



Senator Marie Sherlock



Summer 2023

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



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.

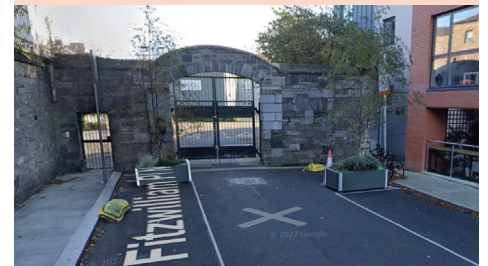
We need to get serious about dereliction and vacancy. We've over 4,300 vacant and derelict homes in our area. We have a useless vacant property tax that is designed to fail, and weak compulsory purchase laws. The State must step up. The scale of housing need in this country means that construction workers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



Childcare shortages grow

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

There are at least four pre-schools in the inner city that have had to close all because new premises could not be found locally. This comes on top of a massive shortage of creche places putting families under enormous strain. We need the State to build more facilities.



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.



*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

(01) 618 4564

marie@mariesherlock.ie

www.mariesherlock.ie

@Marie_Sherlock

@MarieSherlockDublin

@senatormariesherlock

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



Sean McDermott Street Pool to re-open:

Sean McDermott Street pool is set to finally reopen in July to the public. Classes are due to commence in September and will be operated by Swim Ireland.

Orchard Road Depot:

DCC intends to develop the Orchard Road Depot site into a Senior Citizens' complex and community facility with a provisional plan for 35-40 apartment units. It is due to be developed by FOLD housing and detailed designs will be published in the next few weeks.

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**.

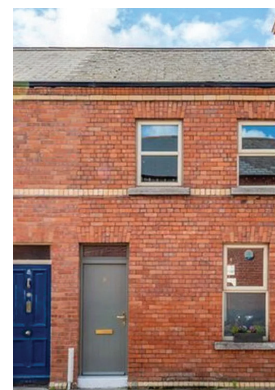
Marie with Philly McMahon, Citywide's Anna Quigley, Áodhan Ó Riordán TD and Senator Annie Hoey at Labour's public meeting on Decriminalisation.

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.**

D7 Educate Together: congratulations to the school on the opening of their fabulous new school building. This is now a three-stream school.

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.



It was a privilege to join Jenny Courtney and the team at **Belvedere Youth Club for the launch of their restorative practice project.** This is one of the first places in the country to embed restorative practice in the work they do with young people in the local community.

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.



Hill Street Family Resource Centre

I was delighted to visit Eileen Smith and her team at the centre. Their work is crucial to **empowering parents, families, and individuals** in the **local community.** They have developed a ground breaking **pre-school preparation course** and have great plans for their building.

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 Adaptation 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.



Please get in touch

☎ (01) 618 4564

✉ marie@mariesherlock.ie

🌐 www.mariesherlock.ie

🐦 @Marie_Sherlock

📘 @MarieSherlockDublin

📷 @senatormariesherlock

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Páirtí an **Lucht Oibre**

Working for a Fairer City