

ONE FAMILY ELECTION 2016 MANIFESTO





ELECTION 2016

One Family

Cherish House, 2 Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin 2, D02 N624, Ireland

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One Family calls on all political parties and all candidates running in the General Election 2016 to commit to and live the ideals of our nation's founders in this historic time of reflection.

One Family was established in 1972 as Cherish, a name taken from the 1916 Proclamation which declared that Ireland would 'cherish all of the children of the nation equally'. Unfortunately, our vision of creating a just and equal society for all of our nation's people has yet to be fully realised. The vast majority of Ireland's poorest children live in one-parent families without the services, respect or laws to protect and support them to live their lives to their full potential.

One Family is Ireland's organisation for one-parent families and people sharing parenting or separating; offering support, information and services to all members of all one-parent families and to those sharing parenting. Children are at the centre of our work.

You have the opportunity to ensure that these children and families are not left behind again by committing to our six point Manifesto.

One Family calls on you to commit to:

1. WORK TO END CHILD POVERTY IN IRELAND

Commit to an interdepartmental approach to ensuring that the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures target can be reached by 2020, putting an end to the blight that is consistent poverty for children in the 21st century. This requires every department and every Minister to collaborate and contribute in a coherent way. Children in one-parent families are still more than twice as likely to live in poverty than other children. Children in these one-parent families are the most vulnerable in our society and a specific strategy is required to support their parents to balance their work and family lives.

2. ENSURE THAT WORK PAYS FOR EVERYONE

Designing the social welfare system to ensure that work pays through tapered supports is vital. In-work supports (such as Family Income Supplement) need to be reviewed to assess if they are working effectively to reduce in-work poverty. Barriers to accessing education, training or employment must be removed. Employers need to be encouraged to realise that supporting diversity, including family diversity, is good for business. The next government must see high quality, affordable childcare as an economic issue, requiring investment comparable to our European neighbours.



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3. UNDERTAKE A FULL REVIEW OF THE ONE PARENT FAMILY PAYMENT REFORMS

Social welfare should be a support for vulnerable families and not subject to cuts without appropriate supports in place. It is imperative that government establishes whether these reforms have had their intended outcome and what supports or adjustments are needed to reverse the negative impacts on already vulnerable families, and in addition, the impact they have had on child poverty and on employment rates for lone parents.

4. SUPPORT SHARED PARENTING

It is now common for parents to share parenting of their children following separation and we know it is in children's best interests to have a relationship with both parents, where possible. This must be understood and supported in government policies and services. The current tax credit entitlements of people parenting alone do not support shared parenting and need to be reviewed and amended to reflect the reality of sharing parenting following relationship breakdown.

5. RECOGNISE AND PROTECT ALL FAMILIES IN THE CONSTITUTION, NOT JUST MARRIED FAMILIES

Article 41 is out-dated in the 21st century and discriminates against many families in Ireland. Our nation's children will not be equally cherished and protected until this aspect of our constitution is changed.

6. INVEST IN OUR FAMILY LAW COURTS AND SERVICES

They are in crisis and need serious investment to ensure the safety and wellbeing of many children and their parents. The Children & Family Relationships Act needs to be fully implemented with accompanying budgets to ensure the law is workable.

Further information, case studies and statistics are available on www.onefamily.ie

#GE16 #EndChildPoverty