

Senator **MARIE SHERLOCK**

Fighting for a Fairer Dublin



Autumn Newsletter 2024

A chara,

I'm working to ensure our city is a fairer, more inclusive and healthier place to live, work, raise a family and go to school.

If there are ever any issues that I can be of assistance with, local or national, please do get in touch.

Le chéile, is féidir linn pobail níos laidre agus níos cothroime a chruthú.

Le meas,

Marie

Senator Marie Sherlock

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

FIXING THE WASTE PROBLEM IN DUBLIN

LOCAL PROBLEM, NATIONAL SOLUTIONS

PUBLIC MEETING

When: 8:30pm, Tues
24th September

Where: Barbara Ward
Clonliffe Community
Centre



SENATOR
MARIE SHERLOCK

Waste collection is a local issue that requires national policy change.

Bin companies drive past litter strewn on our streets. The onus is on residents to report illegal dumping and there is far too little investment in recycling and composting services.

We need to overhaul how waste is collected, who collects and how we hold dumpers responsible.

All are welcome at the meeting.

FIGHTING FOR A SAFER, CLEANER, LIVEABLE CITY

There are major frustrations in our city right now; a housing crisis that is scarring a whole generation of young workers and families, a feeling that our city centre is neither safe nor clean and a huge sadness about the violence and hate that has broken out in some communities.

For the Dublin we love, there has to be change.

- **To keep our city clean** - we want an **overhaul of the dysfunctional waste collection system**.
- **To make our city safer** - we need more Gardaí, greater respect for inner city communities, and a **review of the over-concentration of poorly run hostels and services**. Vulnerable people need to be helped and not abandoned in these communities.
- **To stamp out dereliction in our communities** - we want to see major changes to the **vacant home tax, stronger compulsory purchase laws, strict new rules for vacant public buildings, and a serious plan for the 33 acres of state land that could be used for housing in our area**. We eagerly await the plans for Talbot street and want to see the redevelopment of the Sean McDermott street Magdalen Laundry start as soon as possible.

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Labour

Labour's small but significant win for Autism Families

BUT MORE ACTION NEEDED TO TACKLE AON WAITING LISTS



Marie with the indomitable Cara Darmody protesting outside Leinster House.

Over 15,000 children in this country are waiting longer than six months (the legal limit) for a diagnostic assessment. This number is getting worse: **by the end of this year, the Minister believes the number could be as many as 20,000 children.**

On top of this, we know that **some autistic children still did not have a special school or special class place at the start of September**, despite the enormous efforts of parents that we are working with.

I currently sit on the Oireachtas committee on Autism and I'm very clear - the **new National Autism Strategy** must deliver.

Working with my Labour colleagues in the Dáil, last year we forced the Government to commit to paying for private autism assessments as a first step to getting these children the support they need. This is no long term solution but we're acutely aware that weeks and months really matter in children's lives.

There has to be a serious review of the training, recruitment, retention and pay for those working in these services.

Dublin's voice in Europe



This year the people of Dublin stood up against hatred and division in our communities, and elected Aodhán Ó Ríordáin to be a Member of the European Parliament. As Director of Elections for Aodhán's campaign, I am hugely thankful for the support shown to our candidate right across the city. I am working closely with Aodhán as he represents our city at the heart of Europe.

Drumcondra is now an autism friendly village



Marie with Liana Cassin, Lucy Crean and the other women in Embrace Autism D9 who were instrumental in ensuring Drumcondra is now an Autism friendly village. Two local institutions, Drumcondra Library and Na Fianna, were the first to sign up with the hope that other businesses and organisations will follow.

Towns and villages right across the country are signing up to Autism Friendly Village accreditation. At the heart of it is a commitment that **communities should be accessible, inclusive and accepting of autistic people.** It just requires a change of mindset and a tweak in how we make our local businesses, amenities and public spaces more welcoming and inclusive.



Genocide in Gaza- we cannot continue to look on

Ireland's recognition of the Palestinian state was very welcome but the Government cannot now sit on its hands. **With almost 40,000 dead and close on 100,000 injured amid mass starvation, we have to push for economic sanctions to be imposed on Israel.**

Whether in Ukraine, Gaza, or anywhere else, Ireland must be at the forefront of opposition to the murder of innocent civilians and the cruel destruction of their cultures and communities.

Transport changes in our communities

I cycle, I drive, I walk and I take public transport. Very few of us rely on one mode only and I believe that by **making it easier and safer to cycle, to walk and to take public transport, congestion is reduced and road space is freed up for those who need to drive** - whether for work, for family or because of mobility issues.

I understand that change is not easy, but the current congestion is not benefitting anyone. That is why I support the Dublin City Transport Plan - as a first step to a better travel experience and cleaner air quality for our communities.



BusConnects Update

Planning approval has been granted for the Blanchardstown to city centre, Ballymun/ Finglas to city centre and Swords to city centre routes.

Each of these will now go out to tender with works likely to commence in 2026.

They will involve substantial traffic re-routings in Stoneybatter, Cabra and Glasnevin with significant changes also in the Phibsborough and Drumcondra areas. For more details of the changes please see my summary www.mariesherlock.ie/busconnects.

New approach to drug use badly needed



Ireland has the highest number of drug induced deaths in Europe. In 2020, 322 people lost their lives to drugs - and that does not count those addicted to prescription medication. It's time to recognise that the current system does not work. **To save lives, reduce the stigma of seeking help and to face the reality of drug usage in Ireland, we need serious changes within our health system and to our laws.**

I am a member of the Oireachtas committee on Drug use and we are currently considering what decriminalisation of drug use might look like and calling out the health and social investment that is crucially needed in communities.



Steady supply of construction skills relies on good apprentice wages and secure employment conditions

Close on 400,000 homes are needed over the next 10 years. To do this we need a steady stream of workers.

Yet year 1 and year 2 apprentices are paid well below the minimum wage. There are very real retention issues and it is scandalous that the now Taoiseach has reneged on his promise to fix this a year ago.

We also want to see the creation of a new state housing delivery company to provide quality permanent employment to builders. This would be a sea change from the current unpredictable sub contractor model. The availability of quality permanent employment will be crucial to attracting more workers in.

It was a great privilege to recently present certificates to the 38 graduating from the Dublin City Construction skills programme down in Dublin Port.

Stronger workers' rights law needed to stamp out bad employer behaviour



This year marks 10 years of the Rosie Hackett bridge. This is the only bridge in the city named after a woman. Rosie Hackett was a trade unionist and co-founded the Irish Women Workers' Union and operated the Liberty Hall soup kitchen during the 1913 Lockout.

More than a hundred years on, huge challenges to joining a trade union remain. We've published legislation to break down the barriers to joining and being active in a trade union in Ireland.

- **Toughen up the rules against unfair sacking of workers.** Unjustly taking away someone's livelihood deserves much more than a slap on the wrist. A message must be sent that worker **victimisation and union busting will not be tolerated.**

Major Childcare Shortages in our communities. Sector needs investment to expand places.

The shocking shortage of childcare is having a very significant impact on working parents. It is a major cost of living issue and it is particularly affecting women who want and need to earn. In July, we asked 155 parents across the northside of Dublin about their detailed experience of trying to find childcare.

The results are stark.

- More than a fifth of survey respondents told us they felt forced to give up work.
- Almost a quarter started flexi hours or went part time to deal with the lack of childcare arrangements.

*Survey of Parents shows **

30% *Searching for over 18 months*
22% *Searching for 12-18 months*

21% *felt forced to give up work*
24% *Started flexitime or part-time work*

*Source: online survey undertaken in July 2024 among parents across the Northside of Dublin

We know providers are also frustrated about core funding levels and requirements. Early years workers struggle hugely to stay in the sector they love because of the pay.

Thanks to all the local parents who took part in our survey. We are using the results to push for the State to step in - childcare provision can no longer be left to chance. For children, for early years educators and for parents, we need a truly public affordable system of early years care and education.

Culture can't compete with Capitalism

There was a great turnout at our public meeting in July on supporting the Arts and saving artists' space in Dublin.

The worry and frustration runs deep in the artistic community as we have seen the closure of over 50 local artists' spaces and venues in the city in the past two decades.

We need a combination of supports from central government, local government as well as changes to how the Arts Council can operate.

Our ideas include:

- **Major state purchase programme** of buildings for arts use.
- Specific **funding streams** for long term leases for arts groups.
- The introduction of **low cost cultural mortgages**.
- **Culture/social first policy** for all vacant state buildings not suitable for residential.
- The introduction of **culture conservation orders** in planning laws.



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SENATOR MARIE SHERLOCK
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