

ELECTION 2020: POLITICAL PARTY CARER COMMITMENT CHECKLIST



Family Carers Ireland has contacted each political party asking them to indicate whether they will commit to any or all of the 10 pledges set out in our GE2020 manifesto should they be elected to the next Government. The following table provides a summary of their responses. Please note that the numbers included in the table correspond to the footnotes below and further explain the party's policy position.



Political Party	Pledge 1	Pledge 2	Pledge 3	Pledge 4	Pledge 5	Pledge 6	Pledge 7	Pledge 8	Pledge 9	Pledge 10
Fine Gael	1	✓	✓					2	✓	
Fianna Fáil	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sinn Féin	✓	✓	✓	3	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Labour	5	6	✓	✓	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Green Party	8	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	9	✓	
People Before Profit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Solidarity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Renua	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Democrats	10✓	✓	11✓	12✓	13✓	✓	✓	14✓	✓	✓

1. Fine Gael has committed to increasing Carer's Allowance by €25 over the term of the government.

2. Fine Gael has committed to the recruitment of 3,840 primary care workers to include allied health professionals - occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dementia advisers and mental health professionals.

3. Sinn Féin are proposing a major infrastructure programme to make all public transport services fully wheelchair accessible. They propose significant investment to replace non-wheelchair accessible vehicles in Bus Éireann, construct wheelchair accessible bus stops and undertake accessibility works to bus stations, railway stations and the train fleet over the term of government.

4. Sinn Féin has committed to providing greater tax justice and protecting the lowest earners and are happy to meet FCI after the Dáil is reconvened to discuss our specific proposals.

5,6,7. Labour agree in principle with pledges 1, 2 and 5, however are unable to commit to these pledges until they are fully costed against changing economic conditions. Labour are happy to further discuss the details of these specific pledges and work together towards achieving them in the coming future.

8. The Green Party's manifesto includes a commitment to 'recognising the immense contribution of carers to Irish society by raising both the basic rate of payment of Carer's Allowance and the scheme's earnings disregard'.

9. The Green Party manifesto commits to 'review and increase resources in therapy service areas that impact many people with disabilities' and 'Implementation and adherence to the existing Disability Act which places a statutory obligation on the HSE to begin an assessment for disability within three months, and complete the assessment within another three months, of an application being made'.

10. Social Democrats have committed to overhaul and modernise the financial compensation system to family carers, and while they haven't committed to precise figures, the party believes that such an overhaul would encompass changes in the areas named by Family Carers Ireland.

11. As part of the full implementation of Sláintecare, the Social Democrats are committed to free GP care for all in the context of a universal healthcare system.

12. Social Democrats have committed to improving financial supports for disabled transport users.

13. This is included within the Social Democrats commitment to overhaul and modernise the means testing and financial compensation received by family carers.

14. Social Democrats commitment to fully implement Sláintecare would ensure that people who need medical care are seen on the basis of need.

1 REFORM THE MEANS TEST FOR CARER'S ALLOWANCE within the lifetime of the next Government, by:

- Increasing the Carer's Allowance income disregard from €332.50 to €450 (single) and €665 to €900 (couple) by 2025
- Increasing the capital disregard from €20,000 to €50,000 in line with the existing disregard for Disability Allowance

2 INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A STATUTORY BASIS FOR HOMECARE and incorporate a guarantee of basic supports to family carers who provide 80% of all community care.

- Urgently address the homecare crisis by significantly increasing homecare funding
- Give full-time carers a right to a Carer Needs Assessment and 20 days respite each year
- Abolish the postcode lottery in carer supports by funding the delivery of the 'Carers Guarantee' of €3.2m

3 EXTEND THE GP VISIT CARD TO CARERS IN RECEIPT OF THE CARER'S SUPPORT GRANT

4 INTRODUCE THE TRANSPORT SUPPORT SCHEME promised since 2013 and ensure that existing transport schemes are accessible to people who need them in spite of not having a visible disability.

5 REFORM THE SYSTEM OF TAX RELIEFS AND CREDITS for carers by:

- Increasing the Dependent Relative Tax Credit to match the Incapacitated Child Tax Credit
- Extending eligibility for the Home Carer Tax Credit to include single working carers
- Allowing carers to claim tax relief on the cost of employing a home carer if incurring this expense at same time as claiming the Dependent Relative/Incapacitated Child Tax Credit
- Making Carer's Allowance exempt from tax as is the case with other income supports such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Disability Allowance and Working Family Payment

6 ENSURE THAT 'JUST TRANSITION' PROVISIONS ARE APPLIED TO FAMILY CARERS who are being penalised for unavoidable costs under the polluter pays principle e.g. waste charges and carbon tax.

7 MAKE APPROPRIATE TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS FOR FAMILY CARERS ON COMMENCEMENT OF THE ASSISTED DECISION-MAKING (CAPACITY) ACT 2015 in line with those being made for the state's own Wards of Court system.

8 ABOLISH WAITING LISTS FOR ESSENTIAL THERAPIES including Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Psychology for children with special needs.

9 Publish a REFRESHED NATIONAL CARERS' STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2020-2023

10 DELIVER ON PAY RESTORATION for organisations funded under section 39 of the Health Act (as promised in 2017) and undertake not to discriminate against charities that are not unionised in future pay decisions in regard to the voluntary sector.