

# AONTÚ

LIFE • UNITY • ECONOMIC JUSTICE

MANIFESTO • FORÓGRA

Bealtaine 2023

**IF YOU KEEP VOTING THE SAME  
WAY, NOTHING WILL CHANGE.**



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## Introduction | Réamhrá (Peadar Tóibín TD):

A Chairde,

The North of Ireland is in the middle of a major political and economic crisis. Families are being hammered by the ever-increasing cost of living. Sustained high inflation is doing untold damage to the very fabric of families and communities and yet it has hardly featured as an issue of political concern here over the last 18 months.

What does it say about our political system when the most sustained cost-of-living crisis internationally in generations has been mostly invisible from the political debate here?

John Hume once famously said that you can't eat a flag. And today thousands of families are going without eating or heating due to the inbuilt dysfunction of the political system.

Hospitals are shedding key life and death services. 1 in 7 people are on hospital waiting lists.

300,000 people are living in poverty, 45,000 people are on housing waiting lists and key public servants are forced to strike for decent pay.

Indeed, the one political action that Sinn Féin, the DUP, the SDLP, the UUP and the Alliance have taken is to hike up Rates Bills for families on Councils.

All councils in the North of Ireland have now confirmed a rise in rates bills for the upcoming financial year, some as high as 8%. This is a punch in the stomach to families who are struggling with overdrafts or in the clutches of money lenders.

How is it acceptable that in the jaws of a Cost-of-Living Crisis, the Stormont Political Establishment do not turn up for work, yet still take a wage and at council drastically hike up rates on struggling families?

### **Largest Ever Aontú Team**

Aontú will field our largest candidate team ever in the north of Ireland. I am extremely proud of the quality of these candidates. These are articulate and able women and men from all walks of life, who have shown massive dedication to their communities. Momentum is growing behind the Aontú campaign.

If you're fed up of the Cost-of-Living Crisis, the closure of Hospital services and massive Rates increases while the Stormont parties take their wages, change your vote to Aontú.

### **If you Think Aontú, Vote Aontú**

Many people think Aontú, but vote for other parties out of habit or misplaced loyalty. Many people still vote for parties who are actually damaging their core values.

But thankfully that's starting to change. A new people-powered movement is growing throughout Ireland. People are voting for Aontú to show the Stormont Parties that we have had enough. At last, momentum is building for Common Sense.

Le gach deá-ghuí,

Peadar Tóibín TD

## Foreword | Brollach (Gemma Brolly):

A chairde,

It is a great honour for me to write the forward to this manifesto. Aontú is an all-Ireland political party which was formed in 2019. Since our formation we've built a strong foundation across the thirty-two counties. In the recent general and assembly elections we secured 55,000 votes. We have 1,300 members, sixty functioning Cumann and fifty local area representatives with elected representatives from Derry to Wexford.

Aontú stands on the three pillars of Life, Unity and Economic Justice and has done some serious work in holding the establishment to account, and speaking up for vulnerable people.

Our representatives across Ireland are involved in many local campaigns. I myself am the founder and Chair of the Save Causeway Coast Hospital campaign. Causeway Hospital is the most important health infrastructure we have in our region. Key maternity services at our hospital are being closed. This would mean that well over 800 mothers would have to travel long distances to other hospitals. The Intensive Care Unit maybe next. Without the ICU there can be no functioning A&E.

These service closures are replicated all over the North. Tens of thousands of people have to travel further to already overcrowded hospitals for life and death healthcare. These cuts are a result of a policy of Hospital Service Centralisation. All five Stormont parties have signed up to this policy. Indeed, Michelle O'Neill as Minister for Health launched the Bengoa Report which is the blueprint for these hospital service closures.

These closures are happening without the proper investment in alternative hospital, Primary Care or Stepdown facilities. These closures are costing lives. Pushing back against these closures and providing decent well-funded health care is a key objective of Aontú.

North and south, 23,000 unborn children have been aborted in 3 years. That's the equivalent of 900 classrooms of children who have had their lives ended due to these laws that have been introduced.

Sinn Féin lobbied hard for the North to be Next. They forgot their republicanism and lobbied the British Government to introduce abortion on demand in this part of Ireland. Shockingly SF and the SDLP leader have voted for abortion up until birth for children with disabilities.

Seasann Aontú ar son ár dteanga, ár gcúltúr agus ár náisiún. Bhí muid ag fanacht ó 2006 le haghaidh Reachtaíocht na Gaeilge agus le haghaidh cearta teanga. Cuireadh Acht I bhfeidhm I mí na Nollag 2022 ach tá cuid mhór le déanamh go foill de réir an teanga agus comhionannas. Tá Aontú céad fan gcéad taobh thiar den fheachtas chun an Reachtaíocht a chur chun chinn.

On May 18th send the strongest message possible to the Stormont establishment,

Vote for real change, vote for accountability, Vótáil Aontú uimhir 1.

*Le gach deá-ghuí,*

**Gemma Brolly,**

**Aontú Deputy Leader**

**AONTU**  **2023 Council Election Candidates**  
 LIFE • UNITY • ECONOMIC JUSTICE



**GEMMA BROLLY  
BANN**



**Cllr EMMET DOYLE  
BALLYARNETT**



**Cllr DENISE MULLEN  
DUNGANNON**



**DARRYL CHRISTY  
THE MOOR**



**JOHN BOYLE  
LIMAVADY**



**SIOBHÁN McERLEAN  
DUNSILLY**



**JOHN ROBBIN  
THE GLENS**



**LEZA HOUSTON  
DERG**



**GERARD HERDMAN  
BLACK MOUNTAIN**



**NOREEN McELDOWNEY  
CARNTOGHER**



**LIAM McELHINNEY  
BENBRADAGH**



**ROSEMARY McGLONE  
SLIEVE CROOB**



**DARÁN MacMEANMAN  
SPERRIN**



**SHEILA FULLERTON  
MOYOLA**



**SEÁN MacCEARÁIN  
FOYLESIDE**



**DANIEL CONNOLLY  
ARMAGH**



**SHARON LOUGHRAN  
NEWRY**



**LIAM REICHENBERG  
SLIEVE GULLION**



**LUKE McCANN  
COLLIN**

**Vótáil**



# Reforming the Broken Political System | Athchóiriú ar an gCóras Polaitiúil Briste:

## The Good Friday Agreement has been gutted.

For the last few weeks the political establishment have been celebrating the Good Friday Agreement. For sure the Good Friday Agreement was a landmark agreement that brought to an end to decades of horror and violence.

The Good Friday Agreement has saved thousands of lives for which society is eternally grateful. But the elephant in the room is that the Good Friday Agreement is not currently operational. The institutions central to the Good Friday Agreement are for the most part broken, in tatters on the floor. The Assembly is collapsed. The executive is AWOL and the North South Ministerial Council is defunct.

The recent celebrations are akin to a birthday party for a person who no longer has a pulse. The Good Friday agreement is no longer a living agreement, and the responsibility lays squarely at the door of the Dublin and British Governments.

The north of Ireland is being held to ransom by the Undemocratic Unionist Party. And this is being allowed to happen by the British and Irish Governments who are supposed to be the guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement but who are not guaranteeing anything.

The institutions, as they are currently constructed, indulge this distorted view of democracy. Until this is resolved the Assembly is cursed to a cycle of collapse and fall. Until this is resolved the people of the north are cursed to a Groundhog Day of real economic hardship. There is a deep hypocrisy in the fact that two Governments are raising a glass to toast the Good Friday Agreement while in practical terms its expiring.

## Reform of the Political Institutions.

Aontú is the party of reform. Its Aontú that has led the campaign to reform the Executive so it can't be crashed by the DUP, SF or anyone else. Stormont has been shut for 40% of its existence. This is no longer tolerable.

It's Aontú that has led the campaign to stop salaries for stay-at-home MLAs. If an MLA won't do their job, they should not get paid. In no other walk of life would someone get paid if they refused to show up to work.

## Local Authority Reforms

### Accountability

There is an extraordinary lack of accountability at Local Authority level. Aontú is the party of accountability. Some of our councils have racked up astronomical debt with almost no push back from any other political party. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have £69.8m worth of debt. Causeway Coast and Glens Council have £71.1m worth of debt. Ards and North Down have a staggering £78.9m worth of debt.

Aontú is calling for independent investigations of these debt mountains. We are also calling for a rebalance of power between the Council officials and elected councillors who enhance democratic oversight.

## **Unity**

Aontú means Unity. We are the party of the all-Ireland Economy. Since the development of InterTrade Ireland there has been precious little done to integrate the two sides of this island.

At council level Aontú will push for Memorandums of Understanding to be created between councils north and south so that council services can be delivered more seamlessly across the border. We will joint fund cross-border, cross-council projects of mutual benefit.

## **Housing**

Aontú Councillors will work with Department of Communities and Housing Associations to ensure that high quality maintenance and repairs on properties are carried out in a timely fashion and unacceptable behaviour and anti-social behaviour is not tolerated.

We will ensure local government services assist in homelessness prevention. We commit to conducting an audit of council services to assess how councils already contribute to homelessness prevention and to consider further actions that councils can take in this area. We will appoint a homelessness prevention lead in each council and ensure people with lived experience of homelessness are at the heart of policy development and the design of services which impact them. We will use planning powers to ensure new social and genuinely affordable housing gets built where it is needed.

## **Mortgage Interest Relief**

There is major concern due to the recent rise in bank interest rates. This will dramatically increase the amount of money constituents are paying for their mortgages.

Aontú calls on the Department for Communities and the Department for Work and Pensions to reduce the qualifying period for Support for Mortgage Interest from 39 weeks; extend the repayment period during the cost-of-living crisis; and reinstate a non-repayable grant and allow households to claim support.

We also call on the Land and Property Services to consider the appropriateness of enforcement action (including court action) against ratepayers struggling to pay bills during the cost-of-living crisis.

## **Mental health**

In light of the increase in mental health difficulties arising from the pandemic evidenced by in-patient bed occupancy and waiting times to access service, Aontú will use councils to declare a Mental Health Emergency.

We will seek an All-Party Working Group to be convened to prepare a response from Councils to the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031 consultation, lobby for sustainable, funded and accessible services and to ensure its implementation.

We will seek a commitment to ensure that children and young people will be able to access mental health services when and where they need them without barriers with CAMHS receiving no less than 10% of the mental health budget.

We demand that mental health services for those over 65 be needs based, and not age based and that the community and voluntary sector will be fully integrated into the development and delivery of mental health services.

We will push for access to psychological services to be embedded into mainstream mental health services and the creation of a regional mental health crisis service and fully integrated dual diagnosis provision. The Aontú strategy encompasses a ‘No Wrong Door’ approach to services. We call on the Executive to fully fund the strategy in line with the Strategy Funding Plan.

### **Addiction**

Recorded drug offences, arrests and seizures are increasing in the six counties year on year. There is a real fear of drug-related crime in our communities despite the dedicated work undertaken by the statutory health and social care and community and voluntary sector. We are calling for the necessary drug rehabilitation and Detox services to be put in place through partnership with councils, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice, PSNI, HURT and organisations such as the Northlands Centre and the Western Trust.

### **Public Spaces**

Community wellbeing is enhanced significantly by green spaces, parks and Community facilities. We are concerned at the current state of many of our public spaces including damaged surfaces, lack of amenities, incidents of anti-social behaviour and lack of disabled access.

We will call for a multi-disciplinary team to be established for the purpose of surveying the entirety of our parks, identifying remedial works, maintenance, oversight and bringing our parks to their full potential.

### **British Legacy Bill**

Truth and Justice are the corner stones of a liberal democracy. If Britain deletes the right of people to achieve truth and justice, it can no longer call itself a liberal democracy. If they proceed with the Legacy Bill, Aontú will name in the Dáil the British Soldiers who murdered innocent people in this country. We want to give thanks to Cllr Denise Mullen who has done such good work on this issue.

We will use all the councils that we are elected to, to pass motions in support of the two Aontú Bills that see justice and truth for victims and survivors.

Aontú have already introduced a Bill in the Dáil that would create a State Commission of Investigation into British collusion.

### **Social Welfare Rights**

The ‘Sounding the Alarm’ report compiled by *Right2Work* and *Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR)* clearly outlines from the experience of advice workers that the current benefits system is not fit for purpose.

93% of claimants, as outlined in the report are unaware of the criteria used to assess eligibility for Universal Credit and 80% of claimants did not fully understand the nature of the assessment process for all benefits, rising to 98% for Universal Credit. This system has become increasingly complex since welfare reform.



Despite a paper being circulated to Executive Ministers by the Department for Communities on multiple occasions up to March 2021 focussing on the primary legislation required to continue mitigation payments, the proposal was not placed on the Executive agenda.

Aontú echoes calls by Right2Work for a human rights checklist to be introduced in the benefits system to protect claimants and we write to the Executive Office to ask why essential legislation on welfare mitigation has not yet been tabled for discussion despite the detrimental impact the delay has on individuals and families.

### **North South Interconnector**

Aontú will use Councils to seek to stop the overgrounding of the North South Inter-connector. We support the all-Ireland energy market and the interconnectors that allow it to function, but these must adhere to community consent, must be safe and must not damage communities. The technology has improved significantly in the last 5 years and undergrounding is fully feasible. Indeed, there are significant examples of undergrounding technology being used for similar projects internationally.

### **Justice for Noah Donohue:**

Noah Donohue was a bright, happy 14-year-old boy with a loving mother. He went missing on the 21st of June 2020. Shockingly and tragically, he was found dead in a storm drain in Belfast some days later. Since that time, his family has had no answers about the circumstances surrounding his death. The PSNI have actively sought to withhold information surrounding his death and seek a Public Interest Immunity certificate. These certificates have traditionally been used by the authorities to protect the identity of informants in Paramilitaries. It is time to release the files and get justice for Noah. His mother, his family, his loved ones, should not have to fight the police for answers.

Aontú pledge:

- As priority, in the name of safety for all our children, a consistent challenge against the ongoing process of a PII being used to withhold information in Noah Donohue's Inquest.
- As priority, in the name of safety for all our children, the consistent requesting for a new and proper investigation into the death of Noah Donohue.

## Cost of Living | Costas Maireachtála:

The Executive doesn't seem to understand the pressure that workers and families are under. SF / DUP / SDLP / UUP / Alliance do not seem to understand that businesses and farmers are now being pushed to breaking point because of Stormont's half measures. People are using their wages to pay off their overdrafts. They are going into debt on the back of eye-watering bills. The purchasing power of the average person has fallen by thousands. Aontú is the party of devolution. We seek to return the powers to control taxation from London to the democratic control of the people of the North. This will reduce the cost of energy for families and businesses during this crisis.

Aontú seeks:

- A devolution of fuel taxes from England to Ireland so we can lower them, to help struggling families.
- Equalisation of Corporation Taxes with the south of Ireland to drive Foreign Direct Investment.
- Devolution of more tax powers in order to grow the economy, to improve the prosperity of families and to significantly reduce the cost of fuel in this Cost-of-Living Crisis.
- Implementation of price caps on Electricity & Gas.
- Implementation of a VAT/Excise Duties waiver on fuel.
- A reversal of the Cuts to the Universal Credit.
- An emergency payment of up to £500 to middle-to-low income families to deal with the cost-of-living crisis hammering our communities.

### Devolution of Fiscal Powers

The elephant in the room is that this state does not have the budgets to provide proper housing, health, education, local government, or decent wages. The elephant in the room is that Stormont, even when operating, is a jumped-up local authority, with little economic power and dependent on handouts from London to exist.

The system as it is currently operating is similar to an absentee landlord from old, throwing some coins in the air while local Stormont politicians scurry around picking up the handouts.

That may be good enough for Sinn Féin, the DUP, the SDLP, the UUP and the Alliance but it's not good enough for us. It is not good enough for the people of the north.

It has to change. It's a life and death issue for so many people. We will drive that change.

The fiscal philosophy of Stormont has been one of dependence and reliance. The debate on our finances has been continuously framed by the limitations of the Block Grant. Even the two old Nationalist parties are largely silent on the need to devolve tax powers from London. Aontú is different. We are a party of economic ambition. We want to end the dependency of the North of Ireland. We want to grow our economy to benefit our society.

The proportion of our Budget that comes from the Block Grant is higher than in the other devolved administrations on these islands. This is because both Scotland and Wales have more significant tax powers.

The proportion of devolved taxation in the North of Ireland is 5%. This is lower than in Wales where it is at 9% and it is much lower than in Scotland at 22%. As a result, the amount of public

expenditure which is funded by locally set taxes is far higher in Scotland and Wales than in the North of Ireland.

Elected representatives in those jurisdictions have far more control over their total budgets than in this state. Shockingly, Corporation Tax has actually been devolved but it has not yet been commenced. This reflects the level of dysfunction and dependence of our government.

The British Chancellor determines the spending envelope for the North of Ireland. This is done through the use of the Barnett Formula. The Barnett Formula has no legal basis and is purely a Treasury Convention. It could be changed at any time. Critically it is not based on need. In practical terms the people of the North have no influence on that decision at all.

It is worth noting that the spending envelope approved by the Sinn Féin Minister for Finance for 2022 was £13,571.4 billion. This is a fraction of what it needs to be. It means that there will be shortages in housing, health education, transport and social services for decades to come. No Nationalist Minister for Finance should stand over this.

# Economic Justice, Jobs & Enterprise | Ceartas Eacnamaíoch, Poist & Fiontar:

## Workers' Rights:

Aontú is committed to justice in the workplace and the rights of all workers on the island of Ireland to get fair pay for fair work to allow fair living conditions. We affirm the dignity of work and the right of workers to equitable pay and working environment.

We seek to:

- End and prohibit exploitive Zero-Hour contracts.
- End the practice of bogus '*self-employment*' to avoid employer Tax/NIC obligations.
- Establish the right to Collective Bargaining.
- Accommodate and further remote working where feasible.
- Establish a right to a sustainable income throughout retirement.
- Ensure the minimum wage is reflective of the living wage.
- Introduce penalties for employers who sack domestic employees, to be replaced with workers from abroad working for inhumane wages, to prevent exploitation.

## Tax Harmonisation:

In addition to devolution of fiscal powers from London to Ireland, we also need to see harmonisation of taxation across the island of Ireland. There cannot continue to be significant disparities in the levels of taxation depending on where you live. Corporations pay different levels of Corporation Tax dependent on whether they are in Belfast or Dublin. Excise Duties/Carbon Tax is applied to Solid Fuels in the South, whilst no Excise Duties/Carbon Tax and reduced VAT is applied to Solid Fuels in the North – leading to cross-border price differentials. It is time to converge our systems of taxation to harmonise the playing field both north and south.

## Boosting All-Ireland Trade:

In 2021, €4 billion was exported from the north into the south whilst exports from the south to the north were worth €3.7 billion. The 65% increase in all island trade, with €7.7 billion in goods being traded within the 32 counties is just the tip of the iceberg, and affirmation that a cohesive economy from Derry to Kerry is the path towards a united Ireland. An all-Ireland economy is the key to unleashing the full economical potential of this island. The building of the all-Ireland Economy must begin now.

## Economic Sovereignty:

Aontú is the party of Irish political and economic sovereignty. We believe Ireland's success in attracting FDI from both inside and outside of the EU benefits the island as a whole. Also, compared with the dominant EU states and Britain, Ireland has a small population. When decisions are made in London, Brussels and Berlin they are not made purely in Ireland's

interest. It is imperative, therefore, that we retain our limited policy instruments in the interests of our country. Aontú will defend Ireland's right to determine economic and tax policy 100%.

### **Border Development Zone**

The border runs for a total of 499 kilometres from Lough Foyle in Donegal to Carlingford Lough in County Louth. The creation of the Border had the effect of cutting off hinterlands from their market towns and cities and creating two separate economic jurisdictions where originally there was one. This particular region is also most affected by the Troubles and Brexit is an immediate threat to this region.

### **Education | Oideachas:**

The education system is failing our children. This was the view of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in the North, prior to the pandemic. Two years of draconian restrictions and lockdowns have only compounded these failures. Teachers have witnessed first-hand the inability of the education system to properly provide for our children.

Currently, core school spending per pupil is lower in the North of Ireland than in the south, Scotland, England and Wales. SF/ DUP/ SDLP/ UUP/ Alliance have cut more from school spending per pupil in 10 years than anywhere in the south of Ireland, Scotland, England or Wales. Pupil-teacher ratios are rising steadily in the north.

The Education budget faces a shortfall of £735 million over the next three financial years. High inflation is set to cause an interest rate rollercoaster for student loans leaving third level students who, are paying shockingly high college fees, exposed.

Growing numbers of children are on increasingly long waiting lists for additional support such as Literacy Teaching and Support Services or are waiting to be assessed for Special Educational Needs, whilst they struggle in class.

Yet, the Department's policy on sustainable schools states Primary Schools should have at least 140 pupils in urban areas and 105 in rural areas and Post-Primary should have at least 500 in rural areas. This policy could potentially close many small schools throughout the six Counties.

Our schools are the heartbeat and hub of our community, Aontú will not allow the government to go unchallenged and cut corners, cutting off the lifeline to these communities. We will fight to save our schools and improve education.

Aontú is the party of and for teachers and parents who want educational reform and resourcing to give our children the best educational possible, and to ensure no child is left behind.

Cuts to higher education are being made to fill the funding black hole at the Department for the Economy (DfE).

Aontú demands:

- An increase in £300m per year in Education Investment.
- Smaller class sizes.
- Increased Human Resources.
- A streamlining of our teachers' time and energy into teaching itself, with less administrative bureaucracy and paperwork.
- The government tackle long waiting lists for additional support and assessments for Special Educational Needs.

- Protection of schools in rural areas and towns.
- A cap on the cost of school uniforms.

This is the record of the outgoing government on education. Voting for them again will not change anything. **Aontú will work to ensure that no child is left behind.**

### **Stand Up for Equality of Education for All:**

Aontú will fight to secure an equal platform for all sectors of education in a pluralist education system, one which holds no hierarchy of educational ethos, but offers parental choice. Aontú fully support Integrated Education as part of a pluralist education system. However, Sinn Féin and the SDLP to promote Integrated Education over and above other sectors. This would have the effecting of deleting the choice of Catholic, Protestant options for some parents. This is the opposite of pluralism and diversity. It robs parents of the choice of schools according to their ethos and priorities. We must develop and practice mutual respect. We must nurture efforts to listen to one another, to be able to debate and understand, to identify, agree and differ in opinions respectfully.

### **Outreach University Campuses**

3rd Level Education is a significant driver of enterprise development. The lack of 3rd Level Education in the northwest is one of the causes of ‘youth flight’. Encouraging 3rd Level Institutions to provide outreach campuses in regional towns would allow for young people to remain living in local areas and could facilitate the development of enterprise and industry in those same areas. Create Memorandums of Understanding between third level education institutions on both sides of the border to identify what shared services could be provided more efficiently. Educational Training Boards and Local Enterprise Offices in the South should plan, deliver and accept applicants on an All-Island basis.

### **Higher Education Watchdog:**

80% of students are located in Belfast for their studies, with fewer than 3,000 at Magee University and with limited hope of increase. All the while, Derry with a population of over 100,000 (Nearly 60,000 of which are under 40) has no third level higher education institution. Aontú pledges to create a Higher Education Watchdog to oversee and reform HE/FE in the north to be fairly distributed on a regional and population basis.

### **Long Past the Time for a University in Derry:**

It is a point of cross community consensus that Derry has been unjustly denied a university, as part of the wider neglect of the North-West economy, despite its population size and potential. Constituencies east of the Bann received 72% of the Invest NI budget over the past 10 years. This is discriminating and damaging.

The overwhelming majority of students are forced to study in Belfast, which has an impact upon the social and economic development of Derry. Aontú commits to beginning the work of establishing a University for Derry and ending this historic wrong.

## Healthcare | Cúram Sláinte:

More than 350,000 people are waiting for a first consultant-led appointment. More than 260,000 people are waiting on Hospital appointments for more than a year. That's 1 in 7 people in this state whose health is deteriorating while waiting on a Hospital waiting list. It's intolerable and it makes a lie of the principle of a free health service.

Astoundingly the North of Ireland block grant is decided by using the previous year's budget and then adjusting it based on increases or decreases in comparable spending per person in England.

If spending on healthcare rose by £100m in England, the Norths spend will increase by an extra £3.4m as our population is 3.4% the size of England's. That our health budget is determined because of a decision made for English patients is shocking.

It means between 2014 and 2020, the number of people on waiting lists here increased from:

- 127,030 to 308,486 (143% increase) for those in acute and elderly care waiting for a consultant-led appointments
- 17,209 to 31,700 (84% increase) for in-patient treatment
- 32,129 to 65,235 (103% increase) for day care patients
- At the same time, the amount of money spent on these waiting lists has been cut by 62%, from £97m in 2013-14 to £37m in 2019-20.

Because of Stormont's shut down of much of the Health Service during the Covid Crisis there is now a tidal wave of patients with complex needs seeking treatment in emergency departments. But this has not been met with increased funds.

Our Emergency Departments are overwhelmed. Large numbers of patients including the elderly are waiting in excess of 24 hours for an inpatient bed. Ambulances are stranded unable to handover patients. This is causing delays in responding to emergency calls.

We're 3,000 nurses short of what we need. Due to the rate of inflation real wages are falling. Staff are exhausted. They have been forced to strike for fair wages.

By means of a freedom of information request, Aontú Councillor Emmet Doyle in Derry found that between 2010 and the start of the pandemic, Sinn Féin, the SDLP, the DUP, the UUP and the Alliance Party, cut 887 beds from the hospital services in the North. This proved catastrophic in the teeth of Covid as patients had to be treated in hospital car parks.

Aontú seeks:

- To Return the 887 beds removed by the Stormont Establishment to the Health Service.
- The delivery of a fully funded mental health strategy to support those who have suffered so much over the last two years
- €1.5bn in investment over 5 years into the reduction of hospital waiting lists to ensure that no one has to wait longer than a year for the treatment that they need.
- A comprehensive workforce plan to be carried out within the next 6 months.
- The return of 500 net extra Nursing Staff for each of the next 3 years.
- Inflation indexed pay guarantees for Health Care workers.
- Protections against violence and aggression towards nursing staff.
- In light of the many deaths in Nursing Homes during Covid, an investigation into the state's role in how nursing homes are funded, managed and operated.

## Health Reform

There are other deep structural problems within the Health Service that must be addressed

They include:

- A lack of accountability
- Mismanagement
- Shortages of staff
- Under-investment in Primary care and in Community-based services

Aontú wants to see an increasing use of “*Activity Related Payments*” so that hospitals and health services get paid for treating patients and not for having excess management staff. This strategic focusing of funds towards the front line is badly needed.

## Adverse Incidents

Every year the NHS in the North pays out money on the basis of adverse incidents. £400 million has been paid out in compensation as result of medical negligence over 5 years. This is astounding. Some of these are genuine accidents. Some of these adverse incidents are as a result of understaffing and some are as a result of negligence. We need to ensure that there is full accountability for the latter within the NHS. Aontú will press for the establishment of an independent “*Oversight and Risk Management*” team, tasked with constantly monitoring for systemic problems in the Health service.

## Staff Retention

One of the many damaging consequences of austerity on our Healthcare system was the forced migration of thousands of health professionals. Nurses and midwives, doctors and medical consultants as well as allied health professionals were forced to emigrate due to poor pay and working conditions.

Aontú proposes to:

- Complete a Work Force Plan within the next six months to ensure that our health service is properly staffed.
- Ensure the pay of Nurses and Health Care Staff keeps pace, at the very least, with the rate of inflation.

## Primary Care

We need to build Primary Care. This means building a critical mass of Primary Care locations or staff – such as doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and social workers – that are needed to deliver integrated care in their community. Aontú believes this will require resolving supply-side issues relating to the training and location of GPs, especially in areas of greatest social need. Aontú will consult closely with GPs who have established innovative and socially responsive practices in order to replicate, so far as possible, such models more widely.

As part of its strategy to re-pivot healthcare away from its overdependence on the acute system, Aontú will press for 10% of the current health budget being assigned to the development and delivery of Primary Care in communities. The Healthcare Budget for 2021/2022 in the North



was £6.5bn and needed to increase by at least £400 million to maintain its current capacity in 2023/2024.

GPs interact with every individual and every family. They should be at the heart of a responsive, proactive and cost-effective health system. Aontú believes GP's should be incentivized to offer a wider range of services, either directly or through an Integrated Group Practice. It is clear that with increased investment in facilities and staff, GP's can offer a much wider set of services, from minor surgical procedures to mental health, if facilities and space are provided. This makes sense, both in terms of patient-friendly delivery of care and also relieving pressures on the acute system. Pharmacists must also have a greater role in the delivery of Healthcare to citizens.

Midwife led care needs to be looked at to take pressure off maternity units in large hospitals by having low risk pregnancies managed by community midwives at primary care centres, initially through 35 weeks of pregnancy, with a view to creating midwife led pregnancy centres that can take a woman through from early pregnancy to postpartum care, as is seen in other countries. There is strong research to show midwife led care in low-risk pregnancies is more beneficial than consultant or doctor led care in a hospital.

A more balanced and responsive Healthcare system will require greater integration of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary care. Indicative Care Pathways, based on Best Practice, should be used to channel patient flows between Emergency Departments (EDs), Out-Patient Departments (OPDs) and delivering care that is more appropriately delivered in a community setting.

### Acute Care

In 2009, there over 7,200 hospital beds in the North. As of 2021, there was little over 5,600 hospital beds across the North. More than 1,500 beds have been cut from the service, the effects of which are still being felt today.

The effects of short-term "*savings*" through the closure of beds and cuts in staffing are still evident. These cutbacks were implemented notwithstanding all of the evidence that such cutbacks are radically counter-productive, both in terms of health and the long-term costs of rebuilding the system, including staff morale and public trust.

Action is needed in the short term, as well as the medium term. ED services are not functioning as they should – the same cycle of "*crises*" occur year after year. Repeated promises by the five Executive parties to "*fix*" the system have been empty. The number of patients waiting more than twelve hours on trolleys in Emergency Departments across the north increased by 49% between June 2021 and June 2022.

We know that being on a trolley often leads to delayed diagnosis, delayed treatment and patients who have an increased risk of morbidity and mortality. This is a wholly unacceptable situation but one to which the Executive has become desensitised. There is no humanitarian, medical, or economic logic to leaving people waiting on hospital waiting lists.

### Lack of Step-down and Home Care Facilities:

2,700 people are waiting for a domiciliary care package in the north. Having no care package in place means a lot of elderly patients are forced to stay in a hospital bed despite being clinically discharged. Others who want to come home are forced to remain in step-down facilities at a cost of £1,000 per week. There is an obvious cost in human terms, but it is also costing millions of pounds a week and leading to longer waiting lists.

Aontú believe that additional “*Home Care*” services, together with more nursing home capacity, would deliver a more balanced and cost-effective healthcare service. This is a long-standing problem where new thinking and closer integration of Acute and Community care is required. Aontú is fully supportive of this approach. Aontú wants to see an addition £50 million invested in Home Care each year. We believe that this investment will be cost neutral on the health service.

### **All-Ireland Mental Health Strategy:**

Suicide, depression, addiction, and mental health issues know no borders and impact communities of all races, religions, and backgrounds. Too often people in need fall through the cracks and are failed by our mental health services because of inadequate funding and regional inequalities. Aontú pledges to deliver an all-island mental health strategy to care for those in need, and ensure that no border or postcode is a barrier to helping people.

### **Acute or General Medical Hospital Settings**

There is growing evidence which demonstrates that the integration of mental and physical healthcare results in improved outcomes across both domains. The speciality of Liaison Psychiatry is central to such developments, both in terms of services development and the underlying research. In Birmingham the RAID study demonstrated that for every £1 invested in a liaison psychiatry service, £4 were saved across medical bed days. These savings arose from reduced admissions, reduced length of stay and avoidance of repeat admissions. This should be a no-brainer.

## **Housing | Tithíocht:**

Since February last year there has been a £10,545 increase in the average price of a home, due in large part to the lack of supply in the housing market. This represents a 5.7% increase in little over a year. During the pandemic prices rose by over £25,000 – this is more than many people earn in a year!

Across the North, there are over 43,000 people on social housing waiting lists but over two thirds of those on waiting lists are statutorily in housing distress. Meanwhile, over 4,200 people are homeless on our streets. The Stormont Executive is failing in its duty of care towards the people. Aontú pledges to deliver swift, sustainable housing solutions which will meet housing demands. Having a roof over your head you can call your own is not just a pipe dream but an attainable reality.

Aontú seek:

- An increased tax on homes that are empty for over 2 years without good reason and a grant to get them back into use.
- The increased power to CPO derelict houses that are the source of anti-social behaviour.
- A significantly increased investment to build social and affordable homes from central government.
- State land be made available for housing.

- Increased social housing responsibility for private developers
- Rent controls to regulate increases in rents in the private rental market.
- A transparent system of multi-annual budgets for social and affordable housing.
- Increased housing budget to reduce rent, house prices and housing waiting lists.
- Delivery of at least 3,500 social and affordable homes *per annum*.
- A ban on no fault eviction during this homelessness crisis.
- A facility to allow Credit Unions funds be channelled into the building of Social Homes.

## Irish Reunification | Athaontú na hÉireann:

The right of the Irish people to determine our own affairs is a key objective of Aontú. Self-Determination is a civil and human right that should be afforded to all Irish Citizens in Ireland. Brexit has highlighted the cost of allowing Westminster to determine the future of the people of the North of Ireland. Tory MPs know little and care less about the north of Ireland. Yet they determine the future of everyone, north and south.

London has treated the north as an economic backwater. Since partition, the location of the greatest income, economic development, wealth and standards of living has moved from the North to the South. This is not an accident. Self-determination is a key ingredient of community and economic development.

Unfortunately, precious little has been achieved by either Sinn Féin, the SDLP, Fianna Fáil or the Fine Gael government to date. Aontú is a party of practical Republicanism. Practical republicanism has the potential to achieve more for the people of the six counties than protesting on the side-lines ever will.

### A Dáil for All

100 years ago, Irish MPs, North and south, refused to attend Westminster and established the First Dáil. This was a practical step towards Irish Self-Determination. They took this step because they knew that decisions made close to the people that they affect are better decisions. Citizens can influence those decisions and hold decision makers to account. They also knew only too well that London would never make decisions in Ireland's best interest. This has not changed in 100 years.

The formation of the First Dáil was a watershed event in Irish history. The decision to create an Irish national parliament was a powerful action that put into practice the right of the Irish people to determine our own affairs. The Dáil that Countess Markievicz, Cathal Brugha and others established was a national parliament, not a partitionist one. Aontú affirms the right of all the people of Ireland, North and south, to representation in a national parliament.

### Practical Steps to All-Ireland Representation

Aontú MPs, if elected at Westminster General Elections, will present themselves to Leinster House in Dublin. We will demand that all Irish citizens throughout Ireland have democratic representation in Dáil. This would be the first practical step toward the re-establishment of a truly national parliament.

- With a mandate from people in the North, Aontú elected representatives will insist that the Irish government facilitates our participation in Dáil, alongside TDs representing other parts of Ireland.

- Aontú in government will work towards the integration of service delivery on an all-Ireland basis in terms of health, education, spatial development, housing, infrastructural development and justice.
- Aontú has published a Bill that if passed would allow MPs elected in the North of Ireland the right to sit and speak in the Dáil. There is no constitutional bar on this right. Aontú has successfully steered this Bill through its 1<sup>st</sup> stage in the Dáil.
- Aontú Leadar Peadar Tóibín is a member of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, in the Oireachtas. Here Aontú has started a campaign to empower MPs from the North to attend, speak and debate in all Dáil Committees. Each Committee in the Oireachtas has been asked to support this Motion.

### **New Ireland Forum**

Aontú is also calling on the Irish government to invite all shades of political and Civic opinion across the whole of Ireland to attend a New Irish Forum to plan and build for the future. The Forum would begin the practical planning to map out the process of economic and service convergence in both parts of the country and to prepare for the final constitutional settlement in the North.

### **A Referendum on Irish Unity**

Aontú will hold a referendum on Irish reunification within five years.

### **The Protocol**

The majority of the population of the north voted to remain within the EU. The DUP and the Tories ignored the will of the people and proceed to pull the North out of the EU. This necessitated a border. Either the border between the EU and the British State would have to be located along the Irish border which would have necessitated hundreds of checking points on that border or in the Irish Sea which would necessitate checking points on a handful of ports. Obviously, the former would be impossible to police and would shut down movement along 10 counties. As a result, the Protocol is the only practical solution to a self-made disaster by the DUP and the Tories.

### **The Francie Brolly Bill:**

The Francie Brolly Bill will grant MLAs speaking rights in the Dáil, therefore improving understanding and provision for all the people. Inspired and influenced by the late Francie Brolly, Aontú will work with Unionist colleagues to create a harmonious relationship based on respect for each of our traditions. We will create a more just and caring society which has the confidence of all sections of our community. Aontú believe in hard work, determination and, most importantly, respect. We must be prepared to listen as well as talk, we must work to build a better future for generations to come. Aontú will fight for representation of the people at every level.

## **Truth & Justice for Victims of Troubles | Fírinne agus Ceartas d'Íospartaigh na dTrioblóidí:**

There is still no British Justice. There is no rule of law. The British Military killed hundreds of Irish Citizens. This even included the killing of elected representatives such as Cllr Eddie Fullerton and Bernard O'Hagan. They also killed party election workers. Incredibly the British State killed dozens of citizens in the south of Ireland also.

***Why did these covert deaths happen?*** They happened because of the international push back that Britain received after Bloody Sunday. The British Military knew that they could no longer kill Nationalists openly and on Camera. They knew that they could still target nationalist and Catholics but through loyalist proxies. Some people might feel that this is ancient history. But it happened in our lifetime. The perpetrators of these murders live in the same towns and villages as the families of the dead loved ones. Some of the securocrats who carried out this collusion are likely to still be in the pay of the British state.

### **All Ireland Investigation into British Collusion:**

Aontú has introduced to the Dáil two key pieces of legislation that will protect the right of victims and survivors to achieve the truth and justice. The first is the Commission of Investigation (Collusion of British State Forces) Bill 2022. This Bill which would trigger a Investigation into the murder and destruction of British collusion in Ireland north and south.

We intend to introduce the same legislation in this jurisdiction. County by county, report after report, the full extent of British state-sponsored violence is becoming known. It is now time for a comprehensive investigation into the death toll of British collusion in Ireland north and south.

We have also introduced the European Convention on Human Rights (Challenge to British Government Amnesty) Bill 2023 which would mandate the Irish Government to bring the British Government to the European Court of Human Rights if they proceed with the Legacy Bill.

### **Oppose Amnesty for British Crimes:**

The illegal Tory Amnesty would contravene Britain's obligations the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the Good Friday Agreement and the Stormont House Agreement. Every legal, legislative and diplomatic avenue must be exhausted to stop this Amnesty coming into place. If the Irish government fail in doing this, we in Aontú, through our members, will do all we can to bring a Judicial Review to prevent any British Amnesty legislation coming into effect.

## A Compassionate Society | Sochaí Atruach:

### Standing Up for the Right to Life:

Aontú seeks to protect the Right to Life of everyone irrespective of age, gender, race, creed, abilities or stage of development. We seek a humane and compassionate response to unplanned pregnancies. Aontú will fight for the economic supports necessary so that all parents have the confidence to raise their children to their full potential. We will fight to take mothers out of food, housing and healthcare poverty in all cases.

Aontú opposes abortion because abortion ends the lives of human beings. Abortion targets the poorest, those with disabilities and females in particular. You are far more likely to be aborted if you are female, have a disability or are from a poor socio-economic background.

The north has undergone an extreme change in abortion legislation in a short time. Shockingly there has been little debate or discussion about it. The silence has been stifling. No Nationalist party has represented the views of hundreds of thousands of Nationalists that support Human Rights for all individual living human beings.

North and south, 23,000 unborn children have been aborted in three years. That's the equivalent to the 900 classrooms of children who have had their lives ended due to these laws that have been introduced.

Sinn Féin lobbied hard for the North to be Next. They forgot their republicanism and lobbied the British Government to introduce abortion on demand in this part of Ireland. **Shockingly, the SF and the SDLP leaders have voted for abortion up until birth for children with disabilities such as Downs Syndrome.**

Aontú is now the only all Ireland party that supports the objective of the proclamation, to Cherish All the Children of the Nation equally. Aontú is now the only all Ireland party that supports the Human Right to Life for everyone.

We all live under the same sky. We are all responsible for each other, no matter how small, weak or vulnerable we are. Aontú will seek to reverse the deregulation of abortion law and put in protections for babies and their mothers. We will make sure that no mother or child will be left behind.

Aontú understands the scale of the challenge to foster a pro-human rights Ireland. But this is the human rights debate of our generation and we are committed to this struggle and the time it may take. To confront abortion in Ireland, it must be confronted on an all-Ireland basis. All Aontú elected reps will be tasked with challenging the extreme abortion laws on both sides of the border and striving towards an All-Ireland future that vindicates the right to life of every person at all stages of their life.

The right to peacefully protest is a key democratic right. Its not a right you only afford if you agree with the reason for the protest. We in the north know this more than most. The banning of Civil Rights marches and the damage that did to democracy in the north is well known by citizens. Aontú opposes banning these key democratic rights.

## Opposition to Euthanasia:

Euthanasia is not the answer to investment failures in palliative care. Euthanasia is not the answer to the limitations on our capacity to treat and heal. Assisted suicide recommitments elements of our healthcare service to ending life – not preserving and prolonging life.

The societal effects are very worrying. In societies where ‘*Assisted Suicide*’ has been legalised, the regime of Euthanasia does not stay ‘*safe, legal and rare*’. It becomes ‘common, widely-used and normalised.’ Euthanasia also puts extreme pressure on those who are elderly or those with disabilities, making those people feel as if they are a burden on those around them and should simply dispose of themselves to make sure they are not.

Euthanasia is not confined to the decision by any one person, its effect is far more widespread – altering society’s dedication to preserving life. Endorsement of this slide down a very slippery slope will lead to a place where ‘Assisted Suicide’ is normal and widely availed of – with our most vulnerable under pressure to stop ‘being a burden’.

## Environment | Comhshaol:

We have all been passed this earth we live on and will pass it on again to each new generation. We have the obligation not only to hand it on as we have received it, but to remedy the damage done to date due to recent decades of rapid industrial and commercial momentum.

We are living in a time of mass species extinction, manmade global warming, and unprecedented pollution of our oceans, all of which threaten the lives, futures and cultures of people and habitats around the world. Aontú seeks to build a sustainable and environmentally friendly nation while not strangling our small enterprises and traditional skills.

Aontú seek:

- To increase the public transport infrastructure both across the North and on a cross-border basis, to reduce fossil fuel dependency.
- Expansion of active travel routes, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, in our cities, towns and rural areas to end competition for road space with cars, vans and heavy articulated trucks.
- To launch an all-Ireland retrofitting programme to insulate 500,000 homes across the island of Ireland by 2030.
- To launch an all-Ireland climate action plan to meet emissions targets for the island of Ireland by 2050.
- To appoint an all-Ireland Minister for the Environment with authority across the island of Ireland, and accountability to both the Dáil and Assembly.
- To regulate the increasing numbers of data centres across the island of Ireland to protect our natural resources and ensure sustainable development.
- To reduce dependency on fossil fuels from despotic regimes with appalling human rights records, and increase energy independence of the island as a whole.
- To increase the level of microgeneration of electricity.

## Mining:

In a world so focused on Climate Change and a “*Race to Zero*” how can we allow our areas of outstanding natural beauty be threatened by toxic mining practices? Aontú will fight for the rights of the people to both gain information and to inform planning regarding the future of the land of their area. As stated by UNECE: “environmental threats do not respect national borders.” Aontú encourage and support all citizens in having their say on this potentially toxic and divisive development. Large mining projects should not be imposed on communities against their will. Royalties must not go to London.

## Farming and Rural Communities | Feirmeoireacht agus Pobail Tuaithe:

There are over 160,000 farms in Ireland North and South. That figure has been falling continuously over the last number of generations. This is happening in large part due to the economic difficulties involved in farming. Like most sectors of the Irish economy statistical data on Ireland as a whole is in short supply. There is a hard border when it comes to joined up information.

This is a major challenge in the economic management of Ireland. It is Aontú’s view that this information gap needs to be fixed. Farming is a key sector of Irish society. It is key to our food security. It is the backbone of our rural communities, and it generates significant economic activity and employment. Farmers are being crippled by the cost of production, meal and fertiliser.

Aontú seek:

- An increase of farmer incomes to end the exodus of young farmers and the need for many farmers to ‘*double-job*’ to supplement their income from the farm.
- A minimum price ensured for produce that covers the cost of production until such time that the food supply chain negotiates a fair share of profits to farmers.
- To improve rural Broadband.
- To increase the microgeneration of electricity on farmers.
- An all-Ireland import ban on sub-standard Brazilian and South American beef and agri-produce which would dilute food quality and undercut farmer income.

## An Ghaeilge:

The Irish language is a wonderfully rich, cultural gift. It’s an irreplaceable part of the diversity of the planet. It’s a unique infrastructure of thought and a magic door into an Aladdin’s Cave of cultural jewels riches stretching back hundreds of years. It’s been our voice for nearly two thousand years and yet we might well be the last generation to have Irish as a community language.

Irish is the language of family. Children are being raised with Irish as their first language right across the island. Irish is the language of friends and sport and craic. It is a language of business, of ICT and of education. Irish is the language of books, music, poetry and even dance. Irish is our national language. Its indigenous. It’s of here. Yet it’s restricted in many places here.



There is an energy in the Irish Language Community in the North. Yet when Irish speakers seek to engage with the state, the state says ‘no Irish speakers welcome’. Irish is discriminated against by State organisations. Irish Speakers do not have equal rights in their own language. In this regard the north is an outlier in every other state on these islands.

Aontú simply seeks equality for Irish Speakers. Irish Speakers should be able to live their lives in their own language. We should be able to go to school and engage with the state in our own language.

To achieve this Aontú will work with Conradh na Gaeilge and all other Irish Language organisations to achieve the following objectives.

1. That Councils will adopt a comprehensive Irish language policy and strategy that is in keeping with the Council’s obligations under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and the Identity and Language Act (2022).
2. That an Irish language community stakeholder forum will be developed, seeking continuous input from the Irish language community in the development and implementation of any Irish language policy/strategy.
3. That the Council will ensure the establishment of an elected members working group to monitor and make recommendations on the implementation of the policy/strategy
4. That the Council will Provide services in the Irish language.
5. That Council’s Irish language services will be comprehensively publicised bilingually on a regular basis.
6. That Council will ensure the full implementation of all language standards, as placed on the Council by the incoming Irish language commissioner.
7. That Council will develop a bespoke funding scheme to assist Irish language groups aimed at organising community development activities and/or events.
8. That the Council will establish/ensure a bespoke Seachtain na Gaeilge funding scheme for groups who wish to organise events as part of the two week festival in March.
9. The council to develop a bespoke scholarship fund for young people and adults to attend the Gaeltacht.
10. That the Council adopts a street signage policy which is based on best-practice (a simple majority of respondents or 15% of residents).
11. That the Irish language is more visible in the Council area, particularly on signage, in public spaces (for example in parks, leisure centres and council-owned buildings) and in council marketing and branding materials
12. That the Council will organise events and workshops aimed at increasing tolerance, understanding and awareness about the Irish language.
13. That the Council will raise awareness amongst Council staff on their duties under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and the Identity and Language Act through an awareness raising training programme.
14. That the Council will undertake a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign aimed at promoting the Irish language. This will be achieved through the use of social media and advertising on the Council’s online and external platforms and publications. The immediate implementation of the Irish Language Legislation agreed in the NDNA by the British Governments.
15. The adoption of the 20 Year Irish Language Strategy.
16. The Development of an Irish Language Education Bill.
17. To strengthen Irish as a GSCR subject.

Is bua iontach saibhir, cultúrtha í an Ghaeilge. Is cuid thar a bheith luachmhar í d'éagsúlacht an phláinéid. Is stóras uathúil machnaimh agus doras draíochta í isteach in Uaimh Aladdin de shaibhreas agus de sheoda cultúrtha a shíneann siar na céadta bliain. Tá sí mar ghuth againn le beagnach dhá mhíle bliain ach mar sin féin b'fhéidir gur sinne an ghlúin dheireanach a mbeidh an Ghaeilge mar theanga phobail againn.

Is í an Ghaeilge teanga an teaghlaigh. Tá páistí á dtógáil le Gaeilge mar phríomhtheanga acu ar fud Thuaisceart Éireann. Is í an Ghaeilge teanga cairde, spóirt agus spraoi. Is teanga ghnó, TFC agus oideachais í. Is í an Ghaeilge teanga na leabhar, an cheoil, na filíochta agus an damhsa go fiú. Is í an Ghaeilge ár dteanga náisiúnta. Is dár ndúchas í. Is cuid dár n-oidhreacht í. Go fóill féin, áfach, tá cosc uirthi in go leor áiteanna abhus.

Tá fuinneamh i bpobal na Gaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann. Ach nuair a bhíonn Gaeilgeoirí ag iarraidh dul i dteagmháil leis an stát, deir an stát nach bhfuil fáilte roimh chainteoirí Gaeilge. Déanann eagraíochtaí Stáit leithcheal ar an nGaeilge. Níl cearta comhionanna ag cainteoirí Gaeilge ina dteanga féin. Ina leith seo, tá Tuaisceart Éireann scoite amach ó gach stát eile ar na hoileáin seo.

Ní theastaíonn ó Aontú ach comhionannas a lorg do chainteoirí Gaeilge. Ba cheart go mbeadh cainteoirí Gaeilge in ann a saol a chaitheamh ina dteanga féin. Ba cheart go mbeimis in ann dul ar scoil agus dul i ngleic leis an stát inár dteanga féin.

Chun é seo a bhaint amach oibreoidh Aontú le Conradh na Gaeilge agus le gach eagraíocht Ghaeilge eile chun na cuspóirí seo a leanas a bhaint amach.

1. Go mbíonn polasaí agus straitéis chuimsitheach Ghaeilge ag an Chomhairle atá ag teacht le dualgais na Comhairle faoin Chairt Eorpach agus faoin Acht Féiniúlachta agus Teanga (2022).
2. Go mbunófar fóram pobail le pobal na Gaeilge agus go lorgófar ionchur ó phobal na Gaeilge go leanúnach i bhforbairt agus i gcur i bhfeidhm aon pholasaí/straitéis don Ghaeilge sa Chomhairle.
3. Go mbunófar grúpa oibre de chomhairleoirí tofa chun monatóireacht agus moltaí a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm an pholasaí/na straitéise Gaeilge
4. Go ndéanfar poiblíú cuimsitheach ar sheirbhísí Gaeilge na Comhairle ar bhonn rialta go dátheangach.
5. Go nglacfar bearta réamhghníomhacha chun dul i ngleic le leatrom nó leithcheal i gcoinne na Gaeilge.
6. Go gcomhlíonfar gach caighdeán teanga a bhronnann an Choimisinéir úr Ghaeilge ar an chomhairle ina iomláine.
7. Go mbunófar/gcinnteofar scéim deontais ar leith do Sheachtain na Gaeilge chun tacú le grúpaí ar mian leo imeachtaí a eagrú mar chuid den fhéile.
8. Go mbunófar scéim deontais ar leith sa Chomhairle do ghrúpaí Gaeilge ar mian leo imeachtaí forbartha pobail a eagrú.
9. Go mbunófar scéim scoláireachtaí ar leith do dhaoine, idir óg agus aosta, chun freastal ar chúrsaí Gaeltachta.
10. Go mbíonn polasaí sráidainmneacha ag an Chomhairle atá bunaithe ar an deachleachtas (cinneadh bunaithe ar thacaíocht ó mhóramh simplí de fhreagróirí nó 15% de chónaitheoirí sa tsuirbhé sráide).
11. Go mbíonn an Ghaeilge níos feiceálaí sa Chomhairle trí chéile, go háirithe ar chomharthaí, i spásanna poiblí (mar shampla páirceanna, sólanna, foirgnimh de chuid na Comhairle) agus ar ábhair mhargaíochta nó bhrandála na Comhairle.

12. Nach nglactar le hargóintí i gcoinne na comharthaíochta dátheangáí má tá siad bunaithe sa seicteachas.
13. Ardaigh feasacht agus gabh i ngleic le claontacht
14. Go n-eagraítear imeachtaí agus ceardlanna sa phobal, leis an aidhm caoinfhulaingt, tuiscint agus feasacht ar an Ghaeilge a mhéadú.
15. Go n-ardófar feasacht i measc fhoireann na Comhairle ar a ndualgais faoin Chairt Eorpach agus faoin Bhille Féiniúlachta agus Teanga trí chúrsa oiliúna.
16. Go dtabharfaidh an Chomhairle faoi fheachtas cuimsitheach ardaithe feasachta, leis an aidhm acu an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn. Bainfear seo amach trí úsáid na meán sóisialta agus fógraíocht ar ardáin agus foilseacháin inmheánach agus seachtrach na Comhairle.
17. Reachtaíocht Ghaeilge a chomhaontaigh Rialtas na Breataine san NDNA a chur chun feidhme. Tá neamart glan á dhéanamh ag Rialtas na hÉireann ina ndualgas lena chinntiú go gcuirfear an reachtaíocht seo chun feidhme.
18. An Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge a Ghlacadh.
19. Bille um Oideachas lán-Ghaeilge a Fhorbairt
20. An Ghaeilge a neartú mar ábhar GSCR.