



**Peter
McVerry
Trust**

Opening doors for
homeless people

Peter McVerry Trust
General Election Priorities 2016





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GENERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES 2016

- **Land, Procurement and Planning**
- **Social Housing Provision**
- **Minister for Housing
and Homelessness**
- **Mainstreaming Housing First**
- **Right to a Home**
- **Investment in Prevention**
- **Protecting and Supporting
Children and Young People**
- **Drug Treatment Services**



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GENERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES 2016

Peter McVerry Trust asks all candidates in the 2016 General Election to ensure that the needs and voice of people in homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, are heard and acted upon.

In addition to the current needs of families in homelessness, we are asking that parties and candidates recognise the needs of young, single people who are the main grouping within Ireland's homeless population.

Specifically, we are asking political parties and election candidates to publicly state their support for the following measures:

LAND, PROCUREMENT AND PLANNING

Peter McVerry Trust calls on local authorities to carry out an extensive review of their land banks and building stock to identify resources that could be used to deliver social housing. Appropriate land banks and properties could be transferred to Approved Housing Bodies in order to deliver social housing for special needs groups. An urban audit scheme should also be introduced to include private properties which may be derelict or underused and which could form part of a housing supply package via compulsory purchase orders and renovation incentive schemes. The current planning and procurement system should also be streamlined and improved to provide for the accelerated provision of social housing.

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

Peter McVerry Trust calls for the 30% - 50% allocation rates for special needs groups in social housing to be maintained until such time as long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough is eliminated. The lack of social housing supply to date has hampered the Housing Led/Housing First approach that has been adopted by State and voluntary agencies. The rapid delivery of new social housing in the lifetime of the next Government will be crucial in offering immediate pathways out of homelessness, reducing reliance on expensive and largely ineffective emergency accommodation, and help transition fully to a housing led approach.

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MINISTER FOR HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

In order to ensure that the issue of homelessness receives adequate political prioritisation, Peter McVerry Trust believes it is essential that a full Cabinet Minister for Housing & Homelessness is appointed to develop a coherent cross departmental response to the issues. In light of the fact that once again the goal of ending long term homelessness will not be met, a fundamental review must take place in order to tackle the emergency and work towards reducing, and ultimately eliminating homelessness in Ireland.

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MAINSTREAMING HOUSING FIRST

The housing first approach must now be mainstreamed and rolled out nationally following the success of the pilot and project in the Dublin region. This approach will be essential in helping to eliminate rough sleeping across Ireland and allow for the introduction of a rapid re-housing approach to new presentations of homelessness.

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RIGHT TO A HOME

Peter McVerry Trust asks all parties and candidates to commit to holding a referendum on the Right to a Home. In February 2014, the Constitutional Convention voted to recommend that such a provision be included in the Constitution. Such a provision would be in line with Ireland's commitments under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which the State signed in 1973.

INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION

Successfully tackling the routes into, and causes of homelessness, can play a key role in improving the current situation. The high levels of new and repeat cases of homelessness are leading to a significant escalation of the emergency. As a result agencies are constantly responding on an emergency basis to the rising number of individuals and families becoming homeless. A major investment in prevention measures is needed to eliminate preventable forms of homelessness and free up resources to invest in more effective forms of housing led interventions rather than expensive emergency accommodation. A key action will be a major increase in rent supplement rates.

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PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The State needs to robustly respond to the needs of vulnerable children. There are insufficient resources available to support children in residential care and institutional care settings. Investment and recruitment is required to ensure that every vulnerable child and young adult has, at a minimum, an allocated social worker and after care plan in place. The State must ensure that no teenager exiting care enters an adult homeless service. Too many children are ending up in adult hostels because of the lack of appropriate aftercare support in Ireland today. This is an entirely preventable form of homelessness.

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DRUG TREATMENT SERVICES

Peter McVerry Trust wholly supports efforts to bring about a health focused approach to combating drug misuse in Ireland. We recommend the introduction of medically supervised injecting centres in urban centres across Ireland. Additionally, funding must be provided to develop a network of accommodation options for persons exiting treatment and detox services. A significant increase in funding for prevention and treatment is required to help those who are currently seeking to tackle drug misuse.

ABOUT US

VISION

An Ireland that supports all those on the margins and upholds their rights to full inclusion in society.

MISSION

Peter McVerry Trust is committed to reducing homelessness and the harm caused by drug misuse and social disadvantage. Peter McVerry Trust provides low-threshold entry services, primarily to younger persons with complex needs, and offers pathways out of homelessness based on the principles of the Housing First model and within a framework that is based on equal opportunities, dignity and respect.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.pmvtrust.ie

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