



# Nursing Homes Ireland

## 2024 General Election Manifestos

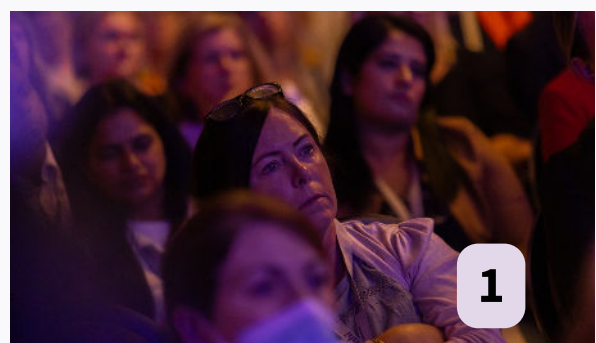
Party Policies and Key Extracts from Manifestos

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# Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u> .....	2
<u>Fine Gael</u> .....	3
<u>Fianna Fáil</u> .....	5
<u>Green Party</u> .....	7
<u>Labour</u> .....	10
<u>Sinn Féin</u> .....	14
<u>Social Democrats</u> .....	16
<u>Independent Ireland</u> .....	18
<u>People Before Profit</u> .....	20
<u>Aontú</u> .....	22
<u>Summary</u> .....	24
<u>NHI - It's Not Fair Campaign</u> .....	27
<u>References</u> .....	30



# Introduction



**Dear Members,**

Nursing Homes Ireland has been actively engaging with political parties across the spectrum, advocating for nursing home care and older person care to be prioritised in policy planning and development.

Our focus has been on ensuring that nursing home care remains sustainable into the future while also becoming more fully integrated into the continuum of care for older people. As part of this, **we will be calling for the release of the long-overdue Fair Deal pricing review within 100 days of the new Government forming.** This review is essential to addressing the challenges facing the sector and ensuring fair and sustainable funding for nursing home care.

As we approach the General Election, this document aims to bring awareness to the key policies proposed by the major political parties regarding nursing home care, older person care, and related areas such as workforce, healthcare access, and Sláintecare implementation. It is not our intention to critique the manifestos but to provide you, our Members, with a clear understanding of what each party is proposing. These proposals will likely shape policy decisions in the programme for government.

To ensure nursing home care remains a key priority, I encourage you to engage with constituency candidates. **Invite candidates to visit your nursing homes**, share the **challenges** and **opportunities** facing the sector, and emphasise the importance of policies that recognise nursing home care as an essential part of Ireland's healthcare system. Inform them of the "It's Not Fair" Campaign and highlight the urgent need for reform in areas such as workforce planning, access to care, and strengthening the role of nursing homes in the national care strategy.

We hope this document is both constructive and informative as we approach this pivotal election. With less than a week to go, it is vital that we remain engaged and continue to advocate for policies that will positively impact our residents, staff, and the communities we serve.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support for the sector during this crucial time.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Tommy". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Fine Gael's manifesto outlines a **broad commitment to improving care for older people** through initiatives such as a National Action Plan for Long-Term Care, expansion of care services, and alignment with the European Care Strategy.

Key proposals include maintaining the Fair Deal Scheme waiting list at four weeks, increasing home support hours, introducing a Statutory Homecare Scheme, and fully staffing the Enhanced Community Care Programme.

The manifesto also commits to publishing and implementing the Commission on Care for Older People report, enhancing digital healthcare, and expanding day centres. While these proposals touch on many aspects of care for older people, the focus on nursing homes is positioned within a wider care framework, with commitments to improve access, affordability, and sustainability across the spectrum of older person care.

Fine Gael also places emphasis on enhancing palliative care services, including support for hospices and the development of a national policy for children's palliative care. These policies, if implemented, could have a significant impact on nursing homes and the broader continuum of older person care.

## Key Points

- **National Action Plan for Long-Term Care:**
  - Commit to making long-term care timely, comprehensive, and affordable.
  - Expand care options, including homecare, community-based care, independent living, and residential care.
- **Fair Deal Scheme:**
  - Maintain the waiting list at four weeks to ensure timely access for nursing home residents.
- **Statutory Homecare Scheme:**
  - Introduce a universal right to homecare, accessible regardless of location.
- **Commission on Care for Older People:**
  - Publish and implement findings to address health and social care needs for older individuals.



## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 79.** - *Fine Gael is dedicated to protecting Ireland's economy while investing in the future well-being of our citizens, particularly in key areas such as health, social protection, and enterprise. We will prioritise investment in health services, ensuring that all individuals, especially older people, have access to quality care and new medicines.*

**Page 88.** - *Fine Gael will continue to advocate for the needs of older people, we will appoint a standalone minister of state, to ensure this remain the case. Recognising the desire of families to have choices and feel supported when considering care options for their relatives.*

**Page 89. - Maintaining the Fair Deal Scheme waiting list:** *We will keep the waiting list for the Fair Deal Scheme at four weeks.*

**Page 89. - Publish and implement the Commission on Care for Older People report:** *We will act on the findings of this commission, which examines health and social care services for older individuals, while developing the National Action Plan*

**Page 89. - Providing additional home support hours:** *We will deliver more home support hours each year, and increase the number of hours for individuals with dementia.*

**Page 89. - Introducing a statutory homecare scheme:** *We will ensure that every individual has the right to homecare, regardless of their location.*

**Page 94. - Appoint a Commissioner for Positive Ageing:** *This role will advocate for the needs and rights of older citizens.*

**Page 94. - Appoint a standalone Minister of State for Older People:** *This minister will focus on addressing issues affecting older individuals and ensuring their voices are heard.*

Fianna Fáil's manifesto outlines its commitment to supporting older people by balancing community-based services, expanded homecare, and nursing home care.

Key proposals include **increasing funding for the Fair Deal Scheme in line with population growth, building more public nursing home beds, and developing career pathways for healthcare assistants to address workforce challenges.**

These measures aim to ensure the sustainability of nursing homes while meeting the growing demand for residential care.

The manifesto places significant emphasis on dementia care, proposing to double the number of dementia advisers, expand Memory Assessment Support Services, and introduce additional early-stage supports such as activity clubs. Fianna Fáil also prioritises homecare, with plans to increase homecare hours by 1 million annually, implement a Statutory Homecare Scheme, and double the Housing Adaptation Grant to help older people remain in their homes.

Community-based supports, including expanded day centres, Meals on Wheels, and investment in the Enhanced Community Care Programme, form a core part of their vision for enabling older people to age in place.

## Key Points

- **Nursing Home Sector:**
  - Increase Fair Deal funding in line with population growth.
  - Build additional public nursing home beds to address capacity challenges.
- **Workforce Development:**
  - Develop career pathways for healthcare assistants to improve recruitment and retention.
- **Homecare Expansion:**
  - Increase homecare hours by 1 million annually.
  - Implement a Statutory Homecare Scheme to support ageing in place.
  - Double the Housing Adaptation Grant for home modifications.
- **Community-Based Supports:**
  - Expand day centres and Meals on Wheels services.
  - Invest in community health programmes and Enhanced Community Care.

## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 67.** - *Support for Older People's mental health Fianna Fáil has always prioritised the health and well-being of older people. We recognise that any one at any age can experience mental health issues and we are committed to addressing the growing needs for enhanced mental health supports for this group. We want to ensure that older people can access the supports they need in their own communities.*

**Page 93.** - *Fianna Fáil is committed to making sure that all of us can age well with dignity and support. We want people to stay in their own homes for as long as possible, with the correct supports.*

**Page 93.** - *Since coming into Government in 2020 we have expanded home care hours, daycare services, at home dementia care, and Meals on Wheels. We also established a Commission on Care for Older People to identify the best ways to support aging, and we are committed to implementing its recommendations.*

**Page 94.** - *Since coming into Government, Fianna Fáil has increased home support hours by 20%, supporting 56,000 people each month. The waiting list for this service has also reduced by 33% since 2019. Since 2020, we re-opened 320-day centres post-pandemic, greatly enhancing the health and well-being of older people and helping them stay in their homes longer. We also doubled funding for the Meals-on-Wheels service allowing an average of almost 240,000 meals being given to 19,000 people each month.*

**Page 95. - Strengthen our nursing home sector** - *If returned to Government, Fianna Fáil will: Increase funding for the Fair Deal Scheme in line with population growth. Build more public nursing home beds. Provide for a career pathway for healthcare assistants.*

The Green Party's manifesto centres on **enabling older people to age in place, prioritising community-based supports and reducing reliance on residential care.**

A key proposal is the introduction of a **Statutory Home Support Scheme** to formalise access to homecare services, ensuring older people have the support they need to live independently. Additionally, the party plans to implement an equity release scheme for retrofitting homes, allowing older people to live in energy-efficient and warmer homes, improving comfort and safety.

To address housing needs, the Green Party proposes that 20% of new housing developments meet universal design standards, ensuring appropriate housing for older people and individuals with disabilities. The manifesto also commits to annually increasing the Living Alone Allowance to support older people living independently.

While these policies reflect a strong focus on homecare and independent living, the manifesto does not specifically address nursing home care or how it integrates into the broader continuum of care for older people.

## Key Points

- **Ageing in Place:**
  - Focus on community-based supports to enable older people to remain in their homes and reduce reliance on residential care.
- **Homecare Services:**
  - Propose the introduction of a Statutory Home Support Scheme to expand and formalise access to homecare.
- **Nursing Home Care Policy:**
  - The manifesto does not directly address nursing home care or how it integrates with broader care strategies.
  - Limited reference to workforce challenges or sustainability of residential care services.



## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 76.** - *Our goal is to support ageing in place, allowing elderly people to access community supports and reducing the need for people to enter retirement homes.*

**Page 76.** - *We will introduce a statutory support scheme for home support services.*

**Page 76.** - *Require one-fifth of new housing developments to meet universal design standards, ensuring appropriate housing options for older people and those with disabilities. Continue to increase the Living Alone Allowance on an annual basis.*

## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 76.** - *Our goal is to support ageing in place, allowing elderly people to access community supports and reducing the need for people to enter retirement homes.*

**Page 76.** - *We will introduce a statutory support scheme for home support services.*

**Page 76.** - *Require one-fifth of new housing developments to meet universal design standards, ensuring appropriate housing options for older people and those with disabilities. Continue to increase the Living Alone Allowance on an annual basis.*

The Labour Party's manifesto envisions a comprehensive approach to care for older people, **focusing on enabling ageing in place, expanding public care provision, and strengthening the rights of older individuals**. A key proposal is to **reform the Fair Deal Scheme to allow funding for homecare costs**, supporting older people who wish to remain at home. Labour also commits to investing in public long-term residential care by building new community nursing homes and expanding the Housing with Supports model as an alternative to traditional nursing home care.

The manifesto highlights the **introduction of a Statutory Home Support Scheme, with a strong regulatory framework and adequate resourcing**, to ensure a rights-based, person-centred approach to homecare. Labour addresses staffing challenges in the care sector by proposing improved pay and working conditions for care workers, alongside plans to reorientate home support services toward public provision through the HSE.

Additionally, the party proposes a National Reablement Scheme to assist older people transitioning from hospital to home, and increased funding for Home Adaptation Grants and the SEAI Warmer Homes scheme to enable independent living.

Labour also

- **emphasises the rights and dignity of older people by advocating for a National Positive Ageing Strategy,**
- **the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing,**
- **and support for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.**

These policies are complemented by a focus on fostering age-friendly communities, bespoke housing, and reducing ageism.

Labour's manifesto presents a broad vision of care reform, balancing ageing in place with public investment in nursing and community care. However, its emphasis on de-privatisation may have implications for private nursing home providers.

## Key Points

- **Nursing Home and Long-Term Care**
  - Expand the Fair Deal Scheme to allow funding for homecare costs, enabling older people to remain at home with State support.
  - Increase the provision of public long-term residential care by building new community nursing homes.
  - Expand the Housing with Supports model as a nursing home alternative, allowing older people to live with dignity and independence.
- **Homecare Services**
  - Introduce a rights-based homecare system with adequate funding and strong regulatory oversight.
  - Address staffing shortages in homecare by improving pay and working conditions for care workers.
  - Prioritise keeping older people at home for as long as possible, supported by appropriate care services.
- **Community-Based Supports**
  - Support the development of age-friendly housing and bespoke housing for older people in communities.
- **Rights and Dignity for Older People**
  - Relaunch this National Positive Ageing Strategy with new funding to promote age-friendly communities and services.
  - Appoint an independent Commissioner to advocate for the needs of older people beyond a health perspective.
  - Advocate for stronger international protections for older people's rights.
- **Focus on De-Privatisation**
  - Reorient care services toward public provision, including homecare delivered by the HSE and publicly funded nursing homes.
  - Establish a unit to oversee care planning, infrastructure mapping, and demographic modelling.

## **Key Extracts from Manifesto**

**Page 25.** - *Labour will deliver on the promise of Sláintecare with consistent funding and political follow through, ongoing reform and value for money to transform our health service. We will review progress made to date and publish an updated Sláintecare model to account for demographic change.*

**Page 26.** - *Labour will publish a new updated plan for the development of the Primary Care Centre network and focus on delivering the full suite of publicly funded community centred healthcare. We will fully staff the Enhanced Community Care Programme supporting specialist teams for older people, chronic disease, healthcare networks and intervention teams, while funding diagnostic and assessment hubs.*

**Page 54.** - *Our Mission is developing the social protection system as the bedrock of our social safety net with payments that protect not just against poverty but provide a decent standard of living and adequate income for older people, people with disabilities and carers, and that people are supported into appropriate work.*

**Page 69.** - *Our Mission is the realisation of a new social contract for care, that values family carers and care workers, reverses the creeping privatisation of social care services, and delivers a new fair deal for older people.*

**Page 69.** - *Labour will reverse the over-reliance on for-profit care services and the outsourcing of essential public services. Through our manifesto Labour outlines detailed policies including our plan for a public system of childcare, and comprehensive supports for people with disabilities. Here we outline our proposals for a new social contract to support family carers, care workers and a new fair deal for older people.*

**Page 69.** - *Labour will consider the future recommendations of the Commission on Care however in the meantime we will establish a National Planning Unit for Care to oversee all aspects of care planning and implementation, and the de-privatisation of care services.*



## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 70.** - Labour will deliver a new fair deal for care and a key objective is investing in public services to reverse the privatisation of home care and the provision of more publicly run nursing care homes, a living wage and improved terms and conditions for care workers. The current system incentivises residential care settings over home care and Labour will change this after years of delay.

**Page 70.** - Labour will establish the long overdue statutory home support scheme that is adequately resourced, rights-based and person centred. To achieve this Labour will also address the shortage of home care staff with improved pay and working conditions.

**Page 70.** - Labour will: Reform the Fair Deal scheme to give people the option of remaining in their home, with the State contributing to their care costs. Provide ongoing funding to the Fair Deal scheme to meet demographic needs while also expanding public provision. Fund the work of the Commission on Care and appoint a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing.

**Page 98.** - Our mission is an Ireland that empowers older people to remain active in their communities, promotes their wellbeing, and guarantees high quality care when required.

**Page 98.** - We will: Relaunch the National Positive Ageing Strategy with an implementation plan and new funding. Establish an independent Commissioner for Ageing and Older People, like those in place in Northern Ireland and Wales, so that the needs of older people are not seen solely from a health perspective. Support the introduction of a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons to address the gaps in the existing human rights system by clarifying the human rights obligations of states and responsibilities towards older people.

**Page 98.** - Labour will build a society that provides a reliable framework of care for older people. We will recognise their agency, empower fulfilling and meaningful lives, and ensure they can continue to make valuable contributions to our communities.



Sinn Féin's manifesto **prioritises the expansion of public nursing home and residential care capacity**, aiming to **double** the number of state-run beds and reduce dependence on private providers. Fair Deal is not mentioned in this manifesto.

Their €15 billion health capital investment plan includes significant funding for nursing homes and community beds, alongside broader health infrastructure improvements. The manifesto also emphasises supporting carers, providing increased recognition and resources to enable more care to be delivered at home.

Sinn Féin underscores the rights and dignity of older people, advocating for the introduction of a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and combating ageism.

While the focus is on expanding public provision and reducing private sector reliance, Members should note the implications for private nursing homes in this vision, as well as the emphasis on shifting care towards community and home-based services.

## Key Points

- **Nursing Home and Residential Care**

- Commit to doubling the number of state-run nursing home beds to reduce dependence on private for-profit care providers.
- Deliver 2,000 community beds, including 1,200 for short and long-stay care, nursing, and rehabilitation.
- Progress the de-congregation of people with disabilities and ensure younger people with disabilities are not inappropriately placed in nursing homes.

- **Homecare and Carer Support**

- Advocate for more care to be delivered at home, aligning with the wishes of families and individuals.



## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 22.** - A Sinn Féin government would set a zero-tolerance approach to hospital trolleys and overcrowding as a target for all hospitals. To achieve this, we would deliver 5,000 new hospital beds by 2031... This would be underpinned with community care reform, including 2,000 community stepdown, nursing care and social inclusion beds and legislation for safe staffing levels. This bundle would cost €1.584bn in additional current expenditure.

**Page 22.** - Delivering 2,000 community beds, including 1,200 short and long-stay residential care, nursing and rehabilitation beds, and deliver full regional community neuro-rehabilitation networks.

**Page 25.** - We would use €2bn from the Apple Tax Money as well as funding that has been committed under the National Development Plan to immediately provide funding certainty for 5,000 acute hospital beds... This ambitious and future-focused capital programme includes estimates for four new elective hospitals, the new maternity hospital, surgical and diagnostic hubs, new primary care centres and community facilities, 5,000 hospital beds, theatre capacity, nursing homes, equipment, machinery, ambulance fleet and other significant and minor infrastructure works.

**Page 98.** - Sinn Féin will commit to increasing the number of beds, improving aftercare supports and services, and developing as part of the national strategy a plan to gradually reduce the number of private forprofit residential care providers.

**Page 134.** - Across the developed world, more and more governments and societies are facing up to pressures on their social care systems, including nursing home care. Most people wish to be cared for at home, and that is what their families want for them at home

The Social Democrats' manifesto takes a **holistic approach to ageing policy, emphasising the introduction of a Commissioner for Ageing and Older Persons to oversee a rights-based framework for older person care.**

Their commitment to a statutory right to homecare and eliminating homecare waiting lists reflects a strong focus on supporting older people to age in place. Investments in accessible housing, transportation, and financial supports further reinforce this approach.

For nursing homes, the manifesto **proposes a review of privatisation in the sector and seeks parity of treatment for staff in public and private care settings.** The implementation of the National Dementia Strategy and expanded neurorehabilitation services highlight their focus on specialised care for older people.

Members should note the emphasis on community and home-based care, with less direct focus on private nursing home provision.

## Key Points

- **Nursing Home and Residential Care**
  - Conduct a comprehensive review of the privatisation of older person care, including the structure of the nursing home market.
  - Work toward parity in pay and conditions for staff in HSE-funded nursing homes and private facilities.
- **Homecare and Community Services**
  - Introduce a legal right to homecare to support ageing in place.
  - Invest to reduce and eliminate waiting lists for homecare services.
  - Expand step-down and rehabilitation facilities to ease the transition from hospital to home or residential care.
- **Support for Older People**
  - Appoint a Commissioner for Ageing and Older Persons to ensure policies meet the needs of older people and take a rights-based approach.

## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 13.** - *Despite the Government's stated commitment to Sláintecare, services are becoming increasingly privatised. This is particularly prevalent in social care for older people, with private companies controlling 80 per cent of all nursing homes, while only 40 per cent of homecare hours are being provided directly by the State. Contracting out these public services is often thought to result in efficiencies, but the reality is that outsourcing these services is poor value for money and results in inferior terms of employment.*

*Meanwhile the increased reliance on the National Treatment Purchase Fund to compensate for lack of capacity in the health service is deepening the public capacity deficit, creating a vicious cycle.*

*In Government, the Social Democrats will:*

- *Reverse the trend of increased privatisation and take more direct responsibility for the provision of health and social care, in line with the principles underpinning Sláintecare.*
- *Conduct a review of the privatisation of elder care, and the market structure for those already privatised.*

**Page 13.** - *Homecare must be a priority to ensure that older people are supported to remain in their homes, reduce dependency on family and friends, and crucially, to end the State's overreliance on institutional care.*

**Page 14.** - *Introduce a statutory right to homecare and provide a budget for a person-centred homecare scheme with equality of access and availability. Invest in homecare packages to abolish waiting lists, and develop step-down and rehabilitation facilities.*

**Page 14.** - *Implement the recommendations of the Strategic Workforce Advisory Group on Homecarers and Nursing Home Health Care Assistants in full...*

**Page 14.** - *Re-examine the Critical Skills list for visas to ensure as much as possible is being done to allow skilled workers for the sector be found. Introduce nationally mandated staffing ratios for nursing homes.*



The Independent Ireland Group's manifesto outlines practical steps to support nursing homes and older person care, **including increased grants to prevent nursing home closures and the addition of dementia units in community hospitals to expand care capacity**. These proposals could help ease the financial and operational pressures faced by nursing home providers while enhancing community care for individuals with dementia.

Their focus on healthcare accountability includes making the Minister for Health directly responsible for service delivery and reforming HSE management to ensure effective use of resources. Mental health care is another priority, with the introduction of outpatient respite facilities aimed at bridging the gap between acute and community care services.

While the manifesto provides specific measures to support older person and mental health, it does not include broader plans for workforce development, nursing home capacity expansion, or long-term strategies for sustaining the private nursing home sector.

## Key Points

- **Nursing Home and Residential Care**
  - To address financial and regulatory challenges, the manifesto proposes increasing grants to help nursing homes remain compliant with standards and avoid closures. This measure aims to ensure the sustainability of existing nursing home capacity, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
  - Adding dementia units to community hospitals is a key priority, designed to provide specialised care and alleviate pressure on nursing homes by offering additional care capacity within the community.
- **Health System Reforms**
  - The manifesto includes a proposal to make the Minister for Health directly answerable for the delivery of healthcare services.
  - Calls for improved competence in managing the HSE to address chronic issues such as understaffing, long waiting times, and resource inefficiencies.

## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 10.** - *Ireland's healthcare system is increasingly unable to meet demand and Irish citizens frequently wait months or years for necessary procedures. Hospital beds are chronically in short supply and primary care staff are overwhelmed by their workload. The bottom line is we need more doctors, nurses, and hospitals. This means we need more funding and competent management of the HSE to ensure that funding is well spent.*

**Page 11.** - *Modernising Mental Health and Eldercare Services Make the Minister for Health directly answerable for delivery of services and ensuring transparent and effective healthcare for all.*

*Introduce outpatient mental health respite facilities, to address the gap between acute admission and community care. Increase grants for nursing homes to remain in compliance and prevent nursing home closures.*

*Add dementia units to community hospitals.*

People Before Profit's manifesto focuses on **expanding public nursing home provision as a solution to the challenges faced by the care sector**, criticising reliance on private care providers.

They advocate for improved conditions for carers by abolishing the Carers Allowance means test and introducing a living wage of €15 per hour. The manifesto also addresses broader financial challenges for older people, including a pension increase to €300 per week, the extension of Fuel Allowance to all pensioners, and doubling the Living Alone Allowance.

The party also emphasises rights and representation for older people, **proposing the establishment of a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People** and advancing a Bill to give retired workers greater say in pension scheme changes.

Overall, the manifesto prioritises public provision and systemic reforms to address financial and care challenges for older individuals.

## Key Points

- **Nursing Home and Older Person Care**
  - Expand the provision of public nursing homes to reduce reliance on private, for-profit care, which they cite as a root cause of the eldercare crisis.
  - Abolish the means test for Carers Allowance and introduce a living wage of €15 per hour for carers to improve financial support for those providing essential care services.
- **Rights and Representation**
  - Establish a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People to advocate for the rights and needs of older people.

## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 11.** - *Modernising Mental Health and Eldercare Services Make the Minister for Health directly answerable for delivery of services and ensuring transparent and effective healthcare for all.*

*Introduce outpatient mental health respite facilities, to address the gap between acute admission and community care. Increase grants for nursing homes to remain in compliance and prevent nursing home closures.*

*Add dementia units to community hospitals.*

Aontú's manifesto focuses on addressing the crisis in nursing home closures, **citing inadequate government funding as a primary issue**. They advocate for stronger support for nursing homes to prevent further closures and ensure care availability for older people.

The party also calls for increased public provision of homecare hours, reducing reliance on private agencies and allowing older people to remain in their homes with State-delivered care. This proposal aims to provide much-needed support to family carers while improving the quality and reliability of homecare services.

Additionally, Aontú criticises inefficiencies in the health system, calling for reduced bureaucracy and better resource allocation to support healthcare staff and facilities.

However, Nursing home care and older person care is not a prominent feature of Aontú's manifesto.

## Key Points

- **Nursing Home and Older Person Care**
  - Aontú acknowledge the crisis in nursing home closures due to insufficient government funding, with calls for increased support to prevent further closures.
- **Homecare Services**
  - Advocates for more regulated and publicly provided homecare hours, reducing reliance on agencies and ensuring State-delivered care.
  - Emphasises the importance of homecare in providing family carers with daily relief from their responsibilities.
- **Health System Reform**
  - Criticises excessive bureaucracy and red tape in the health service, advocating for a streamlined system with better resource allocation and management.



## Key Extracts from Manifesto

**Page 18.** - *Our health service is overmanaged, under resourced and crippled with Government red tape and regulation. Only recently did we have a HSE recruitment freeze. whilst nurses and doctors have been crying out for help with Accident and Emergency departments on their knees.*

**Page 19.** - *Aontú are advocating for more regulated and public home care hours to be provided by the State, rather than agencies, so that people can receive care in their own homes and allow the family carer a daily break from their work.*

**Page 40.** - *Childcare providers are not alone. The same situation has happened with the Nursing Homes today. Nursing Homes are closing down because the government are refusing to provide the necessary funding.*



## Key Themes Across Manifestos

**Homecare:** Strong focus on expanding homecare hours and introducing statutory homecare schemes.

**Public Provision:** Many parties advocate for increasing public nursing home capacity and reducing reliance on private care.

**Workforce:** Proposals to improve pay, conditions, and training for care workers are common.

**Dementia Care:** Expanded services for dementia, including advisers and community supports, feature prominently.

**Rights and Representation:** Calls for appointing a Commissioner for Ageing and adopting a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

## Manifesto Summaries

### Fianna Fáil

- Increase Fair Deal Scheme funding in line with population growth.
- Expand public nursing home capacity and enhance dementia services with more advisers and early-stage supports.
- Introduce a Statutory Homecare Scheme and increase homecare hours by 1 million annually.
- Invest in day centres, housing adaptation grants, and the Enhanced Community Care Programme.

### Fine Gael

- Publish a National Action Plan for Long-Term Care to ensure care is timely, comprehensive, and affordable.
- Maintain Fair Deal Scheme waiting lists at four weeks.
- Expand care options, including homecare, community-based care, and residential care.
- Enhance digital healthcare and support carers with respite care and training.



## Manifesto Summaries

### Sinn Féin

- Double public residential care capacity and reduce reliance on private nursing homes.
- Deliver 2,000 community care beds and prioritise moving younger people with disabilities out of nursing homes.
- Champion a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.
- Invest €15 billion in healthcare infrastructure, including nursing homes and community facilities.

### Labour Party

- Reform the Fair Deal Scheme to include homecare funding and expand public nursing home capacity.
- Introduce a Statutory Homecare Scheme and improve pay and conditions for care workers.
- Relaunch the National Positive Ageing Strategy and appoint a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People.
- Develop age-friendly housing and expand day centres, reablement services, and home adaptations.

### Social Democrats

- Appoint a Commissioner for Ageing and Older Persons to oversee policies for older people.
- Introduce a statutory right to homecare and abolish waiting lists for services.
- Implement the National Dementia Strategy and expand neurorehabilitation services.
- Conduct a review of privatisation in older person care and work towards parity in pay and conditions for care workers.



## Party Manifestos on Nursing Home Care and Older Person Care

### People Before Profit

- Expand public nursing home provision and advocate for de-privatisation of o.
- Abolish the means test for Carers Allowance and introduce a living wage of €15 per hour for carers.
- Double the Living Alone Allowance and extend Fuel Allowance to all pensioners.
- Establish a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People and prioritise retrofitting for older people.

### Independent Ireland Group

- Increase grants to nursing homes to meet compliance requirements and prevent closures.
- Add dementia units to community hospitals to expand care capacity.
- Introduce outpatient mental health respite facilities for older people.
- Make the Minister for Health directly accountable for service delivery.

### Aontú

- Call for increased funding to prevent nursing home closures.
- Advocate for more regulated and publicly provided homecare hours.
- Emphasise reducing bureaucracy in healthcare to improve resource allocation and efficiency.

# It's Not Fair - Campaign

## It's Not Fair Campaign: Securing the Future of Nursing Home and Older Person Care

The “It's Not Fair” campaign, shines a spotlight on the critical challenges facing nursing home care in Ireland.

### Why Nursing Home Care Matters

Nursing homes are a vital part of Ireland's healthcare system, providing essential care for older people who can no longer live independently. However, the sector is in crisis. Since 2018, 77 nursing homes have closed, resulting in the loss of over 2,800 beds in communities across the country. These closures have left families scrambling for care options, forced older people to move far from their homes, and placed additional pressure on already strained public healthcare services.

The Fair Deal Scheme, introduced in 2009, was meant to support residents requiring nursing home care, but it has failed to keep pace with rising operational costs. A stark funding gap exists, with private and voluntary nursing home residents receiving €650 less per bed, per week compared to those in HSE/public facilities—equating to an annual shortfall of €33,800 per resident.

This inequity is unsustainable and threatens the survival of the sector, particularly in rural and underserved areas.



## It's Not Fair Campaign: Securing the Future of Nursing Home and Older Person Care

### What Needs to Change

The “It's Not Fair” campaign calls for a national conversation about the future of nursing home and older person care. With Ireland's ageing population rapidly increasing, ensuring sustainable, high-quality care is more urgent than ever. Key campaign goals include:

#### 1. Fixing Fair Deal Pricing:

- Address the significant funding disparity between private and public nursing homes.
- Release the long-delayed Fair Deal pricing review, initially promised in 2019, to create a sustainable framework for care funding.

#### 2. Recognising Nursing Homes as Integral to the Care Continuum:

- Develop policies that integrate nursing homes into broader healthcare strategies, ensuring older people can access care in their communities.
- Prevent further nursing home closures by providing stability and support to the sector.

#### 3. Highlighting the Broader Impact:

- Ensure every older person has access to care that respects their dignity and enables them to remain close to their families.
- Recognise nursing home care as a critical component of Ireland's healthcare infrastructure.





# It's Not Fair - Campaign

## It's Not Fair Campaign: Securing the Future of Nursing Home and Older Person Care

### Why It's Important

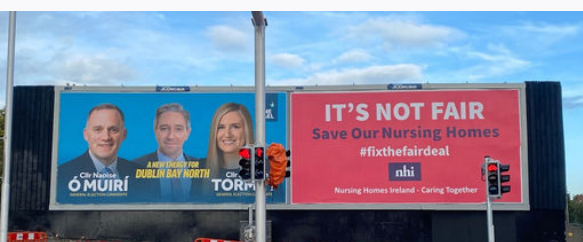
The crisis in nursing home care is not just a sectoral issue - it is a national challenge that affects families, communities, and future generations. Without immediate reform, more nursing homes will close, leaving gaps in care and isolating vulnerable older people from their communities and loved ones. This campaign emphasises that ageing is a shared experience, and the care we plan for today will define how we support one another tomorrow.

### How You Can Help

- Engage with General Election Candidates: Invite candidates to nursing homes, write letters, and highlight the “It’s Not Fair” campaign and its key messages.
- Advocate for Change: Raise awareness of the challenges facing the nursing home sector with your local TDs and election candidates.
- Support the Campaign Online: Visit [www.nhi.ie/fixfairdeal](http://www.nhi.ie/fixfairdeal) to explore missed deadlines on Fair Deal reform and share campaign messages within your community.

The “It’s Not Fair” campaign is about securing a future where older people in Ireland receive the care they deserve.

Together, we can ensure that nursing home care becomes a national priority for the next Government, creating a fairer, more sustainable system for all.





# References

**All information in this document has been sourced from party manifestos, which can be viewed by clicking links below, or going to respective websites:**

**[Fine Gael](#)**

**[Fianna Fail](#)**

**[Green Party](#)**

**[Labour](#)**

**[Sinn Fein](#)**

**[Social Democrats](#)**

**[Independent Ireland](#)**

**[People Before Profit](#)**

**[Aontu](#)**

**[Aontu - Part Two](#)**

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