



# Senator Marie Sherlock



Summer 2023

## HOUSING CRISIS: AFFORDABLE HOMES ARE POSSIBLE IF THE STATE STEPS UP



### Good news for Drumcondra Community



Marie with the SAVE OUR HALL campaign group at the hugely successful fun day last year.

**Corpus Christi Parish Hall** has been fully **closed for over 18 months** but will re-open under the management of the Corpus Christi Girls national school. **Two new units are to open to provide for special educational needs**, and the school has committed to opening the hall for **after-hours community use**.



### New Special School in Dublin 7

Great news about the opening of a **new special school in Grangegorman for primary and secondary school age children** this September. It will be located in the old Dublin 7 Educate Together building.

The housing nightmare in this city of extortionate rents, surging homelessness and fewer homes to buy, is no accident. But we can change that.

**State owned land is available locally.** The Land Development Agency tells us there are over 33 acres available between the various state agencies in Dublin 1, 3, 7 and 9. If the **political will was there, up to 2,700 homes could be built.**

**Land hoarding has been allowed continue** and people desperate for

a home are left to wait. Across our communities, planning has been approved for over 3,200 homes with no sign of them being built.

**We need to get serious about dereliction and vacancy.** We've over 4,300 vacant and derelict homes in our area. We have a useless vacant property tax that is designed to fail, and weak compulsory purchase laws. The State must step up. The scale of housing need in this country means that construction workers should be directly employed.



*A chara,  
I'm your local Senator.*

*If there are ever any issues in your area or assistance that you need, I want to be able to help.*

*Deán teagmháil liom,*

**Marie**  
**Seanadóir Marie Sherlock**

*Labour Party Spokesperson on Employment, Arts, Culture, Media and the Gaeltacht.*

### Please get in touch

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## Review of abortion legislation



Five years on from Repeal, the review into the current abortion legislation is underway. At the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health, I raised serious concerns about the psychological and logistical issues associated with **the 3-day wait period, the distressing issues associated with the 12-week limit, the impunity which conscientious objectors appear to enjoy** yet those providing the service are wide open to criminalisation.

## Local issues

### Bus Connects: Changes for Drumcondra

Plans have now been submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the Swords, Drumcondra and Dorset street area. New cycle and pedestrian bridge next to the Frank Flood Bridge and new segregated cycle lanes along Drumcondra Road Upper and Lower and Dorset Street. Footpath improvements on Upper Drumcondra Road and outside Drumcondra train station and DCU. Trees will now also be retained along the central reserve in Drumcondra Rd. Deadline for submissions to An Bord Pleanála is July 18th.

### Bus Connects- Glasnevin area

An Bord Pleanála was due to decide by the end of October 2023 on the Ballymun/Finglas to City Centre Bus Connects Bus Corridor. However, the final decision date is now not clear. A new report was produced by the National Transport Authority and this has been sent out for comment to everyone who made submissions last year.

## Shocking gap in services for children with additional needs



The northside of Dublin has the **longest waiting lists in the country for initial contact** with children with additional needs.

As of May 2023, over 2,400 children on the northside were waiting 12 months or more. There is also a **shocking shortage of speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and psychologists**. This is causing enormous distress to families.

We must see a serious increase in the recruitment of therapists and a review of the carer's allowance to end the nightmare for parents and children. Labour TDs in the Dáil received commitments from Disability Minister Anne Rabbitte to **establish regional assessment hubs by August or else reimburse parents for paying privately**.

## Decriminalisation of Drugs



We believe **decriminalisation** is the first key step to breaking down the **stigma surrounding addiction and to helping improve services**.

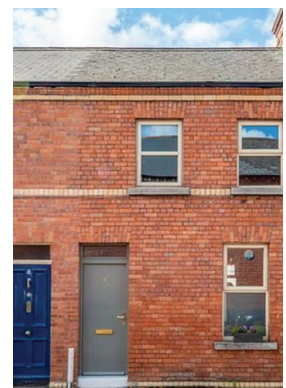
*Marie with Philly McMahon, Citywide's Anna Quigley, Áodhan Ó Riordán TD and Senator Annie Hoey at Labour's public meeting on Decriminalisation.*

First and foremost, it needs to be treated as a **health issue**. The **Citizens' Assembly on Drugs** will run until late October, and we hope to see strong recommendations transforming how addiction to drugs is approached in this country.

## Retrofitting rules must change for pre-1940 homes

Currently, homes built before 1940 are excluded from SEAI grants for wall insulation. There are well over 16,000 houses across Dublin that were built prior to 1940. If we're serious about helping **households to reduce bills**, protecting existing houses, preventing their demolition in a few decades, and meeting new EU building standards, then the rules need to be changed.

We've been calling for Government and the SEAI to change the rules to accommodate these homes. A review has now been promised.



## Good news for local schools



Marie le Príomhoide Pól Hansard i nGaelscoil Choláiste Mhuire i gCearnóg Parnell roimh an "sod" a chasadh don scoil nua i sráid Dominic.

**Gaelscoil Choláiste Mhuire:** the sod has finally been turned on the new school building on Dominick Street. Construction is due to finish by the end of 2024 with pupils due to arrive into the **new two-stream school in 2025.**

**Clonturk Community College:** a new 18 classroom extension will be ready for use this September. A masterplan for a new school campus on the Swords Road has been promised this year to include new school buildings for Clonturk, Scoil Aine and Ellenfield Community College.

**Dublin 7 Special School:** Enrolment has yet to commence for this September but for those that require a special school place, make sure your local Special Education Needs organiser (SENO) is aware of your child's need.

## Where is the Emergency relief for Apartment Defects?



For the past two years, we've joined apartment residents in their call to address the apartment defect scandal. It was good to see the breakthrough in January and on top of the commitment by Government

for a remediation scheme, there was **also the promise of emergency relief.** Frustratingly, there is no sign of this and **apartment residents are facing exorbitant bills for urgent repairs they cannot afford.** Unfortunately, there are thousands living with the daily nightmare of serious fire safety, structural and water ingress damage in their homes.

## Reimagining Richmond Road

For the past 16 years, Richmond Road residents have been promised action by Dublin City Council to improve the safety of their road for pedestrians and cyclists. Action is badly needed to change the disappearing footpaths, HGV's battling to get past cars and cyclists and the lack of paid parking.

We joined local residents in their morning rush-hour protests. **Paths are for people!** It's time to **reimagine Richmond Road** and ensure promises to improve the road are delivered.

## Outrageous wait for healthcare staff



Marie with cleaning staff outside Beaumont Hospital

Significant numbers of cleaning and catering staff across hospitals and nursing homes have yet to receive their €1,000 pandemic special recognition payment.



## Childcare shortages grow

Marie with the staff of the now closed Dunard Community Playgroup.

The shortage of childcare places locally is causing massive strain on families and there are also serious funding issues for early years workers and providers. In Stoneybatter alone, some 105 pre school places have had to close in the past year- all because new premises could not be found locally. We need the State to build more facilities and ensure existing services can be supported to stay open.

## No to scapegoating refugees

While there are serious issues in our communities in accessing health, housing and other services, blaming refugees for these problems is wrong.

We've been working with local communities and asylum seekers to ensure decent conditions for all. We've also been calling for the six month wait before being able to take up employment to be halved. The wait is inhumane and unnecessary.



With TD Aodhán O'Riordáin at the East Wall for All rally



Marie at the launch of the OutHouse Strategic Plan with CEO Oisín O' Reilly, Board Chair Séamus McManus and Senator Annie Hoey.

## Retrofitting and Housing Adaptation Grants

Retrofitting is vital to reducing energy bills and important for reducing carbon emissions.

### SEAI Grants:



**Fully funded energy upgrades** are available for homeowners in receipt of certain welfare supports but they face a scandalously long 24 month waiting list to get works done.



**Part funded energy upgrades** are available for some homeowners, and include support for attic and wall insulation, heat pumps, heating controls, and solar energy. Solar panels are now **exempt from VAT**.

### Local Authority Housing Adaption Grants:



Grants are available for older persons, disabled persons and those with mobility difficulties to adapt their homes and make them more suited to their needs. This can include ramps, stair lifts, windows, doors and more.

**Please contact my office for more information about any of the options above and for support with application forms.**

## Renters' rights

The Government's reckless decision to end the eviction ban is sending hundreds locally into homelessness and overcrowded and difficult situations. It's more important than ever that you know your rights.

- If you are being evicted, make sure you have been given the appropriate notice period- it spans from a minimum of 90 days to 224 days. Contact us or Threshold to make sure the notice is legitimate.
- **Rental assistance:** If you can no longer afford to pay your rent, there may be support available. Please contact my office for information or assistance.
- In **Rent Pressure Zones** rent can only be increased once every 12 months and must be done with at least 90 days' notice and in the form of a Rent Review.

## Pay all apprentices at least the minimum wage



**The cost of living crisis has seen a serious recruitment and retention issue for construction apprentices.**

*If Government is serious about ending the housing crisis, they must urgently look at the supply of construction skills. We published legislation demanding an end to the sub-minimum wage rates of pay for apprentices to encourage more people into trades.*

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Páirtí an **Lucht Oibre**

**Working for a Fairer City**