcare and early years services can serve all in our communities – and Aidan is determined to see it become a reality.



Gary Gannon TD

As Social Democrats TD for Dublin Central and the party's Spokesperson on Justice, Migration and Home Affairs, Gary has been a consistent and outspoken voice for fairness, decency, evidence-based policy, and human dignity at the heart of Ireland's justice system.

In his justice role, Gary has repeatedly challenged the Minister for Justice, Migration and Home Affairs on the Government's increasingly cruel and performative approach to immigration. He has been particularly vocal on the International Protection Bill, calling out the lack of detail or safeguards contained within legislation that will have profound and long-lasting effects on the safety, wellbeing, and rights of people seeking asylum in our Republic. Gary has continuously argued that poorly drafted law, rushed through without proper oversight, is undermining social cohesion and damaging Ireland's international human rights reputation.

Gary has also consistently highlighted the urgent need to rebalance our justice system away from punishment alone and towards prevention, restoration, and early intervention. Sitting on both the Justice Committee and the Drugs Committee, he has been a strong advocate for restorative

justice measures and meaningful funding of youth intervention programmes – issues of particular relevance in Dublin Central, where communities have borne the brunt of decades of underinvestment and reactive policy-making.

On prisons, Gary has been unequivocal in describing overcrowding as a national emergency. He has raised serious concerns about the warehousing of people in overcrowded, unsafe conditions that do nothing to reduce reoffending or improve public safety. Supported by evidence from the Inspector of Prisons and international best practice, he has argued that short custodial sentences, poor access to mental health supports, and the overuse of remand are failing both individuals and society as a whole.

Gary has also worked closely with experts, frontline workers, and survivors in the area of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. He has repeatedly challenged the Government on the persistent lack of refuge spaces, inadequate funding, and the failure to ensure safe accommodation for those fleeing violence. Because tackling gender-based violence requires more than strategies and press releases – it requires sustained investment and political will.

As Chair of the Oireachtas Drugs Committee, Gary has used his position to advance the work of the Citizens' Assembly on Drugs Use – the most comprehensive examination of drugs policy ever undertaken in the State. He remains committed to driving meaningful change towards a progressive, health-led drugs policy that tackles addiction at its root, supports communities, and moves decisively away from the failed criminal justice approach that has dominated for far too long.



Sinéad Gibney TD

Sinéad Gibney is the Social Democrats spokesperson for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment; Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport; and Defence.

As Spokesperson for Defence, Sinéad has been to the forefront of the fight to protect Irish neutrality and the Triple Lock. We have the longest unbroken UN peacekeeping record in the world, and Defence Forces we are rightly proud of. But those same Defence Forces personnel continue to face issues around pay, conditions, and a lack of resources to do their jobs safely and effectively.

Sinéad sits on the Oireachtas AI and Media committees. As someone who spent many years working in tech and human rights, she has focussed her efforts there on tech justice and transparency. This means tackling the treatment of children online, the use of harmful algorithms, the misuse of our personal data and the rollout of unsafe generative AI on online platforms. She has been one of the strongest critics of the government approach to online regulation and a fierce advocate for technology to be adequately regulated so that it can serve the common good, not the interests of a handful of billionaires.

Funding for things like the arts and sport are often seen as an optional extra in our society, but we know that they are the foundation of community cohesion, of education, of ensuring people can live full and fulfilling lives. As spokesperson for Arts, Culture, Communications and Sport, Sinéad has championed funding for community sports, gender equality and inclusivity, and the urgent need to increase arts funding. Her work in the Dáil and on the Committee on Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport has highlighted disabled artists excluded from funding due to a lack of income disregards, the failure to expand funding for the Basic Income for the Arts scheme, and the importance of enshrining gender parity in the planned integration of the GAA.

In her role as spokesperson for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Sinéad has been vocal on the need for a right to collective bargaining. Employers cannot continue to have a veto over whether they will come to the table and strike a fair deal with their workers. In the modern world she has highlighted the need to support new ways of working such as flexible and remote working. SMEs have struggled in recent years in an environment where big business and an overreliance on FDI has left little support for indigenous Irish businesses, who are the bedrock of our economy and our communities. She has used her time in the Dáil to call for support for SMEs and creating an economic model which can withstand global shocks such as tariffs.



Rory Hearne TD

Since being elected as a first-time TD for Dublin North-West, Rory, as the Party's Spokesperson on Housing, Local Government and Heritage, has held the Government to account on their utter failure to tackle the housing emergency. As Gaeltacht and Gaeilge Spokesperson, he has focused on how Irish speaking communities continue to be failed by the State.

Consistently highlighting Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael's shameful legacy of record levels of homelessness and advocating for generations of families locked out of affordable housing have been key priorities for Rory.

Too often the Government accuses the Social Democrats and others of 'not putting forward realistic solutions and policy alternatives'. The Social Democrats have discredited that narrative. As Housing Spokesperson, Rory has brought forward tangible policy proposals such as an Irish state-backed savings scheme – the 'Homes for Ireland Savings Account' – which would operate on a similar basis to the 'Livret A' model in France and open up a new source of private financing for home building in Ireland. Rory has also introduced party policy to push for the development of a state construction company and a modular homes factory.

Soon after the general election, Rory introduced a Private Members' Motion on addressing the housing and rental crises. This motion called on the Government to implement measures including the closing of tax loopholes for investment/vulture funds, a 100% stamp duty on the bulk purchase of homes, and proper protections for renters.

Alongside his role as Housing Spokesperson, Rory has worked hard as Party Spokesperson on the Gaeltacht and the Irish Language, raising the detrimental effects of the housing crisis on Irish-speaking communities and regularly engaging with key stakeholders to promote meaningful support for Irish speakers and our national language. Leanfaidh Rory ar aghaidh ag obair go cruá mar Urlabhraí Gaeltachta agus Gaeilge na Daonlathaigh Shóisialta.

Rory has also made significant contributions to the Oireachtas Housing Committee, questioning key stakeholders on housing matters and challenging the narrative that housing can be treated as an investment opportunity or anything but a human right. He has been raising the issue of substandard conditions in social housing, including in Ballymun, Finglas and elsewhere.

Rory has pushed additional policy alternatives such as a ban on no-fault evictions, the eradication of homelessness through a 'Housing First' strategy, clamping down on illegal short-term lets, tackling vacancy and dereliction, and greater funding for local authorities and approved housing bodies.



Eoin Hayes TD

As our spokesperson for Social Protection, Eoin has given voice to the Social Democrats' transformative vision for a more just society that protects the most vulnerable.

As part of his work, Eoin has doggedly pursued the government on its complete disregard for carers, people with disabilities, parents, and children in Budget 2026. He has also focused on the government's lack of preparation for the introduction of the auto-enrolment pension scheme. Eoin brought forward 10 amendments to the Social Welfare and Auto-enrolment Bill 2025 – the most of any party – which focused on progressive proposals for a cost of disability payment, abolishing the means test for carers, and a second tier of child benefit targeting the most disadvantaged families, as well as issues relating to the structure and risk profile of the new My Future Fund pension scheme. He additionally sought greater worker representation and governance protections on the board overseeing the administration of the scheme.

Before taking up the Social Protection role, Eoin regularly attended the committee on EU Affairs and the Enterprise Committee, leading a political contribution from the latter to the European Commission opposing the EU Omnibus proposals to reduce climate and human rights regulations on corporations. Working closely with the Irish Council for Business and Human Rights, comprised of organisations like Trócaire, Fairtrade Ireland, and the National Women's Council, Eoin drove the committee to make an official contribution which highlighted serious concerns with the commission's proposals to row back on already limited reporting obligations and emphasised that the move marked a deeply regressive turn in the EU's commitment to climate and human rights protections.

As a Dublin TD, Eoin has been extremely vocal on housing, raising the specific issues faced by both younger people and older people approaching retirement age without housing security. He continued to advocate for large scale affordable housing developments on public land in Dublin, including at Cathal Brugha Barracks in Rathmines and the Irish Glass Bottle site.

Other Dublin issues Eoin has focused on have included flood defence and insurance for Dublin Bay coastal neighbourhoods, the acceleration of water infrastructure works for the city, the need for increased school places in non-fee-paying schools in South Dublin, and improving public transport and safe active travel for pedestrians and cyclists.



Pádraig Rice TD

Since becoming Spokesperson for Health, Pádraig has been pursuing this Government over its failure to prioritise implementation of Sláintecare.

In May, the Minister for Health published a new action plan, 'Sláintecare 2025+', without any costings or timelines. Budget 2026 contained no new big-ticket health reforms, just a repackaging of pre-committed initiatives. Pádraig has continuously drawn attention to this shortage of detail, ambition and reform and called on the Minister to allocate a ring-fenced budget for Sláintecare implementation, publish updated costings and outline a clear timeline for full implementation.

In May, Pádraig was elected Chair of the Oireachtas Health Committee. Since then, the Committee has dealt with issues which include Children's Health Ireland's governance, waiting list management and treatment of children in its care; the failures of the current elder care model; unbridled insourcing and outsourcing arrangements in public hospitals; digital health; healthcare services in the Mid West; maternity services in Portlincula University Hospital; and the crisis in public dental services.

Pádraig introduced his first piece of legislation last year. The Public Health (Alcohol) (Amendment) Bill 2025 seeks to close a loophole in the law that allows the drinks industry to circumvent restrictions on alcohol advertising when it comes to their 0.0 products. Pádraig also co-signed a joint opposition Bill which seeks to disregard historic convictions for consensual sexual activity between men, prior to decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993.

Throughout 2025, Pádraig was a leading voice on sexual health services and trans healthcare. In the first half of 2025, he applied significant pressure on the Minister for Health and the Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health to publish the long-awaited new Sexual Health Strategy, which was eventually launched in June – three years after it was due. Pádraig has also consistently called out the shocking state of trans healthcare in this country, and advocated for a new model of trans healthcare, delivered in the community and based on the principle of informed consent. He has repeatedly spoke up for this marginalised community who have been denied the care they deserve for far too long.

Pádraig has also brought attention to significant capacity constraints in Ireland's cancer services. In particular, he has been a strong advocate for improvements in radiation therapy services, working directly with workers, unions, tutors and academics to bring forward solutions to staffing and infrastructure deficits – including a rolling ten-year replacement programme for radiation therapy equipment. Pádraig has also drawn attention to the HSE's rampant outsourcing of radiation therapy to the private sector, while the State does little to increase capacity in the public sector.

Senator Patricia Stephenson

Patricia Stephenson is the Social Democrats' first Senator to be elected to the Seanad and she's had a busy first year.

As the party spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and member of the Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee, Patricia has spoken strongly on the importance of overseas aid, human rights and sustainable trade obligations, and on ensuring conflicts and forgotten crises are kept on the public agenda. She has spoken against the ongoing genocide in Gaza and apartheid in the West Bank and continues to campaign tirelessly for passing the Occupied Territories Bill. She supports Ireland's neutrality, calling for the preservation of the Triple Lock.

Patricia has first-hand experience of international development and peacebuilding, having spent many years living in East Africa. As part of her work, she visited the West Bank on a fact finding mission and participated in a trade trip to North America. In addition, she has spoken several times at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on topics related to peace, freedom of speech, LGBTQI+ rights, and the rights of youth in democracy.

As a member of the Committee for Infrastructure and NDP, Patricia has been scrutinising infrastructure delivery failures and interrogating the systemic failures within government structures, planning systems, and inter-agency coordination. Patricia also sits on the Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. She is committed to working towards all-island solutions in healthcare, disability services and infrastructure. She strongly believes that resilient communities only come about when diversity and inclusivity are prioritised.

One of Patricia's priority issues is tackling gender-based violence. This year, Patricia introduced her first bill, called the Domestic Violence (Free Travel Scheme) Bill 2025, which would provide three months of free travel to people fleeing situations of domestic abuse, a modest intervention that could be a

genuine lifeline to people trapped in situations of coercive abuse. She has consistently raised the issues of domestic violence and limited refuge space for survivors.

Patricia has been advocating for greater recognition of women's health issues, such as endometriosis, PMDD, and more broadly women's pain and medical gaslighting. For too long, women's healthcare has been a neglected topic on the Irish public agenda and these painful conditions have gone undiagnosed and untreated. Patricia is inspired by the women who reach out to her about their experiences and will continue to fight for better health outcomes for women.

Patricia lives in the Carlow-Kilkenny constituency with her partner and two rescue dogs. Locally she's working on issues related to housing, transport and disability advocacy.

Liam Quaide TD

Liam Quaide is the Social Democrats TD for Cork East and spokesperson for Mental Health; Disability; and Rural and Community Development.

Liam represents a diverse and growing constituency facing real pressures around housing, healthcare access, transport, flood relief and the cost-of-living. His work as a TD is focused on delivering practical solutions to those challenges.

Liam is a clinical psychologist by profession, with many years' experience working in Community Adult Mental Health Services and hospital outpatient settings. His professional background strongly informs his parliamentary work, particularly in relation to mental health, disability and safeguarding.

Since his election to the Dáil, he has used parliamentary questions, debates, and committee work to highlight shortfalls in service provision and the lack of planning and compliance with human rights standards in the disability sector. He has raised issues such as waiting lists, access to community supports, and the pressures on families caring for relatives with complex needs.

The cost-of-living pressures faced by disabled people is also a key concern and Liam has consistently highlighted the need for a permanent cost-of-disability payment to ameliorate some of that financial pressure.

Liam is particularly focused on ensuring that people with disabilities are supported to live and be educated in their own communities. Prior to his election as a TD, he led a successful campaign to restore community residential mental health services in East Cork, resulting in a multi-million-euro HSE investment.

Climate action is a central pillar of Liam's work and climate policy must work for people by supporting farmers, improving air and water quality, reducing flood risk, and strengthening local economies. Liam has consistently argued for stronger protections for biodiversity, including trees and hedgerows, alongside much increased investment in public transport and sustainable community development.

Before entering politics, Liam's values were shaped through voluntary work with Amnesty Ireland and the Samaritans, reinforcing his belief in social justice and human rights.

For Liam, politics is about giving voice and power to those who have been left behind in society. It is also about protecting nature, and building resilient, inclusive communities where each person has the opportunity to thrive.



Jennifer Whitmore TD

Jennifer Whitmore is a TD for Wicklow. She has a background in ecology, marine science and environmental law.

Jennifer believes that we need delivery on climate action and nature restoration now and should use every opportunity at our disposal to effect positive change in this area, while ensuring no one is left behind.

Before entering politics, Jennifer spent 10 years in Australia as a senior policy analyst alongside government ministers, developing environmental law, water management and energy policy. She also spent several years working with the Marine Institute as a scientist.

Since Jennifer's election to the Dáil in 2020, she has highlighted the need for better controls on energy prices and the rising cost of groceries. She previously served as chair of the Oireachtas Committee on International Surrogacy and has called for a fully publicly funded childcare and early education service that meets the needs of parents, children and educators.



General Secretary's Report to the 7th National Conference

Since the February 2024 National Conference, the Party has continued to experience a significant increase in visibility, capacity, and influence across multiple dimensions of Irish politics. Party membership is now approaching 3,000 and continues to grow steadily, with new branches being established in an expanding number of areas nationwide. This organisational growth has been matched by increased participation and success across local, European, general, mayoral, Seanad and presidential elections.

Alongside electoral engagement, the Party has established more branches, developed additional college societies, increased the number of regional events held across the country, and expanded its staffing complement to support this heightened activity and ongoing organisational strengthening. It was a great joy to celebrate the milestone of the party's 10th birthday last July and see the room packed with people with a shared purpose and vision.

Since the 2024 local elections, the Party has made substantial gains and now boasts 33 Councillors nationwide. We are proud to be the second-largest group on both Dublin City Council and Kildare County Council. Our Councillors continue to work tirelessly within their communities to deliver tangible improvements and essential local amenities that enhance quality of life.

They engage meaningfully with residents, building strong relationships and collaborating to achieve results despite limited resources. As a Party, we continue to advocate for increased funding and greater powers at local authority level, ensuring that those who know their communities best have a stronger role in shaping them.

Since the last conference, the Social Democrats stood 77 local election candidates, three European candidates, one mayoral candidate, 26 general election candidates and two Seanad candidates. We also led the way as the first party to endorse Catherine Connolly in her successful presidential campaign.

Delivering this scale of electoral engagement required a strong and dedicated Head Office team, which at various points included Conor McHugh, Anna McGowan, Ruairí Power, Carly Bailey, Gareth Moynan, Florence McElwee, Mary Callaghan and Sabrina Ryan.

Acknowledgement must also be given to the Candidate Strategy and Development Committee, under the leadership of Gerry Quinn and later Dermot Looney throughout the General Election period. Sincere thanks to all members of the CSDC and to the many prospective candidates who engaged with the process. The depth and quality of individuals willing to represent the Party is a clear sign of organisational health and growing credibility.

A substantial amount of work was invested in delivering comprehensive training and support for candidates, campaign managers and canvassers, alongside facilitating the procurement of essential printed materials and campaign resources.

Following the General Election, branch development became a central focus with the appointment of Ruairí Power as National Organiser and the establishment of a strengthened organising team, including Regional Organisers Deirdre McCormack and David O'Reilly.

Branch activity has increased significantly since the hiring of additional organisers. Branch officers are now receiving more regularised support, meetings are taking place more frequently, and engagement in local campaigns has ramped up considerably. New or re-established branches are now active in Mayo, Wicklow-Wexford, Wexford, Laois and Galway East. We continue working towards universal branch coverage, with the aim of establishing an active Social Democrats branch in every part of the country in the coming months. Work has also begun with a number of branches on the creation of local development plans to map pathways to electoral success. With the support of relevant Regional Organisers, this process will be rolled out to all branches shortly.

In September 2025, the Party hosted its first ever in-person Branch Officers Training Day at the Harbour Hotel in Galway. The event was well attended and positively received, and further training sessions and resources are planned throughout the year. Looking ahead, we will be running an open-access, in-person workshop for members interested in contesting future elections. The aim is to provide mentorship opportunities, regular engagement with staff, examples of best practice in campaigning, and skills development to increase our likelihood of seat gains in the next electoral cycle. This work will be further strengthened by the planned appointment of a Programme Manager for Gender Balance and Diversity, a position currently advertised.

Regional Organisers remain in regular contact with branch officers and sitting representatives to proactively identify and support prospective candidates for future local, general and European elections.

National Council meetings have continued on a regular schedule, with recent gatherings held in Limerick, Tullamore and Dublin. This forum has proven invaluable for consultation on party strategy, policy discussion, and gaining insight into branch priorities and activities. It was also through this forum that Catherine Connolly emerged as the preferred presidential candidate.

The Left Bank has played a crucial role in advancing discussions on modern democracy and progressive policy development. Its annual Summer School, open to both members and non-members, provided an important space for dialogue on contemporary societal challenges and collaborative solutions. In addition, well-attended seminars in May and November 2025 further enriched intellectual discourse both within and beyond the Party.

Overall, the Left Bank's work reflects our strong commitment to informed debate, member empowerment and progressive policy development as we seek to build a more inclusive and equitable society.

Our digital presence continues to be a vital pillar of our engagement strategy in the modern political landscape, allowing us to connect directly with supporters, reach new audiences, and shape political discourse in real time. Since 2024, the Party has seen significant growth across its social media platforms, reflecting increased public interest and the effectiveness of our digital outreach. The total number of followers across all platforms has risen from 146,630 to 203,507, demonstrating a substantial expansion in our online community and our ability to amplify key messages beyond traditional media channels.

This growth has been particularly strong on visually driven and youth-focused platforms. Our Instagram following increased from 41,600 to 65,129, while TikTok followers grew from 54,000 to 79,871, highlighting the success of our content in engaging younger demographics and encouraging political participation. In addition, the establishment of a Bluesky account has further diversified our digital footprint, ensuring our presence across emerging platforms and future-proofing our communications strategy. Together, these developments underline the importance of a strong, adaptable digital presence in building momentum, fostering dialogue, and maintaining relevance in an increasingly online political environment.

The Party is pleased to now operate with an expanded and strengthened staffing complement. As our membership, electoral activity and national profile grow, it is essential that our organisational capacity keeps pace with our ambitions. A well-resourced professional staff allows the Party to support branches effectively, develop strong campaigns, deliver high-quality communications, and provide strategic direction across all areas of work.

The current staffing structure is as follows:

General Secretary:	Sabrina Ryan
Chief of Staff:	Vic Duggan
Communications & Political Director:	Colette Brown
Policy Director:	Eamon Murphy
National Organiser	Ruairi Power
Regional Organiser South:	David O'Reilly
Regional Organiser Midlands-Northwest:	Deirdre McCormack
Operations Manager:	Mary Callaghan
National Administrator:	Florence McElwee
Press Officer:	Tony McCullagh
Communications Executive:	Michael Dooley
Social Media Manager:	Claire McGowran
Social Media Officer:	Cathal Murray
Social Media Officer:	Hannah Loughlin
Special Projects and & Strategy Advisor:	Clare O'Reilly
Leader Support:	Fiona Cairns
Leader Assistance:	Christine Heffernan

Investment in staffing is not simply about growth, it is about sustainability, professionalism and long-term success. By building a skilled and dedicated team, we ensure that volunteers and elected representatives are properly supported, that organisational systems continue to improve, and that the Party is positioned to compete effectively at every electoral level.

As we look to the year ahead, we are eager to ramp up our campaigning activity and continue focusing on the issues that matter most to people across Ireland. From housing and healthcare to quality public services, fairness, equality, environmental protection and the development of sustainable communities, we remain firmly committed to advocating for positive change.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the outgoing National Executive for their dedication and hard work. They have overseen a period of exceptional growth, a time that has not been without its challenges. Much of this work happens behind the scenes, but the progress we see today would not have been possible without their commitment and service. In particular, I want to thank the outgoing Chairperson Colm Byrne and Treasurer Dave Quinn who stepped into the breach at a time when the organisation needed it most. They have both been of great personal and professional help to me in my role and I owe a debt of gratitude to their support. With enthusiasm and optimism, we look forward to what lies ahead for the Social Democrats as we continue working towards a brighter future for all.

In Solidarity,

Sabrina Ryan
General Secretary



Treasurer Report to the 7th National Conference

Overview

As Treasurer, I am responsible for ensuring that the Party's finances are managed properly and that we are in full compliance with the regulations issued by the Standards in Public Office (SIPO). I am the Appropriate Officer for filing all of the returns to SIPO.

I am happy to advise that since the last National Conference, the party continued to be compliant with all of the regulations issued by SIPO for the calendar years of 2023 and 2024.

Our annual audited accounts for those years are also submitted to SIPO and these are uploaded onto the SIPO website. These accounts include full Income & Expense and Balance Sheet reports. The accounts for 2025 are currently being audited and will be available there in due course.

Financial Statements

All political parties receive significant levels of State funding. There are two separate streams, one based on the Electoral Act 1997 (as amended) and the other being the Parliamentary Activities Allowance (based on the amended Oireachtas Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices Act 2014). We also receive additional indirect funding from the Oireachtas in their payment of certain staff members and the provision of additional administrative supports. These levels of State funding are calculated and based on the results of the party at the most recent General Election. We also received specific grants from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for increasing the participation of women in politics. None of these State income streams can be used for election or referendum purposes, for which the party needs its own sources of income. Overall, our income over the most recent audited years is as follows:

	2024	2023	2022
Electoral Act Funding	330,771	310,774	305,157
Parliamentary Activities Allowance	455,680	418,246	405,461
Admin supports provided by Oireachtas	351,222	235,576	143,580
Women in Politics	31,140	21,877	17,813
State Funding	1,168,813	986,473	872,011
Non-State Funding	143,473	42,899	30,589
Total Funding	1,312,286	1,029,372	902,600

As a consequence of our electoral success in the 2024 General Election, and ahead of our 2025 audit, our EAF funding in 2025 is showing an increase of 38% and our PAA funding is showing an increase of 89%.

We also received a grant of €37,680 in 2025 under a new Gender Balance and Diversity program.

Election Fund

Our own funding streams, excluding State funding, jumped significantly in 2024, reflecting the higher levels of membership and donations in the year of the local, European and general elections. Whilst our 2025 figures are not yet audited, I am happy to report that our non-State income will exceed €100,000 – and this is now our current goal, to achieve this level of annual fundraising so that we are in a strong position come the next local, European and general elections, likely in 2029. We will also need our election fund for this year's by-elections.

I want to extend my acknowledgement and sincere thanks to everyone who supports the party through their membership, their buying draw tickets and those who make regular donations to the party. Without those contributions, we would not be able to grow our electoral successes.

I also want to thank those who helped to organise the various draws and events from which we receive contributions.

Acknowledgements

We were all deeply saddened by the tragic and sudden passing of our friend and colleague Kodzo Selormey. Tributes will be paid to Kodzo over the course of this National Conference, but I want to add my own words of appreciation for the huge amount of work that Kodzo put not only as Treasurer since 2022 but as a dedicated member since the very beginning of the party. Stepping into his shoes has been very difficult simply because of the breadth of Kodzo's work. His presence is missed by everyone, and I want to pay tribute to his enormous contribution to the party

Separately, I want to thank the General Secretary and her members of staff for their time and assistance in facilitating my work as Treasurer.

Dave Quinn
Treasurer,
29/01/2026



Conference Sessions

Meet the new Social Democrats Councillors

Time: 18.30, Friday **Venue:** Main Hall

CLLR ANN BAMBURY *Social Democrats Councillor for Bandon-Kinsale*

A very busy mother of four young children, Ann completed an honours Bachelor of Social Science degree at UCC in 2023 after returning to education as a mature student. Her research, *The Golden Years: Evaluating Healthy Ageing in Place in a Rural Community*, explored the lived experiences of older people and highlighted the urgent need for supported housing, accessible amenities and meaningful participation opportunities in rural Ireland.

She was elected to Cork County Council in 2024, and serves on the HSE Forum, the Planning SPC, the Social Inclusion, Community & Rural Development SPC, Local Active Traveller Committee, Cork Sports Partnership, and the boards of the local Family Centre and the Development Partnership.



CLLR EAMONN HORGAN *Social Democrats Councillor for Midleton*

Eamonn's background is in Civil Engineering and he works as a Project Manager in the Pharmaceutical Industry. He describes himself as a problem solver by nature, and uses these skills learned over the years in his Councillor role. His main focus areas as councillor are to improve recreational amenities, have better public transport options in his local area, and to keep the spotlight on housing delivery.

He lives just outside Midleton with his fiancé and two children.



CLLR JESSLYN HENRY *Social Democrats Councillor for Artane-Whitehall*

Jesslyn's background is in Special Education, having worked as a Special Needs Assistant, and she is a passionate trade unionist.

As a councillor, her priorities centre on the delivery of secure, affordable housing for all. She's a strong advocate for investment in public services and local communities, and she has worked closely with constituents to help establish youth club services, improve sports facilities, and deliver new playgrounds across the area. Ensuring accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities has also been a core focus of her work since being elected.

She serves on the Community, Gaeilge, Sports, Arts and Culture SPC, the Commemoration and Naming Committee, the North Central Sports Forum, and the Local Community Safety Partnership. She is also a member of the City of Dublin ETB, sitting on the boards of several local schools, and chairing two of them. In addition, she's Chair of the City of Dublin Child Protection Oversight Committee.



CLLR NUALA KILLEEN *Social Democrats Councillor for Leixlip*

Nuala is the Social Democrats councillor for Leixlip since 2019. She managed the constituency office of Catherine Murphy TD in Leixlip from 2012 until 2024, and has been involved with the Party since its foundation because she believes in the potential of the Party to radically change Irish politics, and more importantly to make a meaningful difference in people's everyday lives.

Her focus is on housing issues, public and open spaces, main street regeneration, social infrastructure, public transport, and road safety.



Meet the new Social Democrats Councillors

Time: 18.30, Friday

Venue: Main Hall

CLLR CLAIRE O'ROURKE

Social Democrats Councillor for Celbridge

Claire has over 30 years' experience working in her community, including in mental health services through the HSE Counselling in Primary Care Service and private practice.

She has been active with the Social Democrats member since 2018 focused on securing fair funding and strong community infrastructure for growing areas in her locality.

Claire is a passionate defender of green spaces and local heritage, playing a key role in opposing inappropriate development at Donaghcumper and helping to protect Castletown House and Demesne as a founding member of Friends of Castletown.



Friday Keynote Address

Time: 20.40, Friday

Venue: Main Hall

DR. JILAN WAHBA ABDALMAJID

Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland

Ambassador Dr. Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid began her diplomatic service at the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995 as Assistant Chief of Protocol. She was then posted to Cyprus where she completed her doctorate in political Marketing, before coming to Ireland as deputy to the former Ambassador.

She presented her credentials as Head of Mission of the State of Palestine in Ireland to President Michael D. Higgins in January 2020, and again in December 2024 as Ambassador of the State of Palestine following Ireland's recognition of the Palestinian sovereign state.



The Changing Landscape of Political Communication

Time: 19.50, Friday

Venue: Main Hall

LOUISE McSHARRY

Podcaster and DJ

Louise McSharry hosts the Catch Up with Louise McSharry podcast, where she has interviewed a number of politicians including President Catherine Connolly and Holly Cairns.

She began her career at Newstalk and worked for iRadio in Galway, before joining 2FM in 2010. She left 2FM in October 2021.

She published a memoir, *Fat Chance: My Life in Ups and Downs and Crisp Sandwiches*, in 2016.



LEON DIOP

Black and Irish

Leon Diop is a mixed-race man from Tallaght, Dublin, and host of the Black and Irish podcast.

He graduated from Maynooth University with a degree in Psychology before going on to be Maynooth Students' Union President for two terms. In June of 2020 he founded Black and Irish, an organisation working on the behalf of black and mixed-race people in Ireland. He is the co-author of the award-winning book *Black and Irish: Legends, Trailblazers and Everyday Heroes*.

Leon currently serves on the board of the Childhood Development Initiative, Tallaght and Work Equal. In September 2024, he was named as a European Leader for the Obama Foundation. In November 2025, Leon published his second book, *Mixed Up*, aimed at helping young people become more comfortable in their identity. He is currently the Head of DEI at the Arts Council of Ireland.



CLAIRE McGOWRAN

Social Media Manager for the Social Democrats

Claire is joining the team fresh from the Connolly for President campaign where she also led social media.

With a background in digital communications and social issue campaigns, most recently, Claire worked with The Wheel, Ireland's representative body for charities and community groups. As campaign manager for We Act, she amplified stories of impact from communities across Ireland.



CLLR MARY ROCHE

Social Democrats Councillor for Waterford City

First elected in 1999, Mary Roche joined the Social Democrats in November 2022 having spent better part of the last 20 years as an Independent member of Waterford City & County Council.

Mary's background is in communications and she ran her own Public Relations company prior to taking up a career in politics. She has held many positions both locally and nationally and is a former Director of Waterford Chamber of Commerce. She was Chair of the National Fire Safety Committee and a Board member of the National Safety Council.

She has been a member of the Governing Body of Waterford Institute of Technology (now SETU), Chairperson of Waterford Area Partnership and Waterford Youth Committee and was a member of Waterford Wexford ETB. She served as Mayor of Waterford City in 2010/11 and believes passionately in making politics deliver.



A Seismic Shift? Examining Trends in Irish Politics

Time: 09.15, Saturday

Venue: Main Hall

THERESA REIDY

University College Cork

Theresa Reidy is a professor in the Department of Government and Politics at University College Cork.

She is a well-known political scientist and a regular contributor to Irish and international broadcast media with hundreds of appearances on RTE, Sky News, ABC, CBC, Al Jazeera, the BBC, and many more. She has published more than one hundred newspaper articles in the local and national press in Ireland.

Her primary research focus is voting behaviour at elections and referendums, and she has conducted research on political parties and political institutions. Her recent work has been published in *PS: Political Science and Politics, Electoral Studies, Parliamentary Affairs and Politics*, and she is co-editor of several books on Irish elections and Irish politics, including the *'How Ireland Voted'* series of books.



GARY MURPHY

Dublin City University

Gary Murphy is Professor of Politics in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University where he was Head between 2012 and 2018.

He has published extensively on the politics of modern Ireland and is the author of eight books (as well as numerous book chapters and articles) including a biography of Charles Haughey, which was selected as a book of the year by the Irish Times, Sunday Independent, Sunday Business Post, Mail on Sunday, and Irish Examiner.

He regularly appears in Irish print and broadcast media, including as one of RTE's main political analysts at election time, and writes a weekly column for the Irish edition of the Sunday Times.



AIDAN REGAN

University College Dublin

Aidan is Professor of Political Economy at University College Dublin.

He leads the European Research Council-funded *Democracy Challenged* project on how corporate tax avoidance fuels wealth inequality and undermines democratic capitalism. His research spans comparative and international political economy, with a focus on multinational tax avoidance, housing and wealth inequality, climate politics, social class, and democratic responsiveness. Before joining UCD, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute in Cologne and a Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence.

He publishes widely in leading peer-reviewed journals, teaches on capitalism and democracy, and writes a regular column for The Business Post, with frequent contributions to Irish and international media on political economy and public policy.



An Interview with our By-Election Candidates

Time: 12.30, Saturday **Venue:** Main Hall

CLLR DANIEL ENNIS

Social Democrats Councillor for Dublin's North Inner City

Daniel Ennis is the Social Democrats' candidate for the Dublin Central by-election in 2026 and a proud community organiser; rooted in the heart of the constituency he calls home.

Over many years of activism and community organising, Daniel has worked closely with residents, sports clubs and local groups across Dublin Central. Since being elected to Dublin City Council in 2024, he has focused on speaking out on the erosion of vital public services in the inner city, the housing emergency, and the vital need for special education places and facilities.

At a time when people are calling for a more decent and honest kind of politics, Daniel's campaign is focused on listening and delivering real change; from secure, genuinely affordable homes to safer, more liveable communities and a fair deal for renters and workers.



CLLR NIAMH O'CONNOR

Social Democrats Councillor for Cork City South Central

Niamh O'Connor is a Councillor in the Cork City South Central Ward having been co-opted into that seat on the election of Pádraig Rice to Dáil Éireann in the 2024 General Election.

Niamh had previously served as Vice Chair of the Cork South Central Branch. She works as a solicitor in a small city centre practice and has two young children. On the Council her work has prioritised improving basic services and advocating for community building in Cork City Centre.



Irish Unity

Time: 14.00, Saturday **Venue:** Main Hall

FINTAN O'TOOLE

Journalist, Literary Editor and Drama Critic

Fintan O'Toole is a journalist, literary editor, and drama critic for *The Irish Times*, for which he has written since 1988.

He is also a respected political commentator, writer, and the author of more than two dozen books, including *Ship of Fools*, *How Stupidity And Corruption Sank The Celtic Tiger (2009)*, *The Politics of Pain: Postwar England and the Rise of Nationalism (2019)*, *We Don't Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Ireland Since 1958 (2021)*, and most recently *For and Against a United Ireland (2025)*, with Sam McBride.



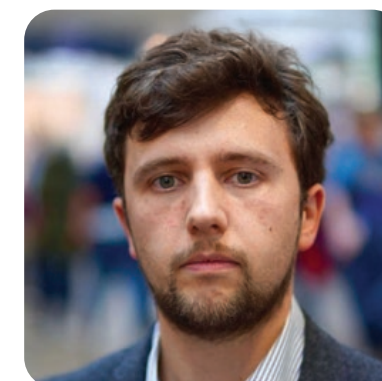
SAM McBRIDE

Northern Ireland Editor of the Belfast Telegraph

Sam McBride is the Northern Ireland Editor of the *Belfast Telegraph* and *Sunday Independent*. He also writes on Northern Ireland for *The Economist*. He is a former political editor of the Belfast News Letter and has made a BBC film about the Northern Bank robbery.

His first book, *Burned: The Inside Story of the 'Cash-for-Ash' Scandal and Northern Ireland's Secretive New Elite*, became a Sunday Times bestseller. Sam is a regular broadcaster on Northern Ireland politics. Sam lives in Belfast with his wife and two young children.

He is the co-author of *For and Against a United Ireland (2025)*, with Fintan O'Toole.



Promoting An Gaeilge

Time: 13.50, Saturday **Venue:** Harbour 4 (Upstairs)

JOHN PRENDERGAST *Conradh na Gaeilge*

John is a Kerryman who is the Advocacy Manager with Conradh na Gaeilge, working on language protection for the organisation. He is also a PhD scholar on the implementation of Language Planning in Ireland with the School of Welsh at Cardiff University in Wales.

John worked as Language Planning Officer in Corca Dhuibhne between 2019 and 2024. He was the country's first Language Planning Officer in a University, at UCD. John is a member of the Irish State's Advisory Committee on Irish Language Services as the Gaeltacht representative, appointed by the Minister for the Gaeltacht, and he is active with the Meitheal Náisiúnta Pleanála Teanga.

John has spent time lecturing Irish and sociolinguistics in universities all around the world on scholarship programmes such as Fulbright and ICUF. He is a director of COMHAR, a former Tánaiste with Conradh na Gaeilge. He writes, and plays football with Na Gaeil Óga.

Ciarraíoch é John atá ina Bhainisteoir Abhcóideachta le Conradh na Gaeilge, ag obair ar chosaint teanga ó dheas don eagraíocht. Is scoláire PhD é freisin ar chur i bhfeidhm na Pleanála Teanga in Éirinn le Scoil na Breatnaise in Ollscoil Caerdydd sa Bhreatain Bheag.

Bhí John ag obair marmar Oifigeach Pleanála Teanga i gCorca Dhuibhne idir 2019 agus 2024. Ba é an chéad Oifigeach Pleanála Teanga in Ollscoil, UCD é. Tá John ina bhall de Choiste Comhairleach Stáit na hÉireann um Sheirbhísí Gaeilge mar ionadaí Gaeltachta, ceaptha ag Aire na Gaeltachta, agus tá sé gníomhach leis an Meitheal Náisiúnta Pleanála Teanga.

Chaith John sealanna ag léachtóireacht in Ollscoileanna ar fuaid na cruinne ar an nGaelainn agus ar shochtheangeolaíocht ar chláracha scoláireachta ar nós Fulbright agus ICUF. Is stiúrthóir é ar COMHAR, iar-Tánaiste le Conradh na Gaeilge. Scríobhann sé, agus imríonn sé peil leis Na Gaeil Óga.



CLLR JOHN HURLEY *Social Democrats Councillor for Stillorgan*

John lives in Stillorgan with his wife and teenage sons, and works in the tech sector.

Over the past number of years, he has been involved with a variety of community organisations including Oatlands Primary school parents council, Lakelands FC, his residents association and has recently founded a Tidy Towns Group in Stillorgan.

During the pandemic, he organized the collection, refurbishment, donation and publicity of the Social Democrats #LaptopsForKids campaign, which provided almost 200 laptops to DEIS schools in the area. He is a community volunteer with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and at weekends he volunteers at the NCBI (now Vision Ireland) shop in Dún Laoghaire.



Tackling the Housing Crisis

Time: 16.00, Saturday Venue: Main Hall

JUDE SHERRY AND FRANK O’CONNOR

Derelict Ireland

Jude Sherry and Frank O’Connor are internationally recognised leaders in systems thinking, design for circular economy, and cultural activism. They co-founded the systems design agency *anois.org* in Amsterdam in 2016 and the experimental immersive art practice **ffud.art** in Cork in 2020, operating at the intersection of design, ecology, policy, and social change.

They are also co-instigators of **#DerelictIreland**, a grassroots cultural movement that has reshaped national conversations on land use and vacancy and was featured in the *New York Times*. Previously, Frank founded the Ecodesign Centre in Wales, which achieved a top-five global ranking and became a benchmark for sustainable design research and innovation.

Lifelong activists with 60 years of combined international experience they are published widely and are regular contributors to international print and broadcast media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and podcasts.



CLLR LESLEY BYRNE

Social Democrats Councillor for the South-West Inner City

Through her role as a Secondary School Principal, Lesley has seen first-hand the challenges that housing instability, poverty, and inequality place on children and their families, shaping her commitment to social justice and education.

This perspective informed her recent Dublin City Council motion recognising housing as a fundamental human right, a symbolic but important step reflecting her belief that secure, affordable housing is essential for dignity, opportunity, and equality. Lesley continues to advocate for policies grounded in the real needs of communities, ensuring their voices are central to local decision-making.



Rewilding Our Seas

Time: 16.00, Saturday **Venue:** Harbour 4 (Upstairs)

PADRAIC FOGARTY

Ecologist

Pádraic Fogarty is an ecologist and former campaign officer with the Irish Wildlife Trust. He is author of the 2017 book Whittled Away - Ireland's Vanishing Nature and an occasional media contributor on issues related to biodiversity and the environment.



DOLF D'HONDT

Marine Conservationist

Dolf D'hondt is a marine conservationist and the chair of the 'Save Our Sprat - Bantry Bay' campaign group.

This community group is calling for a moratorium to all sprat fishing until such time as scientific research can be done which will determine what a sustainable level of fishing for sprat would look like.

Dolf has been part of the Coastwatch seagrass mapping team and is a regional coordinator for the Coastwatch Autumn survey. He is a Director of Streamscapes, the Chair of the Steering Committee for Fair Seas, a crew member of Bantry Lifeboat, and is the environmental representative for the South West Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum, the EMFAF Monitoring Committee, and FLAG South.



CLLR JOAN HOPKINS

Social Democrats Councillor for Howth-Malahide

Joan has 20+ years' experience working in senior roles in International Banking and Finance for both Irish and Multinational organisations. She has a Masters in Organisational Behaviour from UCC & is a qualified Executive Coach.

Joan is passionate about the environment; she co-founded the European Union's first ever Seagrass Restoration Project in her native Baldoyle and has partnered on the project under licence from the NPWS and Professor Dagmar Stengal of the the Marine Institute in Galway.

Baldoyle Bay's Zostera noltii seagrass meadow has been selected as a national BlueC seagrass restoration reference site: *'Investigating Ireland's Blue Carbon Potential through a Scientific, Socio-economic and Legislative Approach'*.





PARTY OFFICER NOMINATIONS

National Conference 2026

Elections for Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, National Executive, Standing Order Committee

List of Candidates:

List of candidates (in alphabetical order of last name)

Candidates running for one or more positions will be listed once in this document.

Party Chairperson
Ciarán Nevin
Sorcha O'Neill

Vice-Chairperson
Saoirse Mackin
Lauren O'Rourke
Daithí Ó Sé

National Executive:

Please note that, as per the Party constitution, a gender quota will apply for this election. Ten of the below candidates will be elected to serve on the National Executive. At least four of the ten members elected must identify as male, and four members as female.

National Executive
Sinéad Brady
Pat De Brún
Noel Dempsey
Shelagh McMahon
Garrett Mullan
Aiden Murphy
Aoife Murtagh
Morgan Nolan
Frank O'Boyle
Rachel Bridget O'Brien
Ciarán Robert O'Donovan
Imelda O'Donovan
Luke O'Gorman
Sorcha O'Neill
Valerie Philpott
Sylvia Power
Alana Rush
Rebecca Ryan
Joe Slevin
Síle Sweeney
Hilary Tonge

Standing Orders Committee:

The Standing Orders Committee shall consist of eight ordinary members, no more than five of whom shall identify as any one gender. Five of the ordinary members shall be elected at National Conference, and three shall be appointed by the National Executive.

Standing Orders
Thomas Creamer
Gavin Elliott
Katie Lally
Victoria Olukitibi
Darragh Walsh
Rebecca Ryan

Party Chairperson

I joined the Soc Dems at our foundation because I believe that Ireland can be fair and kind, giving opportunity to all. That belief brought our party into being. I'm running for Chairperson to drive the next phase: scaling the Party to match our ambition. I've served on the National Executive, as Party Vice Chairperson, and chaired the Dublin Central branch through two successful election campaigns. I've seen what we can achieve when our values are matched by our organisation. We cannot afford to stand still. The next few years will define us, not just as a party, but as a movement ready to deliver in government.

Today, I live in Dublin 7, with my wife Siobhán, our son Cuán and Luna, our lurcher. But I grew up on a small farm in Leitrim, kept afloat by grants and my dad's second job. I lived part of my childhood in a council house, and with the help of free fees, I was the first in my family to go to college. I know the difference the State can make but when the crash came, the State was found wanting: investment slashed, services hollowed out, futures cut short. As President of DIT Students' Union at that time, I saw lives overturned—not by fate, but by political choices. Choices we're still paying for.

This drove me to become an economist. The choices we make either lift people up or leave them behind. Economic policy is too important to be left to those who championed austerity. As Chairperson, I'll focus on building the structures that give branches and candidates the support they need to grow, win, and deliver locally, because members must be the drivers of our movement.

For those of us who believe in the politics of intervention and the power of public services to change lives, this is our moment to prove what social democracy can do.

I'd be honoured to earn your vote.



Ciarán Nevin

Dublin Central

Male

Nominated by:

Dublin Central

My political journey began in 2012 at the Irish Convention on the Constitution, where I helped advance reforms including Marriage Equality. I served two terms as Branch Chair in Kildare North and the past two years on the National Executive, most recently as Vice Chair. It has been an intense and productive period: five elections, five core policy reviews strengthened to best-practice standards, and the recruitment of head office staff so our members, offices, and elected representatives are properly supported. I am particularly proud of my role in modernising our candidate selection processes, ensuring candidates are identified, vetted, and supported in a fair and accountable way. My experience as a county councillor has given me a grounded understanding of public scrutiny, responsibility, and the importance of integrity in public life. Beyond politics, I bring strong governance and leadership experience as former Chair of a school Board of Management, along with qualifications in Investigations, GDPR and HR. I have also served as a Climate Ambassador, Peace Commissioner, and juror for the European Innovations in Politics Awards. Having worked in the mental health sector, I understand the importance of member wellbeing and sustainable activism. What I offer is proven leadership, experience in delivering internal reform, and the stability and judgement needed for our next phase of growth. If elected Chairperson, I will focus on strengthening our structures, improving internal communication, increasing branch input, expanding member training, and deepening diversity and outreach. I will lead with integrity and consistency so the Social Democrats can continue to grow as the strong, principled alternative Ireland needs. I respectfully ask for your support and your vote.

Sorcha will also be on the ballot for National Executive Ordinary Committee member.



Sorcha O'Neill

Kildare North

Female

Nominated by:

*Colm Byrne, Catherine Murphy,
Don Morris, Noel Dempsey,
Fifi Smith*

Vice-Chairperson

I live in Blackpool, Cork City and have been a member of the Social Democrats since January 2019. I work full-time for Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), with our office based in Dublin, while studying part-time for a law degree at the UCC School of Law.

My Experience:

I served 3 years on the National Executive from 2021-2024 so I have an excellent understanding of the party, its structures, and how the National Executive works. I am a co-founder and organiser of Trans Pride Cork since 2022 and served a brief stint on the board of TENI before resigning to take up a full-time staff position. This has given me solid experience in governance, leadership and financial management – three vital qualities for the Vice Chair of the Social Democrats to possess.

Additionally, I have extensive experience in campaigning – from the Marriage Equality Referendum, to Repeal the 8th. I have been a Media Manager for Local Election, General Election and By-Election campaigns, a 2024 Local Election candidate, and a 2025 General Election Campaign Manager.

Most recently, I was Canvassing and Logistics Lead for Catherine Connolly's Presidential Election campaign in Cork North Central.

Future of the Party:

The Social Democrats are a real force for change – we have proven this through the bills we have brought forward, and the work our membership has been active in, whether that is related to Palestine, human rights, LGBT+ equality, migrants rights and women's bodily autonomy.

I want to see the party continue this work, while also ensuring we have strong structures, robust internal policies and excellent governance.

I will work with the incoming Chair and NEC to lead these over the coming term, to ensure equality, fairness, and transparency for our membership.



Saoirse Mackin

Cork North Central

Female

Nominated by:

Cork North Central

As Chair of Dublin Bay North, I am so proud of what we achieved over my terms. We won every election we contested, securing four council seats and delivering a poll-topping result in the 2024 GE. As campaign manager for the local elections and a core member of the GE team, I developed a strong understanding of electoral strategy, membership engagement, and the value of communication and teamwork. I've organised co-options, selection conventions, and maternity cover, strengthening my knowledge of our policies and procedures.

Outside the branch, I've delivered canvass training nationally, both online and in person and have helped with the running of Left Bank Summer School events. Meeting members from across the country and learning about their challenges was incredibly rewarding. Giving people the tools and confidence to win votes is something I value deeply. Our aim as a political party is to bring real, positive change to our country and that means getting the right people elected. This motivation underpins everything I do.

Beyond party work, I'm a public servant at the National Transport Authority, fully trained in GDPR and data protection, with extensive interview experience. I serve as a SIPTU workplace representative and have presented motions on workers' rights at national conferences. These roles have strengthened my ability to manage sensitive issues, remain impartial and advocate for fair, transparent processes.

Our party is growing, and steady leadership is needed to keep us united and focused on our values. I have gained so much personally from the Party, and I want to give something back – by working collaboratively with members, staff, councillors, and the Parliamentary Party to continue to deliver on our vision for a genuine social democratic future for all.



Lauren O'Rourke

Dublin Bay North

Female

Nominated by:

Dublin Bay North

Hi, I'm Daithí Ó Sé from Cork City, bai!

I'm asking for your #1 Vote or highest preference at Conference. I'm a quality engineer, solving problems & designing better processes through engagement & hard work.

I've been a member since July 2015, working on 11 campaigns, including as a Canvass Lead for the Connolly campaign. Elected Branch Chair 4 times in 2 different branches & one of the top 5 volunteers during the Workers Beer Festival Fundraisers, raising nearly €50k. I've served 3 terms on the Policy Committee, including 2 as Chair where I led the restructure of the committee & policy development leading to our GE24 manifesto success.

If elected Vice Chair, I make these 5 pledges:

- 1 Engage & Develop Membership through better onboarding of new members, increased college recruitment & youth organising, targeted training for officers & a central library for branches.
- 2 Improve Internal Communications with membership outreach, help creation of new branches, commitment to regular video calls & branch visits during my term.
- 3 Strengthen Party Structures by organisational review, targeting bottlenecks & time loss, new fundraising streams, consolidate internal democracy, continuous review of procedures & support our Councillors through Forum reform & volunteer skills.
- 4 Develop our Social Community by facilitating social events for members to meet & network, e.g. sports/boardgame tournaments, social trips, international exchanges etc.
- 5 Chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa pháirtí by implementing Conference motions for proposed Irish Language Officer & Irish Language Network.

I've given 100% to the party these past 11 years and with your support, I'll give even more.

Vote Daithí Ó Sé #1 for Vice Chair & let's build together.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir agus Saoirse don Phalaistín!



Daithí Ó Sé

Limerick City

Male

Nominated by:

Jen Cummins TD, Liam Quaide TD, Cllr. Niamh O'Connor, Cllr. Paul Mulville, Cllr. Nuala Kileen

National Executive

My name is Sinéad Brady and I am seeking election as an Ordinary Member of the National Executive and would appreciate your No.1 or next preference vote.

I have been a member of the Social Democrats since April 2019 and have held several branch roles, including Treasurer for multiple terms and, currently, Chair of Galway East. The past year, I worked with HQ to re-establish the branch, which has since seen a 25% increase in membership.

I have been a member of the Policy Committee since March 2023, updating our Biodiversity Policy, contributing to the review of the GE24 Manifesto and towards the restructuring of the committee. I've served as a multi-term National Council member, as a branch rep and with the Policy committee. I am also a member of the Digital & Data Group, which focuses on analysing tally and electoral data.

During the Connolly Campaign, I served as Treasurer of East Galway for Connolly, organising a number of events, including the very successful screening of "Bernadette: Notes On A Political Journey" in the Townhall Theatre, Galway, while ensuring full SIPO compliance. I also established a national procedure for canvass leads to map and track canvassed areas.

Professionally, I have nearly a decade of experience as an ecologist and have expanded into data and GIS analysis, which includes management of national projects. These roles strongly shape my political approach, particularly my interest in election strategy and campaigning, as they both involve the analysis of data to identify likely outcomes, an approach I want to bring to targeting, organising, and winning elections.

I believe my experience across party organisation, policy development, campaigning, and data-led analysis would allow me to make a constructive contribution to the National Executive.



Sinéad Brady

Galway East

Non-binary

Nominated by:

Nathan Smith, Alan Sheerin, Susan Carolan, Fiona Levie, SORCHA O'Higgins

I am an international human rights lawyer and academic with over a decade of experience in activism, campaigning, and policy development at local and international levels. I am a member of the Dublin Bay South branch and serve on the party's national Policy Committee, where I am working on a review of our digital policy that aims to position the party as a leader on principled, rights-based approaches to technology and AI.

I am currently on sabbatical from my role as Amnesty International's global Head of Big Tech Accountability, where I lead efforts to investigate and challenge harms caused by Big Tech, from misinformation to incitement of violence. During my sabbatical, I am conducting fieldwork for my PhD, which focuses on queer grassroots perspectives on international law. I am a qualified lawyer (New York) and hold a master's in international human rights law from SOAS and a Law with Politics degree from UCD. Originally from Co. Carlow, I am a fluent Gaelgeóir and attended all-Irish schools.

I have a strong background in both activism and governance, having served as UCD Students' Union President (2011–12) and Vice-President for Campaigns and Communications (2010–11). As President, I founded two companies to manage union affairs and later served as a non-executive director overseeing governance and finance. I am also a trustee of QUILTS, an LGBTIQ organisation building solidarity among grassroots queer communities worldwide.

My experience and passions span human rights, international law, digital policy, technology, equality, and LGBTIQ issues. I spent seven years doing human rights work in Southeast Asia, including periods at the UN Khmer Rouge Tribunal, the Cambodian Center for Human Rights, and as Amnesty's lead researcher on Cambodia and Vietnam.



Pat De Brún

Dublin Bay South

Male

Nominated by:

*Senator Patricia Stephenson,
Enya Kennedy, Ruaidhrí Garvey,
Oisín Benson, Míde Nic Fhionnlaoich*

POLITICAL PRIORITIES for incoming NE:

Prepare and expand the Party across the country to maximise our participation in a government of the Left after the next GE.

Invest in HO to develop staffing and resources to provide the level of services and support required by our Branches and Members in their Communities.

Provide logistical and financial support to our NE Sub Committees, in particular the CSDC and the Fundraising Sub Committee

MY EXPERIENCE & SKILLSET:

Over 40 years political, trade union and campaigning activity. Key member of groundbreaking electoral campaign successes, e.g. Bernie Malone retaining a MEP seat for Labour in Dublin against all the odds and working for the Robinson Presidential campaign from a Waterville, Co Kerry Summer school all the way to Dublin Castle.

Member of the current Standing Orders Committee (SOC) for this and the last 3 conferences.

I was Political Sec. of UNITE Trade Union administrating their Irish political fund North & South for 10+ years supporting progressive causes & politicians.

Most recently, I was Rory Hearne's Director of Elections in the last Euro election and back in North Kildare helped to comfortably retain the SocDem's seat with the election of Aidan Farrelly T.D.



Noel Dempsey

Kildare North

Male

Nominated by:

Kildare North

I am an active member of the Social Democrats in Dublin Central, where I have contributed to the party's work at both local and national level. I have served as Secretary in my branch, been part of the National Council, and recently managed a successful local election campaign in the constituency, helping to strengthen our presence on the ground and double the number of Social Democrats councillors on Dublin City Council. My involvement has always been driven by a belief that politics should be honest, competent, and rooted in the everyday realities of people's lives.

Professionally, I work in Ireland's energy sector supporting the delivery and governance of national infrastructure. That experience has shaped how I approach political organising – clear thinking, good structures, and a commitment to transparency. I care about building systems that empower members, support branches, and help the party grow in a sustainable, strategic way.

I am running for the National Executive because I want to help the Social Democrats expand our reach and sharpen our impact. My priority is to grow the party with purpose – building the organisational strength, policy clarity, and public confidence needed to finally dislodge Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil from government at the next general election. I think it is so important to build a party that the public trust to address the key issues affecting so many of us – the cost of living and housing being two issues that are so damaging to so many.

I want to bring steadiness, strategic thinking, and a collaborative approach to the National Executive. Above all, I want to help ensure that our members feel supported, our branches feel heard, and our party continues to be a principled force for change.



Shelagh McMahon

Dublin Central

Female

Nominated by:

Dublin Central

I am a candidate for the NEC having been a local election candidate, branch officer and branch member of the Social Democrats since 2016.

I am 50 years old now and have been political since the age of 15 years initially getting involved in campaigning against the first Iraq war and on campaigns such as the X case and many different issues since. That means a lot of campaigns, experience, learning and growth. Working together as a party, we need to reach our communities to share our ideas and win support for our vision for a better Ireland

I welcome the motion on prioritising appointment of LARs, as the work of election campaigns is done in the preparation. I would hope that the NEC will work to better position to help the party to build and grow over the next period, through sharing practice, giving ideas and support to branches to implement.

I am a Housing Officer with one of the largest Approved Housing Bodies since 2019. Prior to that, I was founding Director of the education charity Show Racism the Red Card, which successfully engaged 20,000 young people in anti racism education each year through innovative programmes. Nominated for a Good Governance award, the charity is now a key project of the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

In my current work as a Housing Officer, I see the challenges arising from the failure of politics over the years and it is through this, that I recognise the need for Social Democratic policies. I am also involved with Irish Left With Ukraine as well as in the community as a board member of secondary school, committee member of swimming pool campaign and as vice chair of our residents association.

Active in my branch, I want to bring my activity a step up, contribute ideas, be involved in the discussions at NEC level and build our party.



Garrett Mullan

Fingal

Male

Nominated by:

Claire McSweeney, Michael Lenehan, Paul Mulville, Tegan Parkes, Patrick Maher

I am seeking election as an Ordinary Member of the National Executive to help guide the strategic direction of our party. I bring over two years of experience in senior administrative roles within the education sector, managing complex operations, stakeholder engagement and policy development professionally. I've led cross-border logistics, liaised with regulatory bodies and contributed to strategic reports that have improved student outcomes and institutional performance.

My academic background includes a Master's in Comparative Social Change from Trinity College Dublin and UCD. I have a particular interest in Irish parliamentary procedure, evidence-based policy and public accountability.

I supported multiple candidates during the 2024 General Election and worked on Catherine Connolly's 2025 Presidential Campaign, where I coordinated volunteers, managed donor outreach and organised campaign events. These experiences have strengthened my knowledge of election strategy, canvassing and public engagement.

If elected, I will:

- Support inclusive candidate selection and branch development
- Promote transparency, legal compliance and financial oversight
- Contribute to grievance and disciplinary processes with fairness
- Help build party cohesion through strong communication

I bring a calm, collaborative and professional approach. I am focused on action, accountability and values-led leadership. I would be honoured to represent our members on the National Executive.



Aiden Murphy

Dublin South West

Male

Nominated by:

*Kim Norberg, Liam Frabetti,
Niall Thomas, Justin Sinnott,
Claire Louise Guerin*

A chairde,

My name is Aoife Murtagh and I'm very happy this year to be standing as a candidate for ordinary membership of our National Executive.

I have worn many hats during my ten years as a party member – including as a branch chair, local election candidate, chair of the party's Policy Committee, and a member of our Governance Committee – and I hope that during that time many of you have come to know my commitment to our principles of equality, integrity and inclusivity, as well as my drive to see projects through and achieve results.

I have always believed that our founding principles matter just as much inside the party as in our commitments to the public, and that we should always aim to govern the party as we would wish to someday govern the country.

We have achieved great successes in the last two years, and we can achieve more. I want to improve on our election-readiness, inclusivity, and internal communication and structure by advocating for:

- The introduction of internal discussion and advocacy groups to support member communication, empowerment and engagement, starting with a pilot group for Disability.
- The introduction of regional fora, as recommended by the National Council reform working group a number of years ago. I would envision these as ideally being open to all members and as being venues for party identity-building, campaign-building, and training for membership.
- The adoption and implementation of our updated Grievances and Disciplinary policy to insure fairness and efficiency in the handling of complaints.
- Beginning our preparation for the next election cycle with the early recruitment of Local Area Reps and continued review of our candidate selection procedures, along with putting in place more supports for candidates from minority, disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds to insure our candidates better mirror our society.

Professional Background:

I am a practicing psychotherapist with a BA in Psychology, a Research Masters in Neuropsychology and an MSc in Counselling and Psychotherapy. I also have management and governance experience in the non-profit sector, as former Projects and Services Director at a small neurological charity and a founding committee member of Rathdown For All. From my work, I bring skills in mediation, communication, statistics, data protection, policy-writing and safeguarding.

For communication, inclusivity and stronger party structures, I would ask for your number one vote, and go raibh maith agat for your consideration.



Aoife Murtagh

Dublin Rathdown

Female

Nominated by:

Dublin Rathdown

The duration of the next National Executive may well be the most defining period in the history of the Social Democrats and this country. At the next general election we will have the opportunity to elect a stronger Social Democrat parliamentary team to the country's first Left government. To achieve these aims we need to plan and be prepared. I am running for the Executive to bring my experience to bear on achieving these two goals.

I served as Chair of the Party from June 2019 to February 2021 and have the experience of working with colleagues at national level to develop the party's electoral and organisational structures.

I have been Campaign Manager for two general elections and Director of Elections for two Local Elections in Dublin Bay North. In addition, I served on the national electoral committee of the Party for the Local and General elections in 2024. I want to bring this experience to the National Executive to ensure the Party is prepared at every level for the electoral challenges ahead.

I am one of the founding members of The Left Bank, who have delivered member engagement events for the past 6 years. I truly believe that the engagement of members is critical in the development of the Party and that members get the opportunity to engage in topical political discussions with experts and members of our Parliamentary team. This strengthens our understanding of key political events and leads to better policy formation.

More recently I, along with colleagues, launched the Left Action Network within the Party, to give voice to and a space for discussion and preparation for the election of a Left government to the 35th Dail.

If you share my objectives, I am asking for your #1 vote for the National Executive.



Morgan Nolan

Dublin Bay North

Male

Nominated by:

Dublin Bay North

I joined the Social Democrats because I believe that social justice in Ireland is possible and can be delivered through political change. I am now running for the position of Ordinary Member on the party's national executive with a view to supporting the party and its members to deliver that change.

I was born in Crumlin, before moving out to Leixlip aged 7. My parents both worked hard to ensure that I would be the first in our family to graduate from university. They instilled in me the belief that inequality is wrong, and their left-leaning values have underpinned my commitment to social justice. Now living in Drumcondra with my partner, we have each loved campaigning with the Dublin Central branch and supporting Garry Gannon into the Dail.

I believe the party is at a critical moment. Democracies across the globe are being tested. Law-and-order institutions are being eroded, as are the rights they set out to protect. All of this has consequences for communities across Ireland. It is incumbent on us that we offer tangible, and much-needed solutions for communities in crisis. Impressive growth following the elections of 2024 has resulted in greater opportunities to effect this much-needed positive social change. However, greater exposure also brings risk.

With extensive experience in the NGO sector, I now sit within the senior leadership team of the Irish Refugee Council providing management and leadership support at a critical time for the organisation, but more importantly the community we serve. With a strong knowledge of management and governance, which I put to use daily in my work, I would work to aid the party to both weather storms and to deliver political change.

I would be most grateful for your vote.



Frank O'Boyle

Dublin Central

Male

Nominated by:

Dublin Central

Dear Members,

My name is Rachel, and I thank you for taking the time to consider my application for a National Executive Role. I am writing to express my strong interest in serving as an ordinary member of the National Executive of the Social Democrats, with a particular focus on the legal oversight functions outlined in Article 6.2 of the Party Constitution.

I am applying for this role after discussions with members and from my interpretation of the Social Democrat's constitution. I often feel frustrated that I am not doing enough or not being useful enough to help the left cause, and with this role I would hope to put my abilities to good use for the progression of the Social Democrats, a party that I truly believe in.

I respectfully put it to the party that my left values along with my life experience and qualifications could be a harmonious mix for a role on the executive. I say that my left political values are complemented by my Business/Marketing Degree, profession as a qualified Barrister, my experience as an in-house contract lawyer and more recently as an Irish Folklorist with a Masters from UCC.

I have 3 years' + experience in litigation in Irish Courts countrywide, where I saw many cases across the spectrum. I have gained an additional 7 years' experience as an inhouse contract lawyer across various industries and jurisdictions. My main strength is risk management, contract negotiation and review; however, I am fluent in all things stemming from Legal work. It is my respectful submission that my background, combined with my commitment to social democratic values, makes me well-suited to contribute meaningfully to the Party in this role.



Rachel Bridget O'Brien

Cork South West

Female

Nominated by:

Cork South West

My name is Ciarán Robert O'Donovan, and I am seeking your support & No.1 vote for re-election to the National Executive at Conference. I would like to continue to work on your behalf, using my knowledge and experience to deliver an effective National Executive that delivers for you.

When I ran nearly 2 years ago, I ran on a platform of my skills in Governance and Financial oversight. During this term, I have been an active member of the National Executive. I have sat on the Governance and Fundraising committees, where I worked on building financial models for and helped administer our current fundraising draws and designed the blueprint of a national draw that would broaden our fundraising efforts. I also worked diligently on governance matters where I worked in drafting and successfully implementing wide ranging reforms to our candidate selection process. I also sought and achieved the establishment of the Financial Oversight Committee on the National Executive.

Since joining in 2020, I have served in every branch officer role except for Treasurer and have hands-on experience in campaigning. I was a campaign manager in the LE 2024 in Limerick City North where we won a seat and more recently as Convenor for Limerick City during the Catherine Connolly Campaign, where I led the campaign locally alongside my fellow members who were front and centre in driving this successful campaign.

My approach on the National Executive has and continues to be as an independent voice, working for the wider membership; in keeping with the ethos of our party; my sole concern has been to ensure that we have an efficient and effective governance. I will continue to be that and work to support our elected representatives and leadership in growing our party.



Ciarán Robert O'Donovan

Limerick City

Male

Nominated by:

Daithí Ó Sé, Niamh Hickey, Criostoir Hasty, Declan Mills, Pádraig Lohan

Dedicated member across many aspects of the party, including current Chair of Cork North Central, branch representative to the National Council, organising Left Bank events and supporting several election campaigns.

Governance and Compliance

20+ yrs senior management Cork ETB. This engaged a range of skills and experience covering all aspects of centre management. Most notably, governance, oversight, strategic planning, and compliance.

Community Development

Extensive experience grassroots community development, designing, coordinating, facilitating, and evaluating customized progs/leadership training. Co-authored and developed Meitheal Youth Leadership Programme.

Activism

Long time passionate activist working with many groups and campaigns.Active IPSC member and CPSC committee member. Co-founder of Fermoy Stands with Palestine

Co-designed a psychosocial support programme for medically evacuated Gazan families and organised welcome packs and essentials for their arrival in Ireland with the Gaza Paediatric Care Initiative and Irish Red Cross.

Active member of Action Against War, campaigning for peace, neutrality, and saving the Triple Lock.

Involved in campaigns for affordable housing, clean water, antifascism, migrant rights, and other causes.

Advocacy – Core team member of Long Covid Advocacy Ireland.

National and international advocate for Long Covid and post-viral illnesses,

Executive member of the National Covid Biobank Ireland, and PPI representative on several HSE steering committees.

Member of the Mental Health Forum and long-term advocate for home help and disability rights.



Imelda O'Donovan

Cork North Central

Female

Nominated by:

Cork North Central

Priorities if Elected

- **Strengthening Internal Communication:** Work to ensure decisions are supported by clear context and reasoning, to promote trust, transparency, and inclusivity.
- **Engagement and Retention of Members:** Invest in social capital by understanding members' skills and interests. Develop an online monthly induction and political education programme for new members.
- **Supporting Members & Branches:** Encourage greater support, compassion & solidarity
- **A Viable Left Government for 2029:** Begin structured planning for a credible left-government alternative. (Completing MA Social Justice & Public Policy , focus of dissertation is conducting a social analysis of priority policies and red-line issues for left parties, which may contribute to this.)
- I would be honoured to have your Number 1 vote for Ordinary Member of the NEC.

My name is Luke O’Gorman, and I am a member of the Social Democrats in Cork South Central, based in Cork city. I am standing for election to the National Executive because I believe strong organisation, meaningful participation, and clear communication are essential to building a party that can grow sustainably and deliver nationally.

I have been involved in political and community work for several years. Within the party, I have served as PRO for Cork South Central for the past year, supporting branch communications, promoting local activity, and working closely with members and elected representatives. I was also the organiser for Catherine Connolly’s presidential campaign in Cork South Central, coordinating volunteers and supporting local campaigning.

Local branches are the backbone of our party and should be supported through strong structures, clearly defined committee roles, and practical guidance that helps distribute workload and avoid burnout. I also believe we should make better use of the wide range of skills within our membership by creating clearer ways for people to contribute their experience to branches, campaigns, and elected representatives.

Beyond the party, I have experience in youth participation and civic engagement, including serving as a Local Champion with the National Youth Council of Ireland in both Tipperary and Cork and participating in national advisory panels.

If elected to the National Executive, I would bring a constructive, organised, and member-focused approach, with a strong emphasis on supporting branches, strengthening participation, improving communication, and promoting the Irish language as a living part of our party’s culture and identity.



Luke O’Gorman

Cork South Central

Male

Nominated by:

Cork South Central

I believe that how a party governs itself matters and I fully understand the National Executive's role not as a policy-making body but as a steward of the party's constitution, finances, vision and mission.

With this, I would bring a deep commitment to ensuring that the party at and supporting its development and long-term sustainability.

I have never been one to shy away from asking the difficult questions while remaining committed to working collegially and constructively in the best interests of the party as a whole.



Valerie Philpott

Cork East

Female

Nominated by:

Cork East

As a trade union official for healthcare workers, I am privileged to spend every day coming up with creative solutions to help people see the necessity of collective organising and decision-making. I see the role of the National Executive in a similar light, whereby representatives can use their experiences and skills to make ethical decisions about governance and internal structures. My job necessitates knowledge of industrial law, HR, financial and regulatory oversight, and administration.

My life experiences and the activism I have engaged in have motivated my desire for economic and social justice in Ireland – without one, you cannot have the other. I believe that the housing and rental crisis is the defining issue of our time. Housing is the reason friendship groups are forced online across timezones, it's the reason that anxiety is becoming our base condition, and it is the most expeditious avenue through which the far-right drips poison and lies in a bid to sow division. However, I refuse to yield to the resignation shared by many that life in Ireland has to be hard. The public need principled and compassionate politics, and I know that the Social Democrats can be the driving force in demonstrating this leadership.

I am a practical, hardworking and focused person with a track record of behind-the-scenes organising. This commitment to activism is demonstrated by my work as a National Council Rep, a DSC Canvass Lead in the Presidential campaign, and a regular canvasser for Soc Dems elected officials and candidates. My experience with a variety of voluntary organisations is underpinned by the belief that collective action, solidarity and mass participation in processes both electoral and civic are the only viable paths to building an Ireland that works for all.



Sylvia Power

Dublin South-Central

Female

Nominated by:

Dublin South-Central

I'm just going to say it: I love fundraising. Many people think fundraising is a dirty word. First, I think it's vitally important for us to have the resources we need to back great candidates, policies, and change. Second, when done well, fundraising invites people to be part of something bigger than themselves. I am standing for the National Executive so I can help the party raise the vital funds we need to get great candidates elected, implement meaningful policy change, and improve the quality of life locally and nationally.

By way of background and political experience, I am the Dún Laoghaire Branch Chair and active organiser, strategist, and fundraiser within the Social Democrats since joining the party in 2024. As Deputy Campaign Manager for Hugo Mills' 2024 GE campaign in Dún Laoghaire, I led volunteer mobilisation, canvass coordination, and supported communications, resulting in 5th place in a 4-seat constituency.

Most recently, I served as Senior Manager for Fundraising on Catherine Connolly's Presidential campaign, raising more than €400,000 in eight weeks through a blend of small-donor giving, events, merch sales, and corporate giving with an average donation of ~€30 from over 3,000 supporters (backed by an amazing committee comprised primarily of SocDems!). I aim to build this level of elite, efficient, and fun fundraising capability for the SocDems, if given the opportunity.

Professionally, I have 15+ years of experience in Finance, Strategy, HR and Operations primarily in the international education sector, including C-level and board director roles. On the personal front, I love to bake, volunteer with Dublin Simon, sea swim year round to stay sane, and write short form rom-coms on substack.

Please vote Alana Rush #1 for National Executive.



Alana Rush

Dun Laoghaire

Female

Nominated by:

Dun Laoghaire

My name is Rebecca Ryan, and I'm proud to be standing for election to the National Executive this February. I'm asking for your support to continue the work I've already begun.

I joined the Social Democrats in 2020 because I believed- and still believe- that this party is strongest when it is evidence-led, values-driven, and rooted in communities. What quickly became clear was how much work is required to turn those values into real electoral and organisational success, particularly outside Dublin. That is the work I have committed myself to.

Over the past six years, I have served as Cork East Branch Secretary, Cork East National Representative, Cork East Branch Chair, Campaign Manager for Liam Quaide in 2024, and since February 2025, as a co-opted member of the National Executive.

When I became Chair, Cork East was a quiet branch of 23 members. Within a year, membership had more than tripled to 79. We were running active campaigns and, together, made history by electing Social Democrat representatives twice in the constituency. That progress did not happen by accident. It happened because we organised-relentlessly. We built volunteer teams, planned early, supported candidates properly, and shared resources across branches and constituencies. Most importantly, we made sure that members outside the usual centres of power felt supported by their party.

In 2024, I managed or co-managed local and general election campaigns across a geographically large constituency; recruited and coordinated volunteers; led selections; organised canvasses; ran CorkSocDems social media; created poster plans; and coordinated tallies and counts. Just as importantly, I ensured that members were supported, new activists were trained, and no one felt they were carrying the workload alone.

Alongside this, my professional background is in systems, governance, and impact. I work as a Programme Coordinator for an international educational charity based in Cork, and have experience across disability services, international and early intervention education, public policy, and social change. My work has focused on democratic engagement, equity, and combating online disinformation.

I have lived and worked in France, Italy, Spain, and Scotland, and I have seen first-hand how strong or weak- institutions shape outcomes for communities. I hold a BA in Social Care, an MSc in Education, Public Policy and Equity, and additional qualifications from MTU, UNICEF, the OECD, and UNESCO.

Since being co-opted to the NEC, I have contributed to governance reform, internal policy development, and committee structures. I authored the revised Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and have consistently advocated for decentralisation- regionalising resources, training, funding, and events- because a national party must be built on national structures.



Rebecca Ryan

Cork North Central

Female

Nominated by:

Cork North Central

My priorities on the NEC are clear:

- Stronger support for branches and local representatives, particularly outside Dublin
- Early and ongoing candidate and community development
- Accountability, transparency, and good governance
- Diversity, inclusion, and safe internal party culture
- I don't see the NEC as a title or a stepping stone. I see it as a responsibility- to members, candidates, and communities who need a credible, progressive alternative in government.
- I've done this work already- quietly, consistently, and often behind the scenes. If elected, I will continue to bring organisation, energy, and a strong regional voice to the National Executive.

Rebecca will also be on the ballot for the Standing Orders Committee

I left Mayo for England aged 4. As a child my 'Irishness' gave me an understanding of being 'other' while the council house helped to shape my politics. My Catholic primary school was inadequate, and I attended a secondary modern school. I became a teacher after studying History & Politics at Lancaster University. I was involved in anti-racism work in Nottinghamshire organising and presenting conferences for the county during a 2-year secondment. Before retiring I was an Assistant Headteacher in a Berkshire school.

After retiring I worked as a supply teacher in over 90 schools in England. This experience taught me that status means little but genuine concern, and fine-tuned skills, are central to success with influencing people. In 2013 I published a book, and later ran workshops, to help parents communicate more successfully with their teenagers. With teenagers, as with politics, persuasion flows from clear thinking and respect. I joined the party after my return to Ireland in 2022. With no active branch in Laois, I joined Carlow Kilkenny and became vice-chair in late 2023. I now chair the new energetic Laois branch. I continue to live and breathe politics as I have always done.

Having lived in England until recently I am not historically or emotionally connected to politicians or parties in Ireland. I read Irish politics from a detached perspective without prejudice or assumptions. I rely on others to improve my perspective, but my starting point is different from many whose lives have been lived in Ireland, and I believe this has value. Our party is the only left-of-centre option capable of really changing Ireland. Assumptions and wishful thinking will not bring success. The political environment may change dramatically, hardly change at all, or anything in between. I believe we need to establish an identity through campaigning on matters, 'felt' issues, that resonate with people who have yet to vote for us.

I have one priority only. An absolute focus on establishing the party as the trusted face of centre-left politics by following clear strategies. We will share some common ground with other parties but we must also be different on policy, aims, tone and style.



Joe Slevin

Laois
Male

Nominated by:
Laois

A chairde,

I am seeking your vote for the position of Ordinary Member of the National Executive.

Living in the Northeast Inner City I am conscious of my own relative privilege, but I am also confronted daily by the stark reality of a two-tier Ireland. I see the devastation caused by chronic underinvestment in our communities, the scourge of dereliction, and the human cost of a government that prioritizes private interests over public good.

I am originally from a rural community. My professional work concerns food processors, which keeps me grounded in the realities of the agricultural sector and rural livelihoods. This dual perspective – understanding both the specific struggles of the inner city and the challenges facing rural Ireland – is something I want to bring to the table.

I am running because I believe the Social Democrats are the only party capable of delivering the structural change we need. I want to use my energy and skills to ensure our party is robust, organized, and ready to challenge the status quo nationally.

I pride myself on being organised, reliable, and focused on solutions. Membership of the Dublin Central branch has taught me that policy must be grounded in the reality of people's lives. I want to bring that grassroots perspective to the National Executive.

If elected, I will focus on:

- Ensuring the National Executive remains connected to the realities facing our branches in diverse communities, from rural towns to the inner city.
- Strengthening our internal governance so we can support our representatives and grow our membership base efficiently.
- Ensuring our national strategy remains bold, unapologetic, and true to our core values.

I enjoy reading, particularly books on Irish history, politics and feminism. While I no longer play competitive sport, I enjoy commuting by bicycle and the occasional park run. I am presently working towards improving my spoken to Gaeilge to fluency.

I ask for your vote to help build a party that doesn't just talk about equality but fights for it.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.



Síle Sweeney

Dublin Central
Female

Nominated by:
Dublin Central

I am seeking your support to continue serving on the National Executive of the Social Democrats. I was co-opted to the Executive in 2025 and am now asking for your backing to continue that work.

My politics is rooted in community action. I believe party activism and community activism strengthen each other, and that national decision-making must be informed by what is happening on the ground, outside Dublin and beyond election cycles.

I am a director of Mná Ag Gaire CLG, a community organisation centring women's voices and wellbeing. My work there involves governance, policy development, and strategic planning, with a strong focus on inclusion, accountability, and ethical leadership. We work with women from diverse backgrounds, including migrants and members of the LGBTQ+ community. I also co-founded the Loo4U campaign in Clare. This campaign highlights the importance of access to clean, safe public toilets – an issue of dignity and accessibility for older people, disabled people, families, and those with health conditions.

Many members will know my involvement in the Midwest Hospital Campaign, standing up for safe healthcare and transparency, as well as my work with Save Ennis Town to protect shared community assets. I was recently elected as a Public Participation Network representative on the LCDC, bringing community voices into local development decisions.

If elected to continue on the National Executive, I will be a clear voice for Clare and the Midwest, feed local concerns into national strategy, support members and branches, and uphold the party's values with integrity.

In solidarity,

Hilary Tonge



Hilary Tonge

Clare

Female

Nominated by:

Clare

Standing Orders Committee

My name is Thomas Creamer, and I would like to ask for your No. 1 vote (or highest preference) for a role on the Standing Orders Committee.

I am originally from Leitrim, and was a founding member and inaugural chair of the Sligo–Leitrim branch.

I am currently the Treasurer of the Dublin West branch – the branch I originally started with when I joined the Soc Dems in 2020 – and part of the committee of the Dublin 15 branch of CATU.

This organisational experience is something I can draw upon to assist the Standing Order Committee in its role in organising the agenda for the next National Conference.

I successfully tabled a conference motion on Corporation Tax in 2022, an experience that has left me with an excellent insight into what makes for a good motion at conference, which I will bring to the Standing Orders Committee.

As someone who has performed the role of polling clerk, ballot counter, and tally person across a number of elections, I am confident that my experience will be readily useful to the Standing Orders Committee, in its role as the manager and overseer of the party's internal democratic processes.

I have actively canvassed for and supported the party in every election and bye-election since I joined – including the 2024 Local and National Elections, while I was completing an evening Masters in Public Policy at DCU.

If elected, my priorities will be

- To ensure that the National Conference is as accessible to as many of our members as possible.
- That discussion and deliberation of the issues and concerns of the membership are thoroughly facilitated through our international democratic channels.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you want to ask anything about my candidacy or raise any issues that you feel need to be addressed.



Thomas Creamer

Dublin West

Male

Nominated by:

*Lola Gonzalez, Mistura Oyeibanji,
Tricia Cross, Kieron Smith,
Brian Lynch*

I am a qualified barrister and long standing member of the Dublin Central branch where I served as Secretary, Treasurer and Chair for a number of terms. I served as a member of the National Executive and I have many years experience at board level in the charity/NGO sector.



Gavin Elliott

Dublin Central

Male

Nominated by:

*Mick Gaskin, Ciaran Nevin,
Peter Tanham, Kieran Walsh,
Caitlin Hennessy*

Having long held a strong interest in politics and activism, my first meaningful interaction with the Social Democrats came when I was invited to Leinster House to observe the party bring forward a motion that had been lobbied for by the Irish Cancer Society, an organisation I was volunteering with at the time. Seeing that advocacy translated directly into parliamentary action was a defining moment for me. It demonstrated that the Social Democrats are committed to turning grassroots campaigning into real, tangible change.

Motivated by this experience, I became a member of the Social Democrats two years ago and have since been actively involved in the Dublin North West branch, where I currently serve as Branch Secretary. I was proud to support Rory Hearne’s campaign and to canvass for his successful election in 2024, and more recently I joined the Dublin North West canvassing team for Catherine Connolly.

I joined the Social Democrats because I genuinely believe the party has both the vision and the determination to deliver meaningful and lasting change in Ireland.

In my work as an Accountant, governance is the foundation upon which my career is built, and for that reason I would welcome the opportunity to join the Standing Orders Committee.

The values of the Social Democrats align strongly with my own because they are rooted in fairness, equality, and a clear commitment to social justice. The party’s focus on building a more equal society through universal public services, affordable housing, and a strong social safety net reflects my belief that everyone deserves dignity and security, regardless of income or background. I’m particularly aligned with the Social Democrats’ feminist approach to politics, which recognises that gender equality is inseparable from economic justice, reproductive rights, and properly valuing care work. Their emphasis on evidence-based policymaking, transparency, and integrity in public life also resonates with my desire for politics that is ethical, thoughtful, and genuinely people-centred. In prioritising wellbeing over profit and long-term societal good over short-term gains, the Social Democrats represent the kind of progressive, compassionate Ireland I want to see – one that looks after its people and leaves no one behind. The Social Democrats are a party I am proud to be a part of as we grow over the coming years.



Katie Lally

Dublin North West

Female

Nominated by:

*David O’Reilly, Patricia Roe,
Rory Hearne TD, Ruairi McGrady,
Mick Lally*

Hi! My name is Victoria Olukitibi, and I am seeking your Number 1 vote for the Standing Orders Committee for another term.

I am a proud Clare woman from Ennis. I studied in NUI Galway, completing a BA in Law & Politics and an LLB, and went on to earn a Master's in Politics at the University of Limerick.

While in Galway, I was active in the Together for Yes campaign and the NUIG Social Democrats Society, canvassing in the general election, and was also involved in Amnesty International and the Debating Societies. In Limerick, I contributed to the Together for Safety campaign, assisting with legal research.

Back in Clare, I volunteered as a Research and Development Assistant with Haven Horizons, a charity working to end violence against women and children, and was also involved with Extinction Rebellion.

Within the party, I have been active in the Clare Branch, canvassing in local and general elections. I have served as a National Council Representative, sat on the National Diversity Committee, and from June 2021 to May 2022 served on the National Executive, attending every meeting during my term.

I have been a member of the Standing Orders Committee since 2023 and am seeking another term so I can continue contributing to the fair, consistent, and transparent running of party processes. I also bring past experience working in a TD's office, as well as my current role as an Information and Administration Officer with Chime, the National Charity for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People.

I believe my background in law, research, party governance, and administration equips me well to continue this work.

I look forward to meeting you at conference and would be grateful for your support.

Kind regards,

Victoria Olukitibi



Victoria Olukitibi

Clare

Female

Nominated by:

Clare

Hi there, I am Darragh from West Cork.

I study Politics and Economics at UCD. I help out there as the PRO for the Social Democrats society. I am a National Council Rep, and I have enjoyed gaining insight into the tremendous work happening on the ground across the country.

Through the standing orders committee, I hope to become more involved and contribute to our party's work. Relevant previous experience includes being the returning officer for my student council's elections. Additionally, I served on the Monitoring and Advisory Committee of the Irish Secondary-Level Student Union to ensure compliance with its constitution. Above all, I am eager to learn.

More about me

I became interested in politics during lockdown as a secondary school student and was passionate about reforming what I saw as an outdated education system. I sent a detailed letter of recommendation to the Minister. Teachers advised me to join youth organisations such as Comhairle Na Nóg and the YMCA, and there I grew inspired to act for Climate Justice, economic equity, and other societal issues. Then, for 3 years, I put energy into activism.

In the 2024 general election, I wanted to support a candidate who stood for these values and the SocDems' advocacy inspired me. Holly Cairn's social media post asking for support was the tipping point for me to rally behind her campaign. My branch members made me feel right at home.

After the incredible election, I volunteered to serve as one of our branch's national council reps and have thoroughly enjoyed meeting wonderful people there. Later, I joined Catherine Connolly's campaign as a video editor and was delighted to find Ruairí Power opening the door for me at Connolly's HQ. Energised by our party's work, I hope I can play a further role in strengthening its work.



Darragh Walsh

Cork South West

Male

Nominated by:

Cork South West



CONFERENCE MOTIONS



PLENARY SESSION 1: Policy Motions

Five Policy Motions on Supporting Vulnerable Citizens & Fighting Discrimination

MOTION: PM11 <i>(Submitted by Dublin Bay South Branch)</i>	
Title	Support for Survivors of Institutional Human Rights Abuses
Mandate	Government / Policy
Summary	Conference supports a comprehensive suite of financial, medical and other state supports for survivors of Institutional Abuse that seek to remediate failures of past support and redress schemes.
Motion Text	<p>Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• notes with sadness the severe, unequal and unconscionable treatment of those who were incarcerated in institutions in Ireland in the 20th century: those in Mother and Baby Homes, Magdalene Laundries, County Homes, Industrial Schools, Reformatory Schools, and those Boarded Out.• further notes the dark injustice the survivors of those institutions still face in the lack of acknowledgement from the State, lack of access to their records, lack of recognition of their forced labour, the forced disappearance of children through forced adoption or death with thousands of burials unaccounted for, and the lack of reparations, and proper acknowledgement of the crimes and neglect committed against them in institutions and by individuals to whom they were entrusted.• Condemns the wholly inadequate reckoning of both government and the Catholic Church with this stain on the history of the Irish State, and condemns the intransigence in failing to meet and hear the reasonable grievances and demands of survivors for the justice they and their families deserve.

MOTION: PM11 <i>(Continued)</i>	
Motion Text	<p>Conference calls on Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fully acknowledge the survivors of the practice of Boarding Out and seek reconciliation and justice for them.• Expunge the criminal records associated with survivors’ time spent in institutions when they were unlawfully removed from their families as children and young adults (Department of Justice)• Redesign redress and support schemes so that all survivors of institutional abuse are eligible for support, not just those who applied for or accessed previous schemes (Departments of Education and Children), and ensure survivors are not required to sign waivers in order to access redress schemes• Provide access to an enhanced Medical Card which provide supports in line with holders of HAA Medical Cards (Department of Health)• Support the provision of a contributory pension for survivors of institutional abuse, recognising that this is an obligation the state has in light of the forced child labour survivors had to undertake during their time in institutions and when boarded out (Department of Social Protection)• Provide access to free trauma informed counselling services to all survivors (Department of Health)• Mandate the allocation of additional weighting on the social housing waiting lists (Department of Housing)• Published Guidelines to be issued to all Councils and County Councils that redress payments are not to be viewed as assessable income on Housing Supports applications. (Department of Housing)• Fully exhume mass graves at Bessborough, Sean Ross Abbey, Castlepollard and other institutions where burials are unaccounted for.

MOTION: PM16 <i>(Submitted by Cork North Central Branch)</i>	
Title	Commission into Psychiatric Institutions/ Asylums
Mandate	Government
Summary	Conference calls on Government to implement a Commission of Inquiry into the history of Ireland's psychiatric institutions/ asylums, including State Apology, Redress and Legal Assistance.
Motion Text	<p>Conference notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• that in recent years progress has been made in addressing the historical abuse suffered by many in State Run Institutions such as the Mother and Bay Homes; Industrial Schools/ Reformatories; Magdalene Laundries etc., however;• the Psychiatric Institutions / Asylums have not been properly investigated with a view to a Commission of Inquiry and redress for the survivors of these institutions <p>The Social Democrats commit to supporting a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the conditions, admission practices, and oversight of Ireland's former asylums/ psychiatric institutions along with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Apology – A formal apology to all individuals wrongfully committed due to factors such as neurodiversity, sexuality, expression, or inheritance disputes, and to those who suffered due negligence or inadequate care.• Assets – Proceeds from the sale of public lands or assets linked to these institutions to be directed to accredited mental health charities.• Legal Support – State-funded legal assistance for individuals wrongfully committed who seek to pursue action against those responsible, particularly in cases involving inheritance or property disputes.

MOTION: PM18 <i>(Submitted by National Executive)</i>	
Title	Cost of Living
Mandate	Government
Summary	Conference supports a suite measures that Government should take to combat the Cost of Living crisis.
Motion Text	<p>This Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• notes that the rising cost of living has put relentless pressure on people all over the country.• asserts that while it is true that governments cannot control the price of everything, they can and must take measures to ease the burden on households and implement actions that reduce living costs.• highlights that the costs of groceries have skyrocketed in recent years, with Ireland now having the second highest food prices in the Eurozone. The increase in food prices significantly exceeds the costs of production, suggesting that Irish households are facing unjust inflation in food costs.• acknowledges that households, sports clubs, businesses, and community organisations have seen their insurance premiums continue to rise amid an unprecedented cost of living crisis.• notes that disabled people, pensioners, and low-income households have been particularly affected by the escalating cost of living, facing unique challenges that exacerbate their financial difficulties. It is crucial for the government to implement targeted measures that support these vulnerable groups and ensure their basic needs are met.• emphasises that many public services that are free or heavily subsidised in other countries are exorbitantly priced in Ireland. For example, childcare remains disproportionately expensive.

MOTION: PM18 *(Continued)*

Motion Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• therefore calls on the government to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Introduce a Cost of Disability payment.o Establish a public model of childcare.o Ensure the Agri-Food Regulator uses its powers to investigate price gouging in the food chain.o Implement to following reforms to bring down insurance premiums: capping legal fees for personal injury claims, legislating for insurance companies to publish their calculations justifying any increases, and instructing the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission to thoroughly examine the public liability market.o Introduce targeted energy credits for the lowest-income households to help alleviate immediate financial pressure.o Abolish the means test for Carer’s Allowance to ensure caregiving support is accessible to all who need it.o Increase the minimum wage.• reaffirms the party’s belief that the cost-of-living crisis can be effectively tackled through the expansion and improvement of our public services. The state must play an active role in ensuring that essential services are accessible, affordable, and of high quality, thereby alleviating the financial burdens faced by citizens and fostering a more equitable society
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MOTION: PM3 *(Submitted by Wicklow Branch)*

Title	Combatting Socio Economic Discrimination
Mandate	Government
Summary	This motion affirms the Social Democrats' call for the Government to legislate for the missing 10th ground of disadvantaged socio-economic status as a part of Irish equality law.
Motion Text	<p>This Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognises that the experience of discrimination because of a person’s socio-economic background has been captured in two All Together in Dignity Ireland reports, ‘Does it only happen to me?’ and ‘Breaking Barriers’.• Notes that in June 2025, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in its Equality and Discrimination Report 2024 found socio-economic background to be a major factor for those experiencing discrimination with ‘socio-economic status at 17% being the second highest ground after race for those experiencing discrimination in a social setting; at 27% while seeking work; and at 21% for work-place discrimination (again the second highest after race)’.• Also notes that in October 2025, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children and Equality issued its Pre-Legislative Scrutiny Report on the Equality Bill following consultations with interested parties and recommended that a ground of socio-economic status be included in Irish equality law.• Further notes that 12 out of 27 European Union countries include the prohibition of discrimination on some form of socio-economic status in their national legislation.• Commends the work of Councillor Caroline Winstanley, whose November 2025 motion calling on the Government to include socio-economic status in Irish law was adopted by Wicklow County Council.• Calls on the Government to include socio-economic discrimination as a new status ground in its General Scheme of the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill published in December 2024.• Calls on the Government to include socio-economic discrimination as a new status ground in its General Scheme of the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill published in December 2024.

MOTION: PM15 <i>(Submitted by Waterford Branch)</i>	
Title	Combatting Discrimination Against Disabled People in the Work Place
Mandate	Government
Summary	This motion seeks to address a clear legislative gap in providing protections and support for disabled employees to engage equitably in the workplace.
Motion Text	<p>This Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is dismayed that Ireland lacks legally binding timeframes for the provision of reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities, leaving vulnerable workers waiting indefinitely for essential workplace support.• notes that while the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 require employers to provide reasonable accommodations, there are no statutory deadlines for responding to or implementing accommodation requests.• is outraged that this legislative gap creates unnecessary barriers, with research showing that failure to respond to accommodation requests in a timely manner is a significant obstacle preventing people with disabilities from fully participating in employment.• recognizes that best practice examples exist, such as DCU's 3–6 week implementation timeline, but these voluntary measures are insufficient without legislative backing.• believes that clear statutory timeframes would provide certainty for both employees and employers, reduce discrimination complaints, and advance Ireland's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

MOTION: PM15 <i>(Continued)</i>	
Motion Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mandates the Parliamentary Party to draft and champion legislation establishing specific statutory timeframes for reasonable accommodation provisions, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o A maximum number of working days for employers to acknowledge accommodation requests (recommendation: 10 working days)o A maximum number of working days to provide a written contract outlining agreed accommodations (recommendation: 40 working days)o A maximum number of working days from employment start date to provide terms of employment including accommodation details (recommendation: 20 working days)o Mandatory provision of a guidance document similar to the 'Reasonable Accommodation Passport' framework and other guides like 'Understanding Neurodiversity in the Workplace' developed by Employers for Change (which comprises a range of national organisations incl: ICTU& IBEC.) further mandates the Parliamentary Party and the Policy Committee to help develop the below points to ensure this legislation includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Clear escalation procedures when timeframes are not meto Protection for employees during the accommodation processo Regular review mechanisms to ensure accommodations remain appropriateo Alignment with existing Work and Access programme supports <p>Calls on the relevant party spokespersons and the National Executive to launch a campaign highlighting the current legislative gap and building public support for these essential protections for workers with disabilities.</p>

PLENARY SESSION 2:

Party Operations and Strategic Planning

Five Motions on Party Operations and Strategic Planning

MOTION: PA3 (Submitted by Dublin South Central Branch)	
Title	Mandatory Declaration of Financial Interests for Prospective Candidates
Mandate	National Executive
Summary	That all prospective Social Democrats' candidates for public office should complete, as part of the Party's selection process, a full declaration of their financial interests.
Motion Text	<p>This Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognises that honest and transparent politics is a core founding principle of the Social Democrats.• believes that transparency in financial interests is a cornerstone of public trust in elected representatives Conference notes that elected representatives are already required to submit an annual declaration of their financial interests to the Standards in Public Office Commission by completing the Statement of Registrable Interests form.• acknowledges that prospective candidates are currently required to provide information on their financial holdings as part of the internal Expression of Interest form. Conference notes that prospective candidates are not subject to the same level of detail as they would under the Statement of Registrable Interests required by SIPO.• believes that requiring candidates to complete a declaration mirroring the SIPO form would strengthen transparency, ensure consistency, and uphold the Party's founding principles.• instructs all prospective Social Democrats candidates for public office to complete, as part of the Party's candidate selection process, a full declaration of their financial interests mirroring the Statement of Registrable Interests form required by the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO).• calls on Party Headquarters to provide all prospective candidates with a standardised declaration form for this purpose, to ensure consistency among candidate selection processes and accessibility for candidates.• instructs that completed forms be submitted to, and retained by, the Party's Candidate and Strategy Committee until the end of the relevant electoral cycle.• mandates that, following the election, all forms be disposed of in line with data protection requirements.

MOTION: PA5 (Submitted by Carlow Kilkenny Branch)	
Title	Improved Candidate Vetting
Mandate	National Executive
Summary	This motion seeks measures to manage risks relating to the selection of election candidates for the Party.
Motion Text	<p>Conference agrees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the Party Executive must show due regard to the Party's policies and values when selecting election candidates.• That the Party Executive do this by producing a risk register, prior to the beginning of the selection process, which takes account of whether potential candidates have held shares in, been employed by, or served in a senior advisory or board role within; any company, corporation, or industry whose core activities are demonstrably in conflict with the core values, policies or principles of the Party as outlined in the Party's Constitution and policy framework.• That a formal vetting process be established and applied by the Party's committee which holds responsibility for candidate selection to assess compliance with the above provision, including a declaration of interests and affiliations.• That this motion, if passed, shall be incorporated into the Party's rules governing candidate selection and take effect immediately, applying to all future candidate selection processes at local, national, and European levels.

MOTION: CA3 (Submitted by National Executive)	
Title	Codifying National Executive Functions
Mandate	SOC/Constitution
Summary	This motion seeks to codify a range of functions and practices of the National Executive in the Party Constitution.
Motion Text	<p>Conference agrees to Amend Article 6.2.1 by the following changes:</p> <p>Under the subsection 'Elections and Democracy':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add a new bullet point, reading: <i>'The appointment of persons to Party entities, project teams and committees, and filling any vacancies that arise on any such bodies.'</i> <p>Under the subsection: 'Other'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the 2nd bullet point, insert the words <i>'including approving their respective terms of reference and standing orders'</i> after the words <i>'where appropriate'</i>. <p>Conference also agrees to Amend Article 6.2.4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• by inserting the words: <i>'i.e. the Chairperson shall have a regular vote, and in the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall also cast the tie-breaker'</i> after the words <i>'shall be determinative'</i>.

MOTION: PA1 (Submitted by Dublin Bay North Branch)	
Title	Establishing a Taskforce to Explore Feasibility of a Left-Wing Government
Mandate	National Executive
Summary	This motion calls for the incoming National Executive to establish a Taskforce to explore the feasibility of electing a left wing government to the 35th Dáil.
Motion Text	<p>This Conference calls for the incoming National Executive to establish a Taskforce to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explore the feasibility of electing a left wing government to the 35th Dáil2. Determine the essential Milestones required to elect a left wing Government to the 35th Dáil3. Engage with internal and external stakeholders to establish the key socio-economic policies that would be expected of a left wing government in the 35th Dáil. <p>This Taskforce should complete it's work within 6 months and no later than October 2026.</p> <p>The Taskforce report shall be presented to the National Executive for consideration and where appropriate implementation.</p>
Proposed Amendment No.1 from Waterford Branch	<p>Amend the motion by inserting a new bullet point '4.' that reads:</p> <p><i>"4. Conduct a review of the 'Building Forward - Party Development Plan' and the resulting workstreams, as part of a process to help prepare a new 5 year Strategic Party Development Plan that will help build the party capacity to be able to enter, sustain and survive a term in Government."</i></p>

PART OF PANEL D:
Irish Language Session
Two Motions on the Irish Language

MOTION: PM10 (Submitted by Dublin South West Branch)	
Title	Recommendation for the Amendment of the Disclosure of Interests (Ethics in Public Office Act) Regulations
Mandate	Government
Summary	This motion urges the Social Democrats to call on the Government to amend the Disclosure of Interests (Ethics Acts) Regulations within the lifetime of the current administration.
Motion Text	<p>This conference recommends that the Government should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Complete and enact the amended Disclosure of Interests (Ethics Acts) Regulations within the lifetime of the current Government;2. Ensure comprehensive coverage by including all relevant public bodies, directorships and designated positions of employment within the statutory disclosure framework;3. Establish a standing administrative process whereby the prescription of designated positions and directorships is automatically reviewed and updated whenever a new public body is created or an existing one restructured;4. Commit to periodic statutory review (i.e., on a three-year cycle) to maintain the accuracy and relevance of the regulations; and5. Provide a formal update to the Oireachtas outlining progress toward completion of the updated regulations, demonstrating the Government's ongoing commitment to ethics and transparency in public service

MOTION: PA2 (Submitted by Cork South Central)	
Title	Motion to support the wider use of the Irish language within The Social Democrats
Mandate	National Executive
Summary	This motion proposes a range of actions to increase the use of the Irish language within the Party.
Motion Text	<p>Teideal: Rún chun tacú le húsáid níos leithne na Gaeilge laistigh de na Daonlathaigh Shóisialta</p> <p>Moltóir: Daonlathaigh Shóisialta Chorcaí Theas-Lár</p> <p>Réamhrá / Ós rud é:</p> <p>Aithníonn na Daonlathaigh Shóisialta tábhacht na Gaeilge agus tá siad tiomanta tacú le húsáid níos leithne na teanga laistigh den pháirtí agus sa tsochaí níos leithne.</p> <p>Aontaíonn an páirtí dá bhrí sin:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Oifigeach Teanga Gaeilge a cheapadh chun úsáid na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn laistigh den pháirtí. Ceapfaidh an Feidhmeannas Náisiúnta an ról deonach seo ar feadh téarma dhá bhliain.2. Líonra Gaeilge a bhunú do bhaill.3. Spás a chruthú ag Comhdháil an Pháirtí do fhóram Gaeilge chun seasaimh bheartais a phlé.4. Doiciméid, comharthaí agus cumarsáidí an pháirtí a tháirgeadh go dátheangach nuair is indéanta. Áirítear leis seo postálacha ar na meáin shóisialta, cóip de bhunreacht an pháirtí agus príomhpháipéir bheartais.5. Ar Choimisiún Thithe an Oireachtais glao a chur chun maoiniú a chur ar fáil do pháirtithe polaitíochta chun oifigeach Gaeilge a fhostú ar bhonn lánaimseartha chun tuilleadh tacaíochta a thabhairt don obair seo agus don mhisean níos leithne parlaiminte dátheangaí.

MOTION: PA2 *(Continued)*

Motion Text	Title: Motion to support the wider use of the Irish language within The Social Democrats
	Proposer: Cork South-Central Social Democrats
	Preamble / Whereas:
	The Social Democrats recognise the importance of the Irish language and are committed to supporting the wider use of the language within the party and wider society.
	The party therefore agrees to:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appoint an Irish Language Officer to promote the use of Irish within the party. This voluntary role will be appointed by the National Executive for a two year term.2. Establish an Irish Language Network for members.3. Create space at the Party Conference for an Irish forum to discuss policy positions.4. Produce party documents, signs and communications bilingually where practicable. Include social media posts, a copy of the party constitution and key policy papers.5. Call on the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission to provide political parties with funding to hire an Irish language officer on a full time basis to further support this work and the wider mission of a bilingual parliament.

MOTION: PM8 *(Submitted by Fingal Branch)*

Title	Renewing and Rebuilding Use of Our Language
Mandate	Policy Committee
Summary	This motion seeks to renew and rebuild the use of our language through a variety of proposals.
Motion Text	<p>Conference calls on the Party to champion the renewal of the Irish language through accessible, community-based and educational supports.</p> <p>Conference mandates the Party to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and promote a cross-departmental Irish-language plan focused on increasing everyday use of Irish.• Advocate for funding to expand access to Coláistí Samhraidh and activities through the Irish language, especially for people from under presented backgrounds.• Campaign for the creation of new residential Irish-language colleges nationwide and Irish Language Offices in each local authority.• Support measures to make Irish learning affordable for adults, including subsidies for immersive programmes and full funding for community-based courses.

PLENARY SESSION 3:

Party Operations and Rules

Six Motions on Party Operations, Structures, and Rules

MOTION: CA5 <i>(Submitted by Dublin Rathdown)</i>	
Title	Status of Gaeilge in the Party - Stádas na Gaeilge sa Pháirtí
Mandate	SOC/Constitution
Summary	This motion seeks to amend the Party Constitution to ensure equality of the English and Ireland languages in official party communications and publications, in accordance with the Official Language Acts (2003, 2021).
Motion Text	<p>Conference agrees to amend the Social Democrats constitution by the addition of the following Article 16:</p> <p>That the Constitution be amended by the insertion of the following Article:</p> <p>Article 16 – Bilingual Communications Policy</p> <p>This Motion proposes:</p> <p>That the National Headquarters of the Social Democrats shall operate under a formal bilingual policy ensuring the equal presence of the Irish and English languages in all official public communications issued by the Party.</p> <p>That this be done in accordance with the provisions of the Official Languages Acts (2003 and 2021), and in the spirit of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as a commitment to cultural diversity, equality, and linguistic rights in Ireland.</p> <p>That all elected representatives, party officers, and affiliated committees be encouraged to adhere to the same bilingual principles as far as practicable within their means.</p> <p>Article 16 – Bilingual Communications Policy</p> <p>16.1 Purpose</p> <p>The purpose of this Article is to ensure that all official communications issued by the National Headquarters of the Social Democrats reflect the equal status of the Irish and English languages, and that the awareness and use of Irish be promoted as a working language, a cultural expression, and an integral part of the Party's identity.</p>

MOTION: CA5 <i>(Continued)</i>	
Motion Text	<p>16.2 Implementation</p> <p>This policy shall apply to all forms of public communication from the Party, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• press releases, public statements, and media briefings;• the Party website and all digital content;• official Party social media accounts;• documents, reports, and public publications; <p>This policy shall be recommended for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• posters, leaflets, and campaign materials. <p>16.3 Bilingual Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Irish text shall be as visible, accurate, and timely as the English text.• Smaller font size for Irish may be used only in cases of technical necessity.• For online or digital content, users shall be given a clear option to view material in Irish or English, or both versions shall be made available.• On social media, at least one in every four posts should be in Irish or bilingual, wherever feasible. <p>16.4 Press Releases and Public Material</p> <p>No public statement or press release from National Headquarters of the Social Democrats shall be issued without an Irish version available or issued simultaneously, allowing for urgent release and breaking information.</p> <p>Priority shall be given to linguistic accuracy and natural Irish usage in all translations over word-for-word direct translations.</p> <p>16.5 Correspondence</p> <p>All correspondence received in Irish shall be replied to in Irish. Responding in English to correspondence written in Irish shall be considered a breach of this policy.</p>

MOTION: CA5 (Continued)

Motion Text	<p>All official Party emails shall include the line:</p> <p><i>“Cuirtear fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge.” / “Correspondence in Irish is welcome.”</i></p>
16.6 Website	<p>The official Party website shall be fully bilingual.</p> <p>All pages shall display clear language toggles between Irish and English.</p> <p>All updates and new content shall be made available in Irish at the same time as in English.</p>
16.7 Recruitment and Working Language	<p>This Article does not require the creation of any new bilingual roles. However, all recruitment notices issued by Party Headquarters shall be made available in both Irish and English, in compliance with current language legislation.</p> <p>Staff members wishing to improve their Irish shall be supported with access to language learning resources.</p>
16.8 Legal Provisions and Language Rights	<p>This policy shall be interpreted in line with the Official Languages Acts (2003 & 2021), the Equality Act 2004, and the Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty.</p> <p>The Party recognises Irish as the national and first official language of Ireland and as an official language of the European Union.</p>
16.9 Final Provisions	<p>The National Executive Committee shall publish and update practical guidelines relating to this policy as necessary.</p> <p>This Article shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by Party Conference.</p>

MOTION: CA5 (Continued)

Motion Text	<p>AS GAEILGE</p> <p>Gluaiseacht chun Bunreacht na nDaonlathach Sóisialta a Leasú:</p> <p>Alt 16 – Beartas Cumarsáide Dátheangach</p> <p>Go ndéanfaí an Bunreacht a leasú chun an t-alt seo a leanas a chur leis:</p> <p>Alt 16 – Beartas Cumarsáide Dátheangach</p> <p>Tograíonn an Gluaiseacht seo:</p> <p>Go gcloífeadh Ceanncheathrú Náisiúnta na nDaonlathach Sóisialta le beartas foirmiúil dátheangach a chinntíonn go mbeidh an Ghaeilge agus an Béarla i láthair, ar bhonn comhionann, i ngach cumarsáid phoiblí oifigiúil ón bPáirtí.</p> <p>Go ndéanfaí é seo de réir fhorálacha Achtanna na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (2003 agus 2021), agus i spiorad Chairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh, mar chomhartha d’fheabhas na héagsúlachta cultúrtha, comhionannais, agus cearta teanga in Éirinn.</p> <p>Go spreagfaí freisin na comhaltaí tofa, na hoifigigh phoiblí agus na fochoistí uile de chuid an Pháirtí chun cloí leis na prionsabail chéanna dátheangacha, de réir a gcumas agus a n-acmhainní féin.</p> <p>Alt 16 – Beartas Cumarsáide Dátheangach</p> <p>16.1 Cuspóir</p> <p>Is é cuspóir an t-alt seo ná a chinntiú go léiríonn gach cumarsáid oifigiúil ó Cheanncheathrú Náisiúnta na nDaonlathach Sóisialta stádas comhionann na Gaeilge agus an Bhéarla, agus go gcuirtear feacht agus úsáid na Gaeilge chun cinn mar theanga oibre, teanga chultúir, agus mar chuid dhilis d’aitheantas an Pháirtí.</p>
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MOTION: CA5 (Continued)

Motion Text	16.2	<p>Feidhmiú</p> <p>Beidh an beartas seo i bhfeidhm ar gach cineál cumarsáide phoiblí ón bPáirtí, lena n-áirítear ach gan a bheith teoranta do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• preasráitis, ráitis phoiblí, agus nótaí don mheán;• suíomh gréasáin an Pháirtí agus ábhar digiteach;• cuntais meán sóisialta oifigiúla an Pháirtí;• doiciméid, tuarascálacha, agus foilseacháin phoiblí. <p>Molfar an polasaí seo do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• póstaeir, bileoga, agus ábhair feachtais.
	16.3	<p>Caighdeáin Dátheangacha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beidh téacs na Gaeilge chomh feiceálach, chomh cruinn agus chomh tráthuil céanna leis an téacs i mBéarla.• Ní úsáidfear cló níos lú don Ghaeilge ach amháin má bhíonn gá teicniúil leis.• I gcás ábhar leictreonach, tabharfar rogha shoiléir don úsáideoir idir Gaeilge agus Béarla, nó beidh an dá leagan ar fáil sa suíomh céanna.• Maidir le meáin shóisialta, déanfar iarracht ar a laghad post amháin as gach ceathrar a chur ar fáil i nGaeilge nó go dátheangach.
	16.4	<p>Preasráitis agus Ábhar Poiblí</p> <p>Ní eiseofar aon ráiteas poiblí nó preasráiteas ó Cheanncheathrú Náisiúnta na nDaonlathach Sóisialta go dtí go mbeidh leagan Gaeilge ar fáil, nó go mbeidh sé eisithe go comhthreomhar leis an leagan Béarla, rud a cheadaíonn scaoileadh práinneach agus faisnéis bhriste.</p> <p>Cuirfear tús áite le cruinneas agus le stíl nádúrtha na Gaeilge i ngach aistriúchán, thar aistriúchán díreach focal ar fhocal.</p>
	16.5	<p>Comhfhreagras</p> <p>Tabharfar freagra i nGaeilge ar aon chomhfhreagras a fhaightear i nGaeilge.</p>

MOTION: CA5 (Continued)

Motion Text		<p>Measfar freagra i mBéarla ar chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge mar shárú ar bheartas an Pháirtí.</p> <p>Ba cheart gach ríomhphost oifigiúil ón bPáirtí an líne seo a áireamh: <i>“Cuirtear fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge.”</i></p>
	16.6	<p>Suíomh Gréasáin</p> <p>Beidh suíomh gréasáin oifigiúil an Pháirtí dátheangach go hiomlán.</p> <p>Beidh cnaipí soiléire le haistriú idir Gaeilge agus Béarla ar gach leathanach.</p> <p>Cuirfear nuashonruithe ar fáil i nGaeilge ag an am céanna leis an leagan Béarla.</p>
	16.7	<p>Earcaíocht agus Teanga Oibre</p> <p>Ní bheidh gá le cruthú aon ról nua dátheangacha faoin gAlt seo.</p> <p>Áfach, déanfar gach fógra poist a bhaineann le Ceanncheathrú an Pháirtí a chur ar fáil i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla, de réir na reachtaíochta teanga reatha.</p> <p>Tabharfar deis do bhaill foirne atá ag iarraidh a gcuid Gaeilge a fheabhsú tacaíocht agus rochtain ar acmhainní foghlama.</p>
	16.8	<p>Forálacha Dlíthiúla agus Cearta Teanga</p> <p>Déanfar an beartas seo a léirmhíniú i gcomhréir le hAchtanna na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (2003 & 2021), le hAcht an Chomhionannais 2004, agus le dualgais Chéart an Duine de réir na n-institiúidí poiblí.</p> <p>Tugann an Páirtí aitheantas don Ghaeilge mar theanga dhúchais na hÉireann agus mar theanga oifigiúil den Aontas Eorpach.</p>
	16.9	<p>Forálacha Deiridh</p> <p>Déanfaidh an Coiste Náisiúnta na treoirlínte praiticiúla a bhaineann leis an mbeartas seo a fhoilsiú agus a nuashonrú de réir mar is gá.</p> <p>Tiocfaidh an t-alt seo i bhfeidhm láithreach tar éis glacadh leis ag Comhdháil an Pháirtí.</p>

MOTION: CA1 (Submitted by Clare)	
Title	Candidate Selection Procedures and the role of the National Executive
Mandate	SOC/Constitution
Summary	This motion seeks to alter the National Executive's role in candidate selection.
Motion Text	<p>Conference agrees to Amend Article 6.2.1 by the following changes:</p> <p>Conference agrees to Amend Article 9 by the following two changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amending Clause 9.2.8 by Deleting the sentence <i>"The National Executive may in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with Branch chairs, forego any or all of the requirements of the constituency selection process as it deems necessary."</i>• Amending Clause 9.2.9 by Deleting the words <i>"Notwithstanding the above"</i>

MOTION: PA4 (Submitted by Dun Laoghaire Branch)	
Title	Local Area Representatives Recruitment and Role
Mandate	National Executive
Summary	A motion re the development of the Local Area Representative role.
Motion Text	<p>That Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• notes that in the 2024 local elections, the Social Democrats won 35 of 949 council seats, securing 3.4% of first-preference votes. This underrepresents the Party's true level of support, as reflected in opinion polls, indicating that many voters who wished to support a Social Democrat candidate could not do so;• notes that Local Area Reps can be a valuable source of momentum and energy in developing branches, which allow prospective candidates a trial run and that to exist without any representative for several years can stunt the growth of these branches;• therefore calls on the National Executive to actively support the early recruitment Local Area Representatives (LARs) from 2026 onwards and to open LAR selection in any given branch, as soon as requested by that branch;• calls on the National Executive to establish limitations, where necessary, such as an 18 month term limit and clear guidance that LARs do not automatically become candidates;• calls on Branches without elected representatives, to identify strong prospective representatives and, when ready, to ask the National Executive to open LAR selection in their branch;• notes that Local Area Reps should not automatically be deemed to become candidates in the next election, nor should their appointment preclude other members from seeking the same role in the future.
Proposed Amendment No.1 from Galway East	Amend to add that the role will be clearly defined by the National Executive with its responsibilities and limitations explicitly set out, as well as the provision of mandatory training and guidance on public representation to ensure consistent messaging across all branches. Clear accountability and oversight structures should be established to ensure that the role is exercised responsibly and in the collective interest of the Party at a local and national level.

MOTION: PA4 (Continued)

Proposed Amendment No.2 from Dublin Central	<p>Remove the following bulletpoints:</p> <p><i>"Therefore calls on the National Executive to actively support the early recruitment Local Area Representatives (LARs) from 2026 onwards and to open LAR selection in any given branch, as soon as requested by that branch"</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>"Calls on Branches without elected representatives to identify strong prospective representatives and, when ready, to ask the National Executive to open LAR selection in their branch;"</i></p> <p>And add with the following bulletpoints (to be inserted in the place of the current bulletpoint beginning <i>"Therefore calls..."</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notes that such a scheme must be carefully designed to minimise the risks of; constraints to staffing and voluntary resources, low progression rates from LAR positions to electoral candidacy, limiting healthy competition for electoral candidacy etc.• Calls on the National Executive to establish a subcommittee to assess the value and viability of a Local Area Representative programme, comprised of NE members, relevant staff and appointees.• Such a committee must show due regard to current resource capacity, strength of local branch structures, and ensure that any such scheme promotes a high-calibre and diverse range of LARs, with the purpose of supporting the selection and election of as many high-quality, electable candidates as possible.• Adds that the National Executive retains sole competence over electoral strategy. As such, it retains discretion over whether to open expressions of interest for LAR positions in a given constituency, following input from the Organising Team and consultation with local branch members.• Encourages branch members and elected representatives to play a proactive role in identifying potential candidates for LAR roles or future elections, and to notify their relevant regional organisers of any such
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MOTION: CA2 (Submitted by National Executive)

Title	National Council Reform
Mandate	SOC/Constitution
Summary	Changes to the structure of National Council
Motion Text	<p>Conference Resolves to Amend Article 6.1–6.1.4 of the Constitution so that it will now read as follows:</p> <p>6.1 National Council</p> <p>6.1.1 Purpose</p> <p>The purpose of the National Council is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Enable members to make proposals for policy development for consideration by the Policy Committee.b. Support the effective implementation of Party campaigns by providing structured input before, during, and after national campaigns and referenda.c. Facilitate communication and accountability between Party HQ, the Party Leadership, Party Officers, the Policy Committee, and the wider Party.d. Consider significant strategic matters delegated to it by the Party Leadership or the National Executive between National Conferences. <p>6.1.2 Composition</p> <p>The National Council shall be comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Two representatives from each branch, one of whom shall be the Branch Chairperson, the other shall be a branch officer and, where practicable, of a different gender identity to the Branch Chairperson.b. All members of the National Executive.c. All elected representatives of the Party.d. The Policy Committeee. The General Secretary, or another staff member appointed by the General Secretary, who shall have participation but not voting rights.

MOTION: CA2 (Continued)

Motion Text	6.1.3 Meetings
	<div><div>a. The National Council will meet three times in every calendar year, except in a quarter when a Party Conference or national election has been called. A meeting may be called by the Party Chairperson, and shall be called by the General Secretary or other assigned Party employee upon receiving a petition signed by at least 50% of Branch Chairpersons, having first consulted with their respective branches.</div><div>b. Meetings may be held in person, online, or in a hybrid format.</div><div>c. Delegates will be given 10 working days' notice of the meeting.</div><div>d. The quorum shall be reached when at least 40% of branches are represented.</div></div>
	6.1.4 Accountability and Procedure
	<div><div>a. The National Council shall operate under Standing Orders developed by the National Council and approved by the National Executive.</div><div>b. Reports to the National Council shall be primarily written and circulated in advance, with oral contributions limited to matters requiring discussion or decision.</div><div>c. National Council members shall have the opportunity to question Party Officers, staff, and bodies on matters within their remit.</div></div> <div>Amend the motion by inserting a new bullet point '4.' that reads: <i>"4. Conduct a review of the 'Building Forward - Party Development Plan' and the resulting workstreams, as part of a process to help prepare a new 5 year Strategic Party Development Plan that will help build the party capacity to be able to enter, sustain and survive a term in Government."</i></div>

MOTION: CA2 (Continued)

Proposed Amendment No.1 from Clare Branch	<div>To amend article 6.1.3 Meetings.</div> <div>To add the following two sentences: 6.1.3.d <i>"Meetings will be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order"</i> 6.1.3.e <i>"Minutes will be circulated no more than 10 working days after the meeting"</i></div>
Proposed Amendment No. 2 from DSC, Dun Laoghaire	<div>Amend the proposed 6.1.2.a so that it reads <i>"Two representatives from each branch who, where practicable, will be of a different gender identity. Branches shall have flexibility in choosing their representatives, and should endeavour to select branch members who are deeply engaged with the Party."</i></div> <div>And also Add <i>"and branch chairpersons"</i> after the word <i>"delegates"</i> in the proposed new 6.1.3.c.</div>
Proposed Amendment No. 3 from Galway East	<div>(6.1.2.b still to be deleted as proposed)</div> <div>Retain the existing 6.1.2.f. regarding attendance and participation rights of senior staff.</div> <div>Drop the proposed changes to 6.1.4, keeping the existing 6.1.4 in its entirety.</div>
Proposed Amendment No. 4 from Dublin Bay North	<div>Amend</div> <div>6.1.1(d) Consider significant strategic matters delegated to it by the Party Leadership or the National Executive between National Conferences.</div> <div>So that it reads</div> <div>6.1.1(d) Consider significant strategic matters including but not limited to those delegated to it by the Party Leadership or the National Executive, between National Conferences.</div>

MOTION: PA7 <i>(Submitted by National Executive)</i>	
Title	National Council Reform
Mandate	SOC/Constitution
Summary	Motion to review Party structures.
Motion Text	<p>Conference instructs the National Executive to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Set up a working group to conduct a structured assessment of the Party's current and future regional organisational needs, including consultation with branches, organisers, and public representatives.Examine potential models for future regional structures, including regional forums or phased regionalisation, should the Party's growth warrant such development.Identify the resource, administrative, and workload implications of any proposed regional structure.Report back to a special National Council no later than Spring 2027 with findings and recommendations, including whether the establishment of Regional Councils or alternative regional mechanisms is advisable and sustainable.

MOTION: CA4 <i>(Submitted by Dublin Central Branch)</i>	
Title	Reform of Party Structures
Mandate	SOC/Constitution
Summary	The motion proposes abolishing the current National Council and replacing it with three Regional Councils aligned to Ireland's existing regional assembly boundaries.
Motion Text	<p>Conference notes that the National Council, in its current form, is not functioning effectively. It has not proved effective in creating a regular link between branches and their members and the Party centre including the National Executive. Its role is poorly defined, with proceedings lacking clear purpose.</p> <p>Conference further notes that, as the Party grows throughout the country, that developing regional structures will enable greater dynamism, allow information to flow more easily, and support more meaningful accountability. Regional structures will also acknowledge that the needs of branches vary, will encourage innovation in how the Party functions, and will enable resources to be deployed where they are most needed.</p> <p>Conference proposes the following amendment to Section 6 of the Constitution, replacing the existing National Council with three Regional Councils which are aligned to Ireland's regional assemblies. The Regional Councils would take on expanded responsibilities for branch development and local area rep selection (working closely with the Party's organisers, including ensuring national coverage in both representatives and branches). The Regional Councils would have a delegated budget and would be supported by their assigned Party Organiser (e.g. as secretary to the councils).</p> <p>A.1 Reform of Party structures</p> <p>There shall be three structures sharing the governance and administration of the Party in addition to National Conference. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Councils• National Executive• Parliamentary Party

MOTION: CA4 (Continued)

Motion Text	
6.1	Regional Councils
6.1.1	<p>Purpose</p> <p>The purpose of the Regional Councils is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Party’s regional growth by developing branches organisationally, strengthening and linking them with public representatives, and coordinating activity across constituencies and counties.• Provide a representative forum for branches that identifies regional priorities based on local needs and highlights issues requiring national attention.• Coordinate regional activity, campaigns, and elections while delivering national plans locally and preparing an annual regional plan for organisation, membership, and campaigning.• Produce reports for the National Executive, including one annual report, while reviewing regional resource needs and providing oversight through questions to the Party Leader, Party Chair, and General Secretary.• Facilitate Party policy development by considering motions from branches and transmitting those passed to the National Executive for response within one month.
6.1.2	<p>Regions</p> <p>Regional Councils will exist in alignment with the boundaries of the State’s Regional Assemblies as per the Local Government Reform Act 2014.</p> <p>The Party shall seek to establish a Regional Council incorporating the remaining counties of the island of Ireland, when resources allow.</p>
6.1.3	<p>Composition</p> <p>The Regional Councils shall each be comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two representatives from each branch in the region (the branch chairperson and one other committee member who shall, as far as is practicable, be of a different gender identity to the chairperson).• All public representatives of the Party in the region.

MOTION: CA4 (Continued)

Motion Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two members of the National Executive.• A Party employee, as assigned by the General Secretary, who will act as Secretary.• Additional non-voting attendees when specialist input is useful.
6.1.4	Meetings
6.1.4.1	<p>Regional Councils will meet four times per calendar year, as agreed by the member branches, except in a quarter when a Party Conference or a national election is called. A special meeting may be called by the Party Chairperson and shall be called by the General Secretary or other assigned Party employee on receipt of a petition signed by at least 50 percent of branch chairpersons in the region.</p>
6.1.4.2	<p>Members will receive at least 20 working days notice.</p>
6.1.4.3	<p>A quorum will be reached when 40 percent of active branches are represented.</p>
6.1.4.4	<p>Meetings of the regional councils shall be chaired by a branch within the respective region, with responsibility for chairing to rotate on a half-yearly cycle. The chairing branch shall prepare the agenda, convene and facilitate the meeting, and create a record of the meeting.</p>
6.1.4.5	<p>In a year in which Party Conference is not set to occur, the Regional Councils shall meet together for one national session, which will be chaired by the Party Chairperson and will focus on common matters of national relevance.</p>
6.1.5	Accountability
6.1.5.1	<p>The Regional Councils will receive reports on an alternating basis from various Party Officers, Staff, and bodies in line with the procedures set out in the standing orders of the Regional Council and as determined by the respective Regional Council chairpersons in consultation with the Party Chairperson, the Party Leader/Deputy Leader and Policy Committee Chair in advance of each meeting.</p>

MOTION: CA4 <i>(Continued)</i>	
Motion Text	6.1.5.2 Members of the Regional Councils will be given an opportunity to ask questions on any of the reports submitted.
	6.1.5.3 Regional Councils will publish an annual report setting out activity, progress, regional issues, and motions passed. The National Executive will issue a written response to each Regional Council's annual report within two months.
	6.1.5.4 After each Regional Council meeting, the secretary will issue a summary of decisions and reports to the National Executive and branches.
	6.1.5.5 Regional Councils will, at their next meeting, report back to branches on national decisions, responses from the National Executive, and how national actions affect the region.
	6.1.5.4 Members of the National Council will be given an opportunity to ask questions on any of the reports submitted.
	6.1.5.5 Regional Councils may request updates on the progress of motions that have been passed at Party Conference.
	6.1.5.6 Regional Councils may be apportioned an annual budget by the National Executive to spend on activities directly related to their purpose, as set out in 6.1.1, and must provide a detailed report on all expenditure as per the terms set out by the National Executive.

PART OF PANEL E: Housing Session

Two Motions on Housing, and on Combatting the Far Right

MOTION: PM14 <i>(Submitted by Dublin North West)</i>	
Title	Co-operative affordable housing in Ireland
Mandate	Parliamentary Party
Summary	To put support and funding for co-operative housing into the Social Democrats housing policy.
Motion Text	Conference notes the lack of cooperative affordable housing in Ireland and: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• notes the lack of a cooperative affordable housing sector in Ireland, as well as that cooperative and community affordable housing is a significant housing sector in many other European countries.• calls on the Party to promote, as one of its core housing policies, the introduction of legislation and funding to support the expansion of cooperative and community-led affordable housing in Ireland to give those locked out of the housing market a new, affordable cooperative housing option.

PLENARY SESSION 4: Health Policy Motions

Four Motions on Health Policy Matters

MOTION: PA6 (Submitted by Central Branch)	
Title	Building strategic and committed resistance to the far-right across the island
Mandate	National Executive
Summary	A motion re combatting the far right.
Motion Text	<p>Conference recognises that the far-right is a serious threat to communities right across the island of Ireland. It notes the ferocity and determination of grassroots fascism – and observes the political pandering that increasingly hands them agenda-setting power; and, in the North, is alarmed to see a clear bridge opening up between these grassroots and mainstream political parties. Conference is deeply concerned to know of the level of cross-border and cross-regional coordination between hate groups and influencers – and worries that the left is deeply disadvantaged in not being well enough connected and coordinated in our response.</p> <p>Conference commends the skilled, generous and vital work of the Parliamentary Party to build broad left alliances and to sustain trust and solidarity towards ensuring that we (or at least those with voting rights!) had the chance to elect a new President to be proud of – a steadfast champion of equality, social justice and human rights. Conference applauds and takes heart from the efforts and energy of so many across the party that pushed on to make the vision real. Catherine Connolly's election was a meaningful repudiation of the far-right who were left to snipe from the sidelines – and it is a campaign that deserves a legacy in our continued, energetic ability to meet and defeat the far-right at every turn.</p> <p>Conference believes that the party must play a sustained, conscientious role in ensuring that the far-right does not gain further ground in our communities; and that they are thwarted in any further targeting of minorities or erosion of our rights.</p> <p>Conference calls on the party to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a committee or working group to coordinate action to resist the far-right• a body that may, for example, map strengths and gaps; engage with and empower activists; seek expertise and allies; and develop supports within communities at greatest risk from far-right action. Such a committee should report into the membership; and have mechanisms to facilitate a number of member-led initiatives.• To develop a strategy that contributes to forging a coordinated left response across the island, with sustained organising and an approach to coalition-building that favours the public good.
Proposed Amendment No.1 from Dublin South Central	<p>Amend “Conference calls on the party to:”</p> <p>So that it reads “Conference calls on the National Executive to:”</p>

MOTION: PM1 (Submitted by Limerick County Branch)	
Title	Independent review of HIQA and The Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services
Mandate	Government
Summary	Proposing an independent review of HIQA and The Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services.
Motion Text	<p>That the Social Democrats call for an independent external review of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) and the Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services, to assess their current effectiveness in regulating healthcare services and protecting residents’ / service users rights and welfare.</p> <p>This review should be commissioned by the Minister for Health, carried out by an independent panel with regulatory and human-rights expertise, and include full public reporting of findings and recommendations.</p>

MOTION: PM9 <i>(Submitted by Laois Branch)</i>	
Title	Mental Health: Children and Young Adults
Mandate	Parliamentary Party
Summary	To build a campaign that demands better support for young people's mental health and use it to highlight the failures of the governing parties.
Motion Text	<p>Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• believes that our party needs to have a strong identity and campaigning for young people can be a major part of our 'brand'.• notes that most young people moving into the electorate do not have a personal 'history' with other parties and are a key target group for us at elections.• believes this issue touches the lives of families across Ireland and small low-cost steps could be advocated while highlighting government complacency.• calls on the Government to address the inadequate provisions for supporting and promoting the mental health of children and young adults.• further mandates the Parliamentary Party and Councillors; to demand increased funding for existing services to enable providers to offer timely support for young people, 12-24, across all counties; to investigate the treatment of young people with additional needs in prison and to actively campaign and support local and national stakeholders. The campaign should highlight the importance of encouraging a national 'conversation' about mental health that would enable adults to support children and young people more effectively and be more resilient themselves.

MOTION: PM17 <i>(Submitted by Kerry Branch)</i>	
Title	Resistance to Downgrading of Coru Standards
Mandate	Parliamentary Party
Summary	To oppose the standards Coru has proposed for the regulation of the professions of Psychotherapy and Counselling that will put hem out of line with the rest of their professional colleagues in Europe.
Motion Text	<p>That the Party:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• strongly supports the efforts of the Irish Psychotherapy and Counselling Associations to resist the implementation of Coru's Revised Standards for the professions of Psychotherapy and Counselling.• believes the recommendations would leave service users at risk from a substandard service, as well as Irish professionals becoming outliers in Europe• believes Coru's standards lack any requirement for therapists to undertake personal therapy; there is no requirement for close Clinical Supervision during training and inadequate guidelines for Supervision post training. There is also a lack of any specified time period for training and inadequate requirement of Clinical Practice hours, and no recognition of the distinct nature of Psychotherapy as a Profession.

PLENARY SESSION 5: Misc Policy Motions

Seven Motions on various issues

MOTION: PM19 <i>(Submitted by National Executive)</i>	
Title	Postnatal Care
Mandate	Government
Summary	There are critical gaps in postnatal care in Ireland. The Party seeks support from the membership to campaign on the following issues during the forthcoming Dáil term.
Motion Text	<p>There are critical gaps in postnatal care in Ireland.</p> <p>This Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognises the benefits of maternal healthcare, and calls on the Party to support, if in government, the expansion of postnatal care, to cover the first year after birth, not just the first 6 weeks.• believes that access to mental and physical healthcare for parents should be expanded in perinatal care.• calls on Government to expand paid leave for parents to cover, at least, the first year of a child’s life.• calls on Government to urgently deliver the perinatal mother and baby unit first recommended in 2017, to ensure mothers who require admission to psychiatric care are no longer separated from their babies.• calls on the Government to create and implement a strategy to support mothers in their first year, and to implement a review of the Maternity and Infants Scheme. <p>This strategy should include the establishment of community-based support networks for parents</p>

MOTION: PM13 <i>(Submitted by Mayo Branch)</i>	
Title	Early Education/Childcare as Publicly Provided Service
Mandate	Government
Summary	This motion calls on the Government to provide nationally a publicly funded early childcare and education service for children and families similar to primary and secondary education services.
Motion Text	<p>Conference calls on government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guarantee access to all children for a state funded place in early childhood education• Develop a state funded model for early years education where the state directly funds services, and early years staff are paid by the state and are provided with paid sick leave, maternity leave, annual leave and a pension• Create a national agency to manage the system of early years and school age care• Invest in public facilities and infrastructure to meet public demand• Standardise training and education for early childhood educators to be provided and to include training in specials needs• Provide supports and assessments through early childhood services for children with extra needs or neurodivergent needs such as assessments, diagnosis, play therapy, occupational therapy etc.

MOTION: PM5 <i>(Submitted by Galway West Branch)</i>	
Title	Towards a National Direct Vision Standard for Heavy Goods Vehicles to Protect Vulnerable Road Users
Mandate	Policy Committee
Summary	To adopt a national policy advocating for the introduction of a Direct Vision Standard (DVS) for Heavy Goods Vehicles across Ireland. Modelled on the successful London scheme, to reduce deaths and serious injuries among vulnerable road users.
Motion Text	<p>Conference mandates the Policy Committee to develop and promote a national policy framework for the introduction of an Irish Direct Vision Standard for HGVs, modelled on the Transport for London scheme.</p> <p>Conference calls on the Party's elected representatives at all levels to support a policy around DVS requirements, that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mandatory visibility star-rating system for HGVs operating in Irish towns and cities;• Permit requirements for lower-rated vehicles;• A prescribed Safe System (including cameras, proximity sensors with audio alerts, blind-spot mirrors and side-guards) for non-compliant vehicles.• A call for a national consultation involving road safety organisations, cycling and walking advocates, disability and mobility groups, freight operators, refuse collection bodies and road-victim support organisations to ensure the policy is effective and workable.• Accelerated delivery of engineering upgrades at high-risk junctions across urban areas, based on collision data and input from road-safety advocates.

MOTION: PM6 <i>(Submitted by Wicklow-Wexford Branch)</i>	
Title	Rural Transport Motion
Mandate	Policy Committee
Summary	The motion calls for updating party policy to prioritise improved rural public transport amid demographic and economic changes. It highlights declining rural services, growing in-migration, and new local industries hindered by poor connectivity.
Motion Text	<p>Conference recognises that:</p> <p>Rural communities are declining socially and economically as local businesses migrate to larger towns and online.</p> <p>At the same time, rural communities are developing new economic activities, particularly in heritage tourism and outdoor pursuits such as hiking. Many rural communities are attracting incoming residents because of the fierce competition for housing. These new residents are choosing outlying communities instead of paying the price of living or renting in large cities.</p> <p>But there is a huge problem for these rural communities as they evolve: the lack of viable public transport.</p> <p>Conference accordingly resolves that the party's policies should state that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The overall goal for all rural public transport should be the full integration of types of service, so that local buses connect to express buses and trains in such a way to permit commuters to travel to and from towns and cities, shoppers to travel to commercial centres, and consumers to reach and return from places of entertainment in bigger towns (shops, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, pubs, etc.)• Vital transport arteries, e.g., the Expressway bus routes, should receive public funding to enable them to remain viable and where needed to expand. We specifically deprecate the present "review" of Expressway services which is founded on a mistaken concept of unsubsidised profitability rather than as a needed public utility.

MOTION: PM6 (Continued)

Motion Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Local Link network must be funded to allow extension both in terms of the number of routes and the frequency of buses. The goal must be to serve all communities with viable public transport on an all day basis.• The basic infrastructure should be upgraded with clearly denoted bus stops, bus shelters, visible timetables (whether electronic or paper) and identifiable bus route numbers. <p>The fare structure of local transport should be cheap and widely advertised to encourage use of the system.</p> <p>The Leap card and the Free Travel pass should be made universal, to ensure acceptance by all forms of transport, including private operators.</p> <p>The guiding principles of public transport should be a non-profit basis,with a unionised workforce ensuring stability of service improving communication capacity across the country, and reducing traffic congestion, particularly from commuters otherwise forced to drive to their places of work.</p>
Proposed Amendment No. 1 from Clare Branch	<p>Add another point in the bullet point list that starts with <i>"Conference accordingly resolves that the party's policies should state that"</i> Public transport should run on a clock-face schedule.</p> <p>Rationale – Not having to memorise individual times makes it easier for users to take up public transport. It is an international standard.</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clock-face_scheduling</p>
Proposed Amendment No.2 from Dun Laoghaire	<p>Amend the text: The Leap card and the Free Travel pass should be made universal, to ensure acceptance by all forms of transport, including private operators.</p> <p>So that it reads: The Leap card, next generation ticketing and the Free Travel pass should be made universal. They should be accepted by all forms of public transport, including private operators where payment is on a 'per journey' basis.</p>

MOTION: PM12 (Submitted by Tipperary North Branch)

Title	Protect Rural Community Hubs (Including Village Pubs)
Mandate	Government
Summary	This motion calls for urgent action to protect rural community hubs, including village pubs, by modernising licensing, providing targeted supports, enabling community ownership and diversification, and strengthening rural transport – while ensuring disability inclusion and retaining all public health protections on alcohol.
Motion Text	<p>This Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• notes the accelerating loss of village and rural pubs across Ireland.• also notes that, according to a recent article in The Guardian – and consistent with analysis of the Revenue Commissioners' register of renewed liquor licences – Ireland has lost more than 2,100 pubs since 2005 (around a quarter of the total), with growing concerns about loneliness and weaker community cohesion as shared local spaces disappear.• recognises that, in many communities, the local pub is more than a business: it is a rural community hub – a multi-use local space supporting social connection, community activity, inclusive participation and access to services.• also recognises changing rural demographics and the growth of remote work, and believes closures are being driven in part by avoidable administrative burdens, inflexible licensing, and high fixed costs, increasing rural isolation.• further recognises the role some rural pubs play in food access and social connection for people living alone, particularly older people, and believes sustaining rural community life must go hand-in-hand with disability inclusion, public health safeguards, and safe transport options.• mandates and urges our party's Parliamentarians and Councillors to advance a practical package to sustain rural community hubs, explicitly including small rural pubs, while protecting public health.

MOTION: PM12 *(Continued)*

Motion Text	<p>Calls on the Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• modernise and simplify licensing and renewals for small rural pubs, including tiered fees and reduced administrative burden, while maintaining robust standards for safety and responsible service;• establish a Rural Community Hubs Support Scheme (including small rural pubs), targeted at small, independent rural premises and community-led hubs, based on demonstrated local community need; with targeted capital grants and/or low-cost finance for essential works (energy efficiency, safety, basic refurbishment, and accessibility improvements for people with disabilities), supporting participation in community life in line with New Directions, and enabling eligible projects to draw down relevant DRCD and LEADER capital supports subject to programme rules;• support appropriate diversification of small rural pubs as hubs (including daytime community use, cultural/community events, food where appropriate – including affordable hot meals where feasible – and supporting local food heritage and local skills pathways (including chef/hospitality training) within rural communities, and space that can support community activity and remote working where feasible), subject to safety and responsible service requirements;• provide business-planning, financial advisory, and co-operative development supports, including pathways for community ownership and succession planning, for pubs transitioning to community-hub models; and invest in rural and late-night transport, including pilot schemes.• affirms that supporting rural community hubs and protecting public health go hand-in-hand, and that these proposals are intended to sustain community life without increasing alcohol-related harm – through safer transport, responsible service standards, and no weakening of protections under the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018
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MOTION: PM7 *(Submitted by Kildare North Branch)*

Title	The impact of the ending of the UNIFIL mandate on our Defence Forces
Mandate	Government
Summary	Recognition of the impact of our Defence Forces in peace keeping roles over a record number of years.
Motion Text	<p>This conference acknowledges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the significant peace keeping role under the UN and UN- mandate missions played by our Defense Forces for almost 60 years, with 89 peacekeepers paying the ultimate price, 48 of these whilst on service with UNIFIL in Lebanon. Ireland is rightly proud of holding the international record for unbroken peacekeeping service which is also an emphasis of Irish Foreign policy, underpinned by Neutrality. The UNIFIL mandate which involves 10,000 peacekeepers from 46 nations will be renewed for a final year and then by a year-long “orderly and safe draw down and withdrawal” decided as a compromise following the US supported by Israel seeking a full withdrawal by 2026.• That our peacekeepers through their role in UNIFIL have played a hugely positive role but have also developed many skills and as a consequence have made a career in the defense forces more attractive at a time when it is difficult to recruit and retain personnel. <p>This conference calls on Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct an urgent impact assessment on the ending of the UNIFIL mandate for the Defense Forces and by extension their families. Redouble diplomatic efforts towards the reform of the UN and particularly the security council.• Confirm that a theme of the EU presidency, which will be held by Ireland in 2026, will be a counterbalancing of the rush to militarism, by enhancing peacekeeping and diplomatic initiatives towards global peace and security.

MOTION: PM2 (Submitted by Galway East Branch)

Title	Policy for supporting Micro and Small Enterprises in Ireland
Mandate	Policy Committee
Summary	Micro and Small Enterprises represent nearly 50% of the employment in Ireland and account for nearly 99% of all enterprises (CSO, 2021). This motion calls on the Social Democrats to develop a policy to support Micro and Small Enterprises in Ireland.
Motion Text	<p>Conference calls on the Policy Committee, to develop a policy which calls for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledgement that Micro and Small enterprises not only contribute to exchequer through taxation but also directly to local communities through employment and sponsorship of local initiatives (school teams, etc.).• Recognition that in a world where we are losing third spaces, Micro and Small Businesses, especially in rural areas, can be important social hubs within the community in addition to providing valuable sources of employment.• Formation of a dedicated Support Hub to help micro and small enterprises navigate complex business regulations, particularly those without HR support. In addition, changes in regulations, particularly those for which non-compliance can result in a criminal offence, should be communicated in writing to all micro and small enterprises by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment.• Establishment of a commercial version of Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) which protects vulnerable businesses so they aren't faced with significant increases in rent with very little notice.• Extend the Derelict Properties grant to business owners who buy derelict commercial properties in towns and villages. Extend vacant property tax to include commercial spaces in our towns and villages.• Commitment that tax incentives, temporary or permanent, be cognisant of the needs of indigenous SMEs and, where appropriate, targeted towards them.

MOTION: PM4 (Submitted by Longford-Westmeath Branch)

Title	Supporting an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) model for post-consumer textiles by developing a relevant Producer Responsibility Initiative in Ireland
Mandate	Government
Summary	This motion recognises that urgent action is needed to address the vast amounts of post-consumer textiles being disposed of annually as household waste. It calls on the Government to commit to delivering an Extended Producer Responsibility Roadmap for textiles to establish an effective textile separate and management scheme in line with circular economy principles, as recommended by the Textiles Advisory Group.
Motion Text	<p>Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• welcomes the publishing of the Government Roadmap: Strategic Policy Objectives & Strategic Actions for a Circular Economy in Textiles containing strategic actions and objectives, informed by the TAG, the DECC commissioned 2024 research study into post-consumer textiles, current and pending EU legislative requirements.• calls on the Government to recognise that urgent action is needed to address the huge amount of post-consumer textiles entering the waste disposal chain as household waste, annually.• calls on the Government to commit to delivering the Textile Advisory Group's recommendation, as described in the, Government Roadmap: Strategic Policy Objectives & Strategic Actions for a Circular Economy in Textiles, to develop an Extended Producer Responsibility Roadmap for textiles to establish a scheme to finance, deliver and manage an effective textile separate collection and management system in line with waste hierarchy and circular economy principles (including regulatory certainty via end-of waste). Producer fees will be subject to eco-modulation. The EPR scheme will collect accurate market and waste data to support national reporting. The EPR scheme will be required to fund waste prevention activities including circular economy awareness campaigns and to support the role of textile operators including social enterprises, in the collection and sorting of post-consumer textiles and in relation to reuse, repair and preparation for reuse activities.• Further mandates the Parliamentary Party and Councillors to actively support and help to promote community circular economy textile initiatives within their local areas, such as School Uniform, Christmas jumper and Halloween costume swap shops and textile or clothing repair initiatives, as well as calling for and supporting the development of a national Producer Responsibility Initiative for post-consumer textiles in Ireland.



Notes:

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