



Inclusion Ireland Review of Political Party Manifestos

General Election 2020

**Social
Democrats**

Introduction

The Social Democrats was launched in 2015 and contested their first general election in 2016. They currently have 2 sitting TDs.

2016 Manifesto Commitments

- New legislation on patient advocacy
- Invest heavily in early years supports such as speech and language
- Ensuring SEN students have access to education based on their needs

- Investing in Special Needs Assistants, SNAs, including removal of cap, to ensure sufficient resource and provide continuous professional development for SNA
- Steadily reducing primary school class sizes to the EU average of 20
- Improving further education, training and apprenticeships options, and offering better basic literacy and job-hunting skills
- Introduce a Cost of Disability Payment
- Enact the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a priority
- Ensuring that personal assistant and other individualised social care services are restored

Inclusion Ireland Ask 2020	Social Democrats Commitment 2020
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	<p>Have the UNCRPD protocol fully ratified in Ireland</p> <p>See key legislation enacted and commenced to promote and protect the rights, quality of life and independence of people with disabilities</p> <p>Base the position of a Super Junior Minister for Disabilities in the Department of the Taoiseach to ensure a whole of Government, cross departmental approach to disability</p> <p>Pass legislation including the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016 and new legislation on the Deprivation of Liberty</p>
Assisted Decision-Making	Fully commence the Disability Act 2005 and the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015

Participation of people with disabilities	None
Housing	<p>Introduce a new Affordable Housing Scheme</p> <p>Commit to ensuring a minimum of 7% of social housing to meet universal design standards</p> <p>Promote the uptake of adaptation and mobility aids grants to enable independent living for persons with disabilities</p> <p>Adequate supports must also be in place to enable people live independently</p> <p>Ensure Local Authorities review their approved social housing lists and identify the number of people and households who require wheelchair accessible housing</p>
De-institutionalisation	None
Accessibility	<p>Introduce an Assistive Technology Passport</p> <p>Expand the number of playgrounds, pools, gyms, parks and green spaces and venues that are universally designed</p> <p>Insist on the disability-proofing all new construction projects so that housing is fully accessible</p>
Transport	Are keen to see a vast improvement in the area of accessibility for people with disabilities.
Mental Health Services for People with Intellectual Disability	Expand Intellectually Disability Mental Health services by year five
Cost of Disability	Introduce a Cost of Disability Payment
Education	Commence in full the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and the Irish Sign Language Act 2017

	<p>Increase the number of psychologists under the National Educational Psychological Services</p> <p>Develop training for special needs children into the curriculum for teacher training</p>
Employment	<p>End barriers to disabled people entering or remaining within the paid work force</p> <p>Ensure that the target of a minimum 6% employment rate for people with disabilities for public bodies is fully implemented, and extended to public sector contractors</p> <p>Seek to improve funding under the Wage Subsidy Scheme and link to changes in the National Minimum Wage</p> <p>Ensure improved participation in apprenticeships for women and for people with disabilities</p>

Other Disability-Related Commitments

Improvements in a range of supports for people with disabilities including extra personal assistant hours and an assistive technology passport plus set aside funding to allow for the full monitoring of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Immediately expedite the recruitment of 1,000 therapists and other front line healthcare workers.

Introducing a statutory right to Home Care and Personal Assistance

Develop and publish a National Strategy for Autism

Reverse the recent unacceptable cut to disability services in the HSE 2020 service plan

Adopt the recommendations in the Independent Review Group Report to address the basic funding deficit in the funding of services in the disability sector.

Improve personal assistant and other individualised social care services so that people with disabilities can live independently

Raise the medical card income disregard for people with disabilities who are at work to ensure that this is not a barrier to taking and staying in employment

Restore genuine rehabilitative work option while retaining a benefit for long-term recipients of a disability payment

Extra funding for initiatives aimed at cohorts with high drop-out rates or low participation rates including girls, women, older people and people with disabilities.

Commentary

The Social Democrat election manifesto is quite strong on disability related issues, and has a clear rights-based approach to disability that is evident throughout.

The manifesto highlights the importance of the UNCRPD and commits to placing a Super-Junior Minister in the Department of the Taoiseach to lead on the implementation of the Convention, as well as providing funding for its implementation. There is also a commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol of the UNCRPD. All of this is to be welcomed.

Their commitment to promoting people's rights is also reflected in their commitments to pass legislation including the Disability (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016, the new legislation on Deprivation of Liberty, and to fully commence the Disability Act 2005 and the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act.

The manifesto also identifies the importance of housing and makes a general commitment to introduce a new Affordable Housing Scheme, that could benefit people with disabilities. They also commit to ensuring a minimum of 7% of social housing to meet universal design standard, and to promote the uptake of adaptation and mobility aids grants to enable independent living for persons with disabilities.

The manifesto says that supports must be made available for people to live independently. All of these commitments are to be welcomed, however, the manifesto does not mention de-institutionalisation, which is disappointing.

The Social Democrats commit to introducing a cost of disability payment, which is to be welcomed, and have strong commitments on education in their commitment to fully implement the EPSEN Act, and recruit more NEPS Psychologists.

There are also strong commitments regarding employment such as ensuring that the target of a minimum 6% employment rate for people with disabilities for public bodies is fully implemented. They also commit to recruiting 1,000 therapists and healthcare workers, which is to be welcomed.

In summary, the Social Democrats election manifesto is comprehensive in its scope on disability related issues, and puts forward a whole of government approach to disability which is to be welcomed.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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