

National Action Plan Against Racism

Integration and Equality

Hate Crime

Undocumented

Travellers and Roma

Direct Provision, Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Voting and Political Rights

ANTI-RACISM & ETHNIC MINORITIES ISSUES:

What the General Election 2020 political parties have to say

Anti-Racism & Ethnic Minorities Issues: What The General Election 2020 Political Parties Have To Say

General Election Manifestos serve to indicate the Ireland each political party would work to create should they be given the power to do so. But, there are important factors to consider when reading the proposed changes in policy; such as a party's record of action on important issues like Direct Provision, job and housing market discrimination faced by people of African descent and other minorities, or the inequalities in healthcare access and other inequalities faced by Travellers, contributing factors to the disproportional suicide rate affecting Travellers (11% of Traveller deaths, INAR 2019). Each party's history on such issues, whether that party played a role in forming Government in recent terms or has performed as opposition within the Dáil, should be taken into account.

However, the current prominent position of important issues like integration and a real quality of life for ethnic minorities within these manifestos show that, whether or not political parties anticipated their consideration, minority voices are speaking up, and to the extent that they are being heard, those in power are being forced to listen.

Here is a summary of what political parties have to say on anti-racism, integration and equality, hate-crime legislation, Direct Provision and those seeking asylum, issues affecting Traveller and Roma communities, the voting rights and political inclusion of ethnic minorities, and the lives of those who are undocumented.



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AGAINST RACISM

Aontú:

No Mention.

Fianna Fáil:

"Ireland's national action plan against racism has not been renewed or updated since 2008. Fianna Fáil is committed to realising the full ambition of the founding ideals of our Republic and ensuring that all citizens regardless of gender, race or sexuality are empowered to live full lives.

Fine Gael:

"Renewing the Migrant Integration Strategy"

"Under the auspices of the strategy, we have recently established a new committee to tackle racism, which will draft a new national action plan against racism"

Green Party:

"Separate to the new Migrant Integration Strategy, publish a National Action Plan Against Racism"

Labour:

No Mention.

People Before Profit:

No mention.

Sinn Féin:

No Mention.

Social Democrats:

"Develop a new National Action Plan Against Racism"



ANTI-RACISM, INTEGRATION AND EQUALITY

Aontú: No mention.

Fianna Fáil:

"(...) ensuring that all citizens regardless of gender, race or sexuality are empowered to live full lives. We will progress key initiatives to broaden out political participation in order to consolidate and strengthen our democracy. In addition, we will end workplace discrimination and tackle hate crimes head on."

Fine Gael:

"Renewing the Migrant Integration Strategy

The Migrant Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future, published in 2017, provides a framework for a wide range of actions to support migrants to participate fully in Irish life. It includes actions to promote intercultural awareness and to combat racism and xenophobia. Under the auspices of the strategy, we have recently established a new committee to tackle racism, which will draft a new national action plan against racism."

Health Policy "In implementing the National Intercultural Health Strategy 2018 – 2023 we will enhance access to services and provide high quality, culturally responsive care to those from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds."

Green Party:

"Our vision is for an Ireland free of racism, hatred and marginalisation of migrant communities. To work towards that end, we will:

- Develop a new Whole of Government Migrant Integration Strategy, and ringfence funding for its effective implementation.
- Separate to the new Migrant Integration Strategy, publish a National Action Plan Against Racism.
- Establish a new independent National Expert Body for Minority Ethnic Communities, Integration and Interculturalism."

Education Policy "Ensuring that students' ethnicity and religion (or non-religion) are not barriers to their enrolment and participation in school."

Sport "We will undertake a review of inclusiveness and participation in all funded sports to ensure that gender, ethnicity and culture are not a barrier to involvement"



Labour:

"Labour has a zero-tolerance attitude to racism or any other form of discrimination, such as sexism, homophobia or religious prejudice. We must ensure that all of our children are treated equally and given the chance to fulfil their potential without harassment or abuse"

"Labour will restore the right to citizenship to children raised in Ireland and whose primary affiliation is to Ireland" "This legal change can be made under existing provisions in the Constitution, despite the 27th Amendment"

People Before Profit:

"People Before Profit are opposed to racism in all its forms, including Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-Traveller racism. We regard the ordinary people of every nation, ethnic group and creed as our sisters and brothers. We will seek to overcome all instances and causes of racism.

- Give proper recognition to the qualifications of non-EU migrants. This will help to integrate communities.
- Establish a right to family reunification for immigrants who have spent time in Ireland.
- Implement full legal protection for au pairs as employees.
- Establish cross-cultural community forums, particularly in areas with high levels of immigration.
- Hold a referendum to repeal the 27th Amendment. Give all children born here the right to citizenship."

Sinn Féin:

Health Policy: "Race, social class, disability, culture and ethnic identity, income poverty, location and access to social and health services, sexual orientation, age, and other differences can all contribute to the vulnerability of people's lives and consequently to the status of their health and well-being."

"Travellers and other ethnic minority groups, refugees and those in Direct Provision, and the LGBTI+ community all have increased health needs. We will ensure that our health system is cognisant of and responsive to the needs of all of these peoples."



Social Democrats:

- "Legislate to provide Irish born children normally resident an entitlement to citizenship rights."
- "Introduce greater transparency and consistency in our system by reviewing the current Immigration and Residence legislation to ensure clear statutory criteria for immigrationrelated applications and appeals is applied in all cases, and the need for independent appeals mechanisms."
- "Adequately resource INIS, GNIB, and the DBEI Employment Permits Section to ensure efficient processing of applications."
- "Fully implement the National Migrant Integration Strategy."
- "Ensure all Local Authorities have Local Integration Strategies in place."

HATE CRIME LEGISLATION

Aontú:

No mention.

Fianna Fáil:

"Introduce hate crime legislation to tackle racism."

- "Bring forward legislation and promote activities towards positive integration so that all immigrants can be treated with dignity and fairness."
- "Update the Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 so that it reflects the realities of modern Ireland and in particular the impact that social media has had on this issue."

Fine Gael:

"We have commenced consultation on our incitement to hatred legislation and, if returned to office, we will modernise our laws to ensure that those who seek to encourage and incite others to hate minority groups can be prosecuted."

"We will identify international best practice in prosecuting hate crime and legislate to create specific offences, to ensure that those who target victims because of their association with a particular identity characteristic, such as their sexual orientation or ethnicity, can be prosecuted."



Green Party:

In reference to LGBTQI+ people "The addition of protection for transgender and intersex people to existing hate crime legislation and its inclusion in any new legislation."

Labour:

"Labour will make hate crime illegal, such as racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia. The Gardai will be tasked with keeping accurate statistics on hate crime, as is done in Northern Ireland"

People Before Profit:

In reference to LGBTQI+ people "Hate crime legislation to deal with homophobic and transphobic attacks and proper recording of data on such attacks."

Sinn Féin:

In reference to LGBTQI+ people: "Enacting robust hate crime legislation."

Social Democrats:

"Address harassment and hate crimes

- Introduce robust hate crime legislation, in line with international best practice, to recognise the compound impact on victims of these forms of crimes and prevent their occurrence.
- Review and update our hate speech legislation to ensure it is fit for purpose and capable of adequately prosecuting hate speech regardless of whether it is conveyed verbally, in writing, or online.
- Develop a new National Action Plan Against Racism."



REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND DIRECT PROVISION

Aontú:

Only in reference to mental health statistics.

Fianna Fáil:

"Reform Direct Provision"

- Re-focus funding away from privatisation of direct provision towards state led provision.
- Ensure that the "National Standards for Accommodation" are reviewed at least every five years.
- Provide €7m for increased resources for the hearing of asylum applications and appeals to ensure that asylum applications process times are expedited.
- Extend the remit of the Ombudsman so that he will have the power to assess why the asylum application process is taking so long and what can be done to speed it up.
- Broaden the right to work of asylum seekers by reducing the waiting period from 9 months to 6 months.
- Put in place a new €5m community integration fund that local groups can apply to with proposals to help new arrivals engage in local life.
- Enable asylum seekers to access driving licences.
- Prioritise the use of the Community Sponsorship Programme as a route of housing and integrating refugees into our communities."

Fine Gael:

"Speedy decisions on asylum requests."

"Significant progress has been made in improving services to applicants for international protection in recent years. Following The McMahon Report: The Working Group on the Protection Process and Direct Provision, we are moving towards an independent living model in all Direct Provision Centres."

"New Direct Provision centres and community engagement."



"A better long-term approach."

"We do not believe that the current model is fit for purpose for the longterm. The State has asked the former Secretary General to the European Commission, Catherine Day, to chair a small expert group to identify international best practice in the provision of services to applicants for international protection and to consider future migration trends. The group will complete its work late in 2020 and we will respond speedily to its recommendations."

Green Party:

- "Work towards ending Direct Provision and replacing it with a not for profit system based on accommodation provided through existing or new approved housing bodies. At the same time, implement all the recommendations of the McMahon Report to improve conditions for Asylum Seekers currently living in the system."
- "Ensure that asylum applicants are given access to early legal advice, to improve the asylum process for both applicants and the State."
- "Provide better support for women and children who are in the direct provision system to guarantee their wellbeing, including an adequate allowance, access to appropriate facilities and clarity in the law to prevent child trafficking."

Labour:

"Ending the Current System of Direct Provision."

"Labour will progressively abolish the current system of Direct Provision and move responsibility for accommodating asylum seekers to the Department of Rural and Community Affairs. We will phase out for-profit provision of accommodation. Smaller scale tenders will be issued to approved housing bodies, and community consultation and support will be improved. Working rights for asylum seekers will be improved."

People Before Profit:

"End Direct Provision and give asylum seekers the right to work.
Welcome refugees and asylum seekers. Stop deportations"

Sinn Féin:

"We should end the Direct Provision system, treat people with dignity, process applications for asylum in a timely manner and implement the recommendations of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee Report."

Social Democrats:

"We are committed to ending Direct Provision and replacing it with not for profit accommodation which affords dignity, minimises institutionalisation, and protects the physical and mental health of all those awaiting a decision on international protection."



- Better resource the International Protection Office to ensure applications are processed in a timely manner.
- Immediately introduce a new independent inspection model to conduct regular, unannounced monitoring and inspections on existing centres.
- Increase the Daily Expenses Allowance in line with other Social Protection payment rate.
- Extend the ombudsman's jurisdiction to the application process for international protection and any inspectorate for direct provision.
- Investigate appropriate systems to allow those awaiting decisions to access driving licences.
- Ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and include Direct Provision centres within the scope of places of detention.

TRAVELLERS AND ROMA

Aontú:

Only in reference to mental health statistics.

Fiaanna Fáil:

"Traveller accommodation issues must also be addressed with a substantial funding boost following major cutbacks from 2008.

- Undertake an audit of the application of 'limited/reduced timetables' on Traveller children and publish its report. The Inspectorate should also identify a mechanism to capture the use of 'limited/ reduced timetables' when carrying out school inspections.
- Consult with national Travellers organisations in the development of Guidelines on Reduced Timetables.
- Publish disaggregated data on the basis of ethnicity in secondary schools (PPOD) to monitor participation and outcomes of Traveller students.
- Ensure that the inclusion of Traveller culture and history in school curriculum takes place in active consultation with Traveller organisations and acts as a precedent for further inclusion of all the cultures which are part of Ireland.
- Ensure that all funding allocated to Local Authorities for Travellers is spent on Travellers."



Mental Health Policy “Fianna Fáil believes that a strong rights culture must exist and be encouraged within mental health services. It is also vital that programmes be aware be culturally sensitive to groups such as LGBTI+, travellers and the deaf community.”

Fine Gael:

“We will ensure that the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, 2017-2021 is fully implemented to better the lives of Travellers and Roma people. We will conduct an in-depth consultation with these communities, in advance of preparing a new five year strategy. Health inequalities are experienced by members of the Traveller Community, evidenced by the disproportionate impact of chronic disease and higher mortality rates. To overcome these challenges, we will ensure integrated primary care services aligned with comprehensive national projects, including:

- A Traveller Health Action Plan.
- Accessible primary care projects, family support programmes, counselling, dedicated public health nurses.
- Targeted mental health promotion and suicide prevention services.
- Ongoing engagement between our health service and representatives of Traveller and Roma Communities, to ensure that the health policies being provided deliver for the needs of these communities.”

Green Party:

“We will take a whole of government approach to improving social and economic outcomes among the Traveller Community. We will:

- Instruct the Department of Education and Skills to draft and implement a Traveller Education Strategy.
- Commit to developing a comprehensive Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Strategy with a robust implementation and monitoring plan, and to ensuring that Travellers and Roma are included in key mainstream policy initiatives related to employment, including the forthcoming Pathways to Work Strategy.
- Publish and implement the long delayed National Traveller Health Action Plan.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Traveller and Roma Mental Health Strategy.”

Labour

“Labour will develop a holistic strategy to improve the conditions of the Traveller Community and to eliminate prejudice against Travellers, with a focus on creating economic opportunities”



"Labour will require local councils to achieve evidence-based targets for specialised forms of housing, including accessible social housing for people with a disability and Traveller-specific housing, and will require the full use of grants for Traveller accommodation"

People Before Profit:

"Establish an Independent National Housing Agency to oversee the delivery of safe and culturally appropriate Traveller Accommodation"

Sinn Féin:

"Traveller Accommodation

- Implement the recommendations of the 2019 Expert Group on Traveller Accommodation, which makes 32 short and long-term recommendations which aim to remove the barriers to the delivery of culturally appropriate accommodation for Travellers
- Restore funding for Traveller specific accommodation to its 2008 levels

Traveller Health

- Implement the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) 2017-2021
- Publish and implement the long delayed National Traveller Health Action Plan
- Ensure effective and compassionate care to those from ethnic and other minority backgrounds cognisant of their differing situations
- Provide services in a culturally sensitive manner
- Ensure proper diversity training for health professionals
- Roll out free universal counselling services with a GP referral
- Support the roll-out of suicide prevention training through traveller community groups and services

Traveller Education

- Re-establish the Statutory Committee to advise the Minister in initiatives to address educational disadvantage
- Increase investment in the School Completion Programme by one third"

Social Democrats:

"Traveller and Roma Equality.

The systemic discrimination against Travellers across generations has resulted in stark inequalities between Travellers and Settled people. The Social Democrats will take a



holistic approach to improving the living conditions and socio-economic opportunities of the Irish Traveller community"

- Oppose all discriminatory practise and language towards Travellers and support.
- Support Traveller inclusion within community programmes and decision making on a local level.
- Support the Oireachtas recommendation to include a Traveller within the Taoiseach's eleven Seanad nominees.
- Implement the recommendations of the National Traveller Roma and Inclusion Strategy, the Independent Expert Group on Traveller Accommodation, and the National Roma Needs Assessment.
- Establish a National Traveller Health Action Plan to identify the specific physical and mental health needs of the Travelling Community, and implement the findings.
- Require Local Authorities to use the entire allocation of their Traveller Accommodation grants.
- Allocate resources to support Travellers in all levels of education"

VOTING AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Aontú: No Mention.

Fianna Fáil:

"Launch a new minority political engagement initiative"

- "We will introduce financial penalties for Local Authorities which fail to have in place in date migrant integration strategies including political engagement"
- "Launch a public awareness campaign to encourage the migrant population to engage in politics"

Fine Gael:

No mention.

Green Party:

No mention.



Labour:

"Labour will confer voting rights for Dáil elections on all long-term residents, living in Ireland for over five years, regardless of citizenship"

People Before Profit:

"Give voting rights to migrants living and working in Ireland"

Sinn Féin:

No mention.

Social Democrats:

"Extend voting rights at general election level to settled migrants"

UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

Aontú:

No mention.

Fianna Fáil:

Only with reference to Irish immigrants in USA "Work for recognition of the undocumented Irish in the USA."

Fine Gael:

"We will work with NGOs to identify appropriate legal pathways for young people who find themselves 'undocumented' to regularise their status."

Green Party:

"Support a path for regularisation of undocumented migrants, broaden access to family reunification and allow easier access to the labour market."

Labour:

"Labour will regularise undocumented children, young people and adult workers, including migrants fleeing domestic violence who are reliant on their partner's residency"



status. Labour will support those brought to Ireland by human traffickers, not least those traumatised by the experience of forced prostitution."

People Before Profit:

No mention.

Sinn Féin:

No mention.

Social Democrats:

"Establish a path for regularisation of undocumented migrants."