

**TIME TO TURN THE TIDE  
ON THE HOUSING CRISIS**

***NO RETURN TO  
“BUSINESS AS USUAL”***



# Forward to the future —not “business as usual”

## No going back to the status quo!

The covid-19 pandemic aggravated housing inequalities. Weeks of social distancing and isolation have taken a heavy toll on people faced with overcrowding, homelessness, and sofa-surfing. The housing strategy of successive governments has endangered the lives of tens of thousands of people.

## The past

The state transferred its responsibility for housing our people. Private rented accommodation is now the main form of tenure in urban Ireland, exacerbating overcrowding. The facts are stark:

- €1 billion a year paid in rent subsidies by the state to landlords—money that could be used to build public housing

- 10,000+ people homeless, 4,000 of them children

- Average urban rents over €2,000 a month

- Many tenants spending 80 per cent of their income on rent, making saving for a mortgage impossible

- Between 2007 and 2017 the proportion of young adults aged 25–29 living with their parents grew from 11% to 47%

Result: The majority of people are excluded from the possibility of securing a home.

## Who benefits?

Landlords, property speculators, banks, and vulture funds.

Many families face a stressful existence, with precarious employment, zero-hour contracts, extortionate rents, and a costly, sick health service.

Before covid-19 the establishment parties claimed that a rent freeze was “unconstitutional.” They lied to protect the profits of their rich pals. And they will lie again once the crisis subsides.

Even during the pandemic the banks are secretly trying to extort hard-pressed mortgage-holders with interest penalties. This shows what will occur if “business as usual” returns.

In the Six Counties the housing situation is also in crisis as a result of British state policy.

## What is the solution?

An all-Ireland house-building strategy, to maximise resources and to cut waste, duplication, and profiteering.

A state-run building company, to create a new, universally accessible public housing service, with rents linked to income.

- Enshrine the right to housing in the Constitution of Ireland

- Make public housing universally accessible to all, eliminating ghettoisation

## Who benefits?

All citizens will benefit, as rent is affordably linked to income. It also removes the stress, burden and strain that mortgage debt places on people’s lives while freeing up resources to provide for other needs, thus boosting the local economy.

The state benefits. A properly housed population will create a huge social dividend in the form of improved health, education, productivity, and social well-being. The homes will be a state asset in perpetuity that will pay for themselves over time.

With a plentiful supply of housing, prices will stabilise, and the boom-and-bust property bubbles will be history, as will homelessness. There will be no demand for private rented accommodation, as the rack-renting landlords will not be able to compete with income-linked rents. These properties can be bought by the state and added to the public housing stock.

Workers in the state-owned building company will have decent, well-paid permanent jobs, stabilising the building industry for the common good.

During the pandemic, many people may be wishing that things would get “back to normal.” But we should be careful what we wish for.

Do we really want to go back to the unlivable status quo? Or do we deserve a better, more sustainable future?

**Communist Party of Ireland**

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