



'A Right to a Place Called Home'

Congress Housing Report

Autumn 2018



'A Right to a Place Called Home'

Congress Housing Report

Autumn 2018



Introduction

The housing and homeless crisis is without doubt the defining issue of our times and, thus far, a policy failure of major proportions that has caused untold damage to thousands of families, stretching the social fabric of Irish society to breaking.

Fundamentally a lasting solution can only be found when we collectively cease to treat housing as a commodity and assert it as a basic human right and a public good.

Over the last 18 months, Congress has engaged actively on this issue in order to bring about the policy change we so urgently require to make this a reality. And our work will continue until that change has been successfully won and delivered.

The following report outlines much of our activity on this issue. It is comprised of three sections.

Section One updates our policy proposals on the housing crisis, first published mid-2017.

Section Two details the work of the Congress Charter campaign on housing, including the outcome of our national lobby of TDs.

Section Three outlines the results of the survey of young workers conducted earlier this year, with regard to the impact of the housing crisis.

Section One

Congress Housing Policy Paper

How Bad is the Crisis?

Congress initially published its own proposals on how best to deal with the housing and homelessness crisis, in July 2017.

In summary, the Congress document called for the declaration of a housing emergency and the immediate commencement of a major programme of construction of public housing, led by local authorities. In the intervening period, despite the barrage of press releases and official figures, it is abundantly clear that the crisis has actually worsened.

The crisis is characterised by wholly unacceptable levels of homelessness, particularly family homelessness. The Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government estimates that nearly 9,900 people - including over 6,000 adults and nearly 3,900 children - were homeless in July 2018, and were living in totally unsuitable accommodation such as hostels, hotels and B&Bs. This represents an increase of over 50% on the June 2016 figures. In Dublin alone, the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive estimates that 110 people were sleeping rough in Spring 2018.

Census 2016 revealed that 326,500 households (17% of all households) were living in private rental accommodation. This compares to 81,400 (8% of all households) in 1991, representing an increase of 300% over this period.

Unfortunately, for too many tenants, the private rental sector is characterised by high levels of insecurity in relation to tenure and uncertainty with regard to rent. The dysfunctional nature of the private rented sector (a component part of a dysfunctional housing market) was highlighted by the recent Congress survey of young workers, which revealed high levels of dissatisfaction and unhappiness among tenants, with conditions in the sector. The most recent Daft.ie data indicates that average rents are now 75% above their low point in 2011 and 25% above their Celtic Tiger peak. In Dublin, average rents are now 34% above their previous peak.

While property prices across the state are still about 20% below pre-crash peaks, they have increased significantly since early 2013 – by over 80% in Dublin and by 75% across the state. A recent research paper from residential property specialists Knight Frank highlights the impetus behind the price and rental rises, particularly in Dublin:

“A lack of new supply has been driving these increases, with the delivery of new residential stock between 2010 and 2016 sitting at its lowest ever level since records began in 1970.”

This, they note, augurs well for those investing in property:

“With indicators such as prices, rents and supply all pointing in a favourable direction from an investor’s point of view, the outlook remains bright.”

The company expects this will continue to draw in overseas investors (which includes ‘vulture funds’):

“And while the residential market faces serious issues such as the difficulty in obtaining mortgage financing this creates an opportunity for foreign buyers who are not hindered by funding obstacles. In this context, international interest is only set to grow.”

In other words, we will see continued insecurity and spiralling rents in the rental sector, allied with an absence of affordable homes for younger workers and those on average incomes.

Simultaneously, government spending on subsidising private rental accommodation through Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) and Rent Supplement has increased by nearly 50% between 2015 and 2018 – from €327m to €481m. Social Justice Ireland estimates that nearly €870m is being spent in 2018 in the private sector for the provision of rent subsidies and emergency accommodation and it has also been estimated that at the current rate of increase, more than €1.7 billion a year will be spent on state rent assistance by 2022.

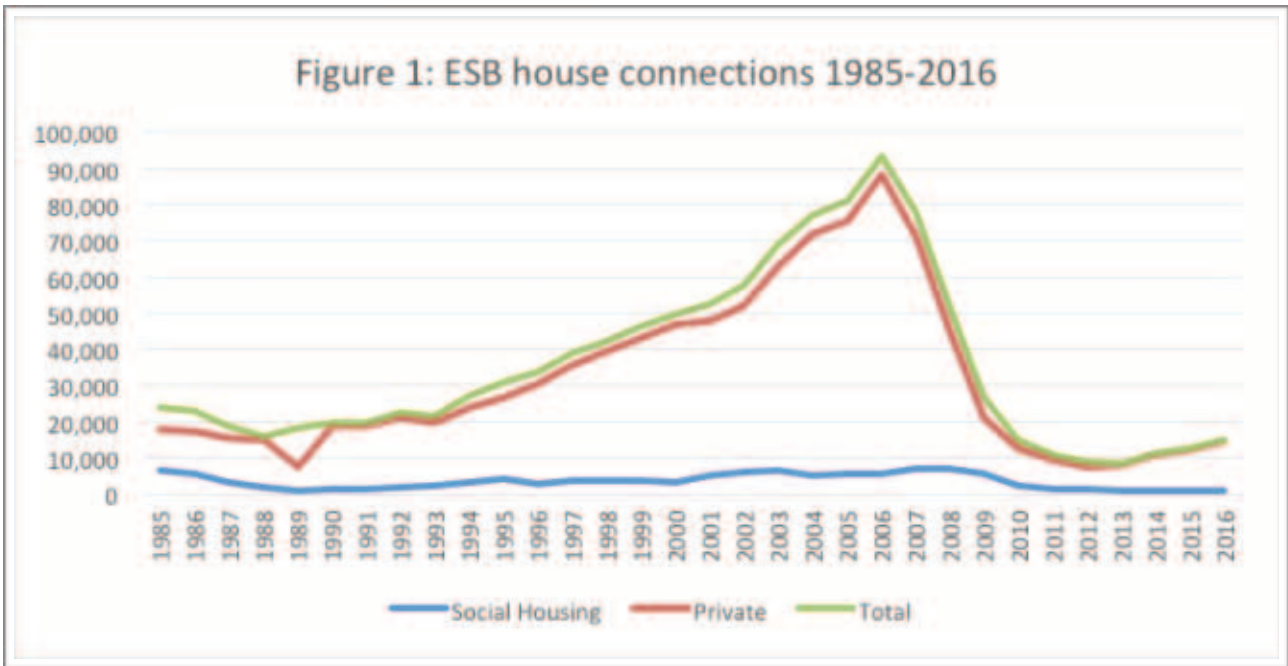
Clearly the numbers do not add up. In fact, the wisdom of this expenditure has been queried by the Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Service (IGEES), within the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER), as outlined below.

Falling Public Housing Provision

This crisis did not happen overnight. In essence, it can be traced back to the decision in the late 1980s to scale back the construction of social housing by local authorities, a decision which, ultimately, saw responsibility for housing provision largely transferred to ‘the market’.

While it is recognised that ESB connections data does overstate the number of new builds, this data is still useful for demonstrating how social housing construction did not keep pace with the private housing construction from the early 1990s onwards. In the mid-1980s, Local Authorities new builds accounted for around one-quarter of total output whereas by 2006, they accounted for around one-twentieth (Figure 1) below).

If we are to have any hope of ending this crisis, it is clear that the state – through local authorities – must once again play a central role in housing provision. However, despite repeated promises, construction of public housing has remained consistently low over recent years. In fact, latest available figures appear to show a decline on previous years in local authority builds in the first

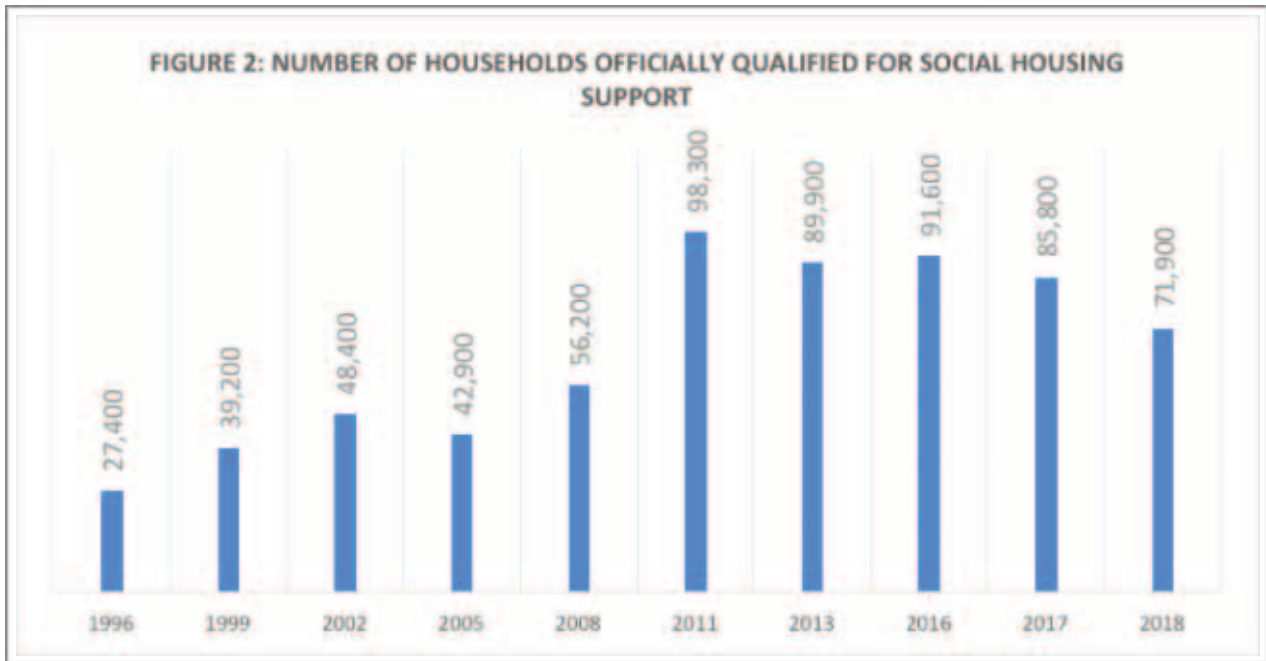


quarter of 2018, with a combined total of just 166 homes constructed by local authorities in that timeframe.

Indeed, in the first quarter of 2018 some 18 local authorities, including local authorities in areas of high demand such as Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, South Dublin, Galway City, Meath and Wicklow, built no homes at all: Wicklow County Council hasn't built any new homes since 2013. A total of just 31 homes were constructed across all Dublin local authorities, whose paltry combined output was almost matched by the 28 homes built by Kerry County Council.

Rising Demand for Social Housing Support

As housing has become more and more unaffordable, it is no surprise that greater numbers of people have been forced to apply to local authorities for social housing support: the number of families and individuals on the official social housing waiting lists rose from 27,400 in 1996 to 56,200 in 2008 (Figure 2), the same period that saw the number of houses built almost trebling (Figure 1). The provisional results of the 2018 Summary of Social Housing Assessments now suggest that almost 72,000 households qualified for social housing support in June 2018. While this is down from the post-crash high, recorded in 2011, it is still well above pre-crash levels (Figure 2 below).



Inadequate Targets for Public Housing

In 2016, the Housing Agency estimated that one-third of the population was in need of some form of housing support.

Housing demand is now estimated to be at least 30,000-35,000 units a year. The National Development Plan projects a population of nearly six million by 2040 and states that an additional 550,000 households will need to be accommodated over this period.

While the *Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* (2016-2021) contains a number of positive proposals, it by and large continues the decades-long, failed, reliance on market provision to meet housing needs.

According to the Minister for Housing *Rebuilding Ireland* “targets the delivery” of 50,000 social homes by 2021 at a total cost of €6 billion, through ‘build activity’ (i.e. new builds, Part V, and voids), acquisition and leasing.

Approximately 33,400 are to be delivered through build activity by Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and 6,500 are to be acquired by Local Authorities and AHBs.

A further 10,000 are to be leased. Table 1 below sets out the targets in relation to build activity and acquisition.

Table 1: Planned breakdown of homes to be delivered via build activity, 2016-2021		
	<i>Build</i>	<i>Acquisition</i>
Local Authority	16,328	1,480
Approved Housing Bodies	8,960	5,050
Refurbished properties/Voids	3,459	-
Properties constructed for social housing through Part V	4,690	-
Total	33,437	6,530

Source – Adapted from written answer to written questions nos.752-754, 12 July 2018

Reliance on the Private Rental Market

In addition, over 80,000 households are to have their housing needs met under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme and the Rental Accommodation Scheme under *Rebuilding Ireland*, according to the Government.

While there will be a need for such payments in the future, it is worth noting that the recent review of current and capital spending on social housing, by the *Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Services* (IGEES) within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, found that in places such as north Dublin and Meath, where prices in the general housing market are higher, the state would spend more on meeting housing needs through mechanisms such as HAP, RAS and leasing than it would through construction and/or leasing. While it would cost the state some €260,000 in rent support for a two bedroom dwelling in north Dublin over a 20-year period, the same house could be built for €130,000 – with the obvious advantage that the state would also own the home. The report concluded that it made economic sense for the state to build public housing in areas where prices were high.

Insufficient Progress on Social Housing

Against an estimated annual need of 30,000-35,000 homes, the ESRI expects housing completions (as measured by electricity connections) to reach 25,000 units in 2018, and 31,000 in 2019.

Congress believes that the targets and rate of progress on social housing ‘build activity’ are wholly insufficient given the scale of the crisis and that the Government’s strategy will still leave the provision of social housing over-reliant on a (state-subsidised) private rental sector: official data indicates that just 1,014 new social housing units were built by Local Authorities last year. At the same time, the Government overachieved on its targets for the number of households that

had their housing needs 'met' through HAP and leasing. Some 15,000 and 600 households respectively were to be accommodated through these mechanisms in 2017 but in reality 17,900 and 827 respectively were actually through these mechanisms, which the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform has now found to be cost-inefficient (in high cost areas).

In addition, the ESRI has also pointed out that actual spending for the first four months of 2018 on 'Housing Planning and Local Government', at €207 million, was just over half of the expected amount of €365 million for this period, suggesting that the Government may be encountering difficulties in this area.

Congress Proposals

We would instead argue that there needs to be a stronger emphasis on social housing construction, led by local authorities, as outlined in our 2017 discussion paper.

Public policy should aim to increase social housing output to *at least* 10,000 new homes a year over the short-term (1-2 years) and as quickly as possible thereafter to *at least* 15,000-20,000 a year.

Achieving such a level of output over the medium term should see the provision of at least 80,000-90,000 new homes over a five-year period. At an estimated average 'all-in' (i.e. including land) cost of €200,000 per home, this should cost in the region of €16 billion-€18 billion.

This target should be pursued as part of an integrated strategy of well-planned mixed income housing.

Public land should be used first and foremost to provide public housing, instead of being sold off to developers and vulture funds. The Government has identified 1,700 hectares owned by local authorities and the Housing Agency and 200 hectares owned by other state and semi-state bodies (e.g. rail depots and former docks etc.) as suitable for housing with the potential to provide at least 50,000 new homes.

Congress advocates the implementation of the Kenny Report's recommendation that Local Authorities be allowed to purchase undeveloped land at a maximum of 25 per cent above existing use value.

As originally proposed by One Cork, Local Authorities should be able to form Municipal Housing Authorities to pool expertise and resources (internal and external) to better manage existing stock, refurbish voids and meet the new targets.

This pooled expertise and capacity could also be made available to other Local Authorities and to AHBs and form part of the introduction of a cost-rental model (see below).

This strategy should be rolled out at first in the five areas of greatest social housing need, i.e. in and around Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. According to the Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2017, 42 per cent of individuals and families that qualify for social housing support are in Dublin city and county, with a further 14 per cent in the neighbouring counties of Louth, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow; 10 per cent are in Cork city and county; 5 per cent are in Galway city and county; 3 per cent are in Limerick city and county; and nearly 2 per cent are in Waterford city and county, making a total of 76 per cent in and around the major cities.

In addition, a Local Authority-led social housing programme should also ensure better working conditions in the provision of social housing and across the entire residential sector.

The Cost Rental Model

This more ambitious target for social housing should form part of a wider strategy that encompasses the phased introduction of a cost-rental model, whereby rents cover the costs of provision and maintenance and may be subsidised according to affordability.

While the pilot project that is apparently being considered to redevelop lands at Emmet Road (St. Michael's Estate) in Dublin does seem to incorporate some elements of a cost-rental model, it is difficult to see how this particular initiative can be reconciled with the cost rental models advocated by NESC, NERI, Social Justice Ireland and others.

Vacant Site Levy & Vacant Property Tax

Congress calls on the Government to bring forward the planned increase in the rate of the Vacant Site Levy, from 3 per cent to 7 per cent, from January 2020 to January 2019.

The Government should also introduce a Vacant Property Tax on homes that have been vacant for a year or more. This tax should be based either on the value of the property or its estimated potential rental income. The rate of tax could be higher in rent pressure zones and increased the longer the home remains vacant. Revenue raised from this measure should be reinvested in the provision of social and affordable homes. We believe this measure should be introduced in Budget 2019 and not left under continued consideration, as outlined in the Government's vacant homes strategy, published in July 2018.

Section Two

Report on the Congress Housing Campaign

Introduction

The initial focus of the campaign was on a process of engagement with key organisations active in the sector, including local authorities, political parties, support agencies and advocacy or campaign groups.

This strategy was determined and overseen by the Congress Housing Group, which was chaired by Congress President Sheila Nunan.

Membership of the group comprised: *Patricia King (Congress General Secretary); John Douglas (Mandate); Barry Murphy (Opatsi); Karan O'Loughlin (Siptu); Joe O'Connor (Forsa); Ciara Kinsella (ASTI/ Youth Comm); Brendan Ogle (Unite); Colm Cronin (POA); Fiona Dunne (One Cork); Margaret Robson (IFUT); Thomas Faulkner (UCATT/ Connect); Ger Gibbons (Congress); Macdara Doyle (Congress).*

The meetings involved as part of the process of engagement took place between September and December 2017.

The rationale behind the process was twofold: to hear from those specialist agencies and groups dealing directly with the crisis, while simultaneously seeking to build support across civil society for the Congress proposals on the emergency, as outlined in our policy paper published in mid-2017: *A Local Authority Led Response to the Housing Crisis.*

It was essentially an exercise in learning and lobbying and in doing so we were also claiming space for Congress on what is a key issue for many union members. Ultimately the process helped to strengthen links and establish common ground on how best to respond and bring an end to the emergency.

Despite the weight of accumulated evidence highlighting the failure of official policy in this area, there are as yet no signs of a significant policy change on the part of government.

But without such a policy shift a successful resolution of this crisis will prove impossible, in the short, medium and long-term.

Fundamentally, as was evident in both the Congress paper on housing and the Charter for Housing Rights, we are seeking a transformation of the Irish housing sector to the extent that

homes cease to be commodities that are traded amongst the highest bidders and become an essential component of the public good and a basic human right.

As the Congress campaign leaflet pointed out: *'Everyone has a right to a place called home.'*

Effecting this change requires that substantial pressure be exerted on government from a wide range of civil society and political groupings, across the spectrum.

The two most recent referendum campaigns highlighted the key role of tightly focused and broadly-based coalitions – whether formally or loosely aligned - in the pursuit of such transformative political and social change.

While referendums differ from other political campaigns – they take place in a defined timeframe, with an agreed proposition to vote on and governments are bound by the outcome – the lesson remains valuable.

Critically, the broad social and political base of both campaigns meant that they were seen as reflective of a wider consensus across society, in favour of change.

Arguably a similar consensus has now emerged in relation to official housing policy and the ongoing crisis.

Engagement with Local Authorities

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) should play a key strategic role in local authorities around the country, and were established to advise and assist in the formulation of policy in a number of designated areas, such as housing.

As part of the campaign, Congress met with the Housing SPCs in a number of the Dublin local authorities.

These included: **Fingal SPC; South Dublin County Council SPC and Dublin City Council SPC.**

We also met with Dublin City Council's **Deputy Chief Executive**, with responsibility for Housing & Community (Brendan Kenny) and with the then **Lord Mayor** (Cllr Micheal MacDonnacha, SF).

Requests for meetings were lodged with all housing SPCs in Dublin and in other major urban centres, but these did not meet with much success. This may have been influenced by the fact that most SPCs only meet quarterly and can take many months to process or to even acknowledge requests.

Politics was also a factor. Those SPCs that responded quickly to our requests and agreed to meet were invariably part of local authorities where the ‘broad left’ (Sinn Fein, Labour, People before Profit, Socialist Party etc) are in the majority.

Overall, there was a genuine welcome for a Congress intervention on the housing issue and support for our key proposal around the need to create a local-authority led response to the crisis. There was also a general frustration expressed with a lack of strategic direction from government on housing and the generally slow pace of official policies and procedures. Procurement policy was cited as being both problematic and cumbersome, from the perspective of councils.

Concerns were also expressed relating to the capacity of local authorities to engage in a housing construction programme as resources had been diminished over recent years and would take time to re-establish.

Engagement with Political Groupings

This engagement took place prior to the lobby campaign of individual Dail TDs and was focused very much on the broad left opposition parties: **Sinn Fein, Labour, People Before Profit**.

In each instance we met with the housing spokesperson from the relevant grouping and other party officials. The purpose of the engagement was to clearly stake out the trade union position on this issue with the parties and explore where there might be common ground, with respect to a resolution of the crisis.

Once again, there was a strong and positive response from the parties in relation to the campaign and our overall policy proposals.

Engagement with Housing Organisations & Campaign Groups

This marked an important phase of the overall campaign as the sector was one that did not have many formal, established links with the trade union movement.

In addition, these specialist agencies operating within the sector possess unparalleled expertise and a vast reservoir of institutional knowledge on the housing and homeless problem. Critically, the major agencies have also established a very substantial public standing on the issue and are routinely called on to respond to official statements and claims on housing policy.

Over the course of this process, we met with specialist housing and homeless groups including: **the Peter McVerry Trust, Simon, Focus Ireland, Threshold and the Irish Council for Social Housing.**

The agencies were particularly fearful that the sustained nature of the crisis would see high levels of homelessness ‘normalised’ and temporary short-term emergency measures (hotel accommodation) become permanent, ongoing features of the official response. There was a strong consensus that official measures were not having the impact that was being claimed and that the crisis would inevitably worsen.

All were agreed that increasing state/ local authority provision of public housing was an essential component of any lasting solution and that we had to fundamentally re-evaluate our approach to housing, as a society.

We also held constructive meetings with the campaign groups the **National Homeless & Housing Coalition** and the **Campaign for Public Housing.**

Overall, the focus was on building links with the sector, hearing their perspective on the problem and on how they envisaged a resolution being developed. The Congress proposals were well-received as was our ‘intervention’ on this issue. Again the process revealed significant common ground between trade unions and the wider housing sector on the key components of a resolution of the crisis.

[The Charter for Housing Rights & National Housing Conference](#)

The extensive period of engagement across civil society was key to the evolution and development of the Charter for Housing Rights, as it confirmed widespread dissatisfaction with existing government policy and a clear consensus around the core elements of a long-term resolution. This was particularly true in respect of:

- the declaration of a housing emergency;***
- ensuring the State regained its key role in housing provision;***
- establishing a legal right to housing and***
- preventing the eviction of people into homelessness.***

All of the above principles formed the core of the Congress Charter for Housing Rights. The Charter was formally launched at a **National Housing Conference** held in January 2018, as part of the inauguration of the next phase of the housing campaign.

The conference featured contributions from key housing spokespeople from all major political groupings: **Fine Gael (Maria Bailey); Fianna Fail (Barry Cowen); Sinn Fein (Eoin O’Broin); Labour (Jan O’Sullivan); People Before Profit (Richard Boyd Barrett).**

It also featured contributions from the key housing and homeless agencies, including: **Simon (Niamh Randall); Focus (Mike Allen); Threshold (John Mark McCafferty); Peter McVerry Trust (Francis Doherty).**

Valuable expert contributions were also heard from architect **Mel Reynolds** and **Dr Lorcan Sirr**, two of the foremost authorities on the housing situation in Ireland.

During the conference, the principles outlined in the Congress Charter were broadly supported by the specialist agencies and it was specifically endorsed by the Sinn Fein, the Labour Party and People Before Profit.

As a result, it was clear that the national lobby of TDs that formed the core of the next phase of the Congress Housing Campaign would focus exclusively on members of **Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and independents** in government (copies of the Charter were also sent to local councillors).

National Lobby of TDs

The national lobby of TDs was initiated in February 2018, following publication of the Congress Charter for Housing Rights and the national housing conference organised by Congress.

As the Charter had been formally endorsed by Sinn Fein, Labour and People Before Profit, the lobby specifically focused on TDs in Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and independents in government, an overall target of 101 TDs across all 40 constituencies:

•Fine Gael: 50

•Fianna Fail: 44

•Independents: 7

Affiliate unions were requested to nominate members resident in constituencies around the country to participate in the campaign. The lobby campaign in Cork and Galway was overseen by the One Cork and One Galway initiatives, respectively. The lobby campaign ran until May 2018.

All relevant TD offices were contacted by phone and email, with each receiving multiple contacts and all were afforded ample opportunity to respond.

Ultimately, lobby meetings were conducted with **73 TDs** from across the aforementioned parties. A total **28** TDS either failed to respond or declined our request to meet. **The full list of lobby outcomes - by constituency - are outlined in the tables below.**

Campaign Materials

In advance of the campaign all nominated lobbyists were sent a 'welcome email' outlining the essential scope of what was planned. In addition, they were provided with additional campaign materials, including:

- A campaign video, featuring the General Secretary, which was produced in house*
- A briefing paper outlining key questions about the campaign*

In addition, printed leaflets and copies of the Charter were sent to the constituencies and circulated among affiliates.

All constituency appointments were organised centrally in Congress and the overwhelming majority took place at the local, constituency level. In a small number of cases meetings took place in Leinster House, where it proved impossible to arrange a meeting at the constituency level.

Online Lobby

An online campaign facility was established on the Congress website which allowed members and supporters to email their own TDs directly. The facility allowed people to directly contact all relevant TDs (FF, FG, Inds) in their constituency with a pre-written mail urging them to support the Charter for Housing Rights.

Thus, each person opting to use the facility generated an average of two to three separate emails directed at all relevant TDs in each constituency,

In early May a 'call to action' email was sent to 6329 addresses on the Congress database requesting they use the online facility to contact their TDs. The mail was opened by 4343 recipients, or 68%. Of that number, 222 responded to the call to action and sent the pre-written email, in the process generating up to 650 separate emails to the target group of constituency TDs.

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing – **Ms Leilani Farha** – visited Ireland in June 2018 to participate in a number of conferences and to address the Dail Committee on Housing & Homelessness.

The Congress Housing Committee secured a meeting with Ms Farha, during her time in Ireland. The Congress delegation was led by Vice President, Kevin Callinan.

In her role as Special Rapporteur Ms Farha is engaged in building a worldwide campaign on the **Right to Housing**, which will involve local authorities, NGOs and civil society housing groups and trade unions. Underpinning the campaign is the clear view that Housing is a Human Right.

Ms Farha praised the Congress Charter of Housing Rights, saying it ‘concretised’ the key elements of her global campaign and raised the possibility of using the Charter as a ‘model’ for the international campaign. She agreed in principle to endorse the Charter and spoke positively on possibilities for future cooperation with Congress and trade unions internationally.

ONE Cork Campaign

The ONE Cork collaborative trade union initiative involving 17 unions and was established in mid-2014. It operates as a partnership between Congress, the Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU) and affiliates operating in Cork city and county.

In November 2016, ONE Cork addressed the worsening housing crisis with the launch of a policy paper that contained a series of recommendations on how the situation might be addressed at local and national level.

This was subsequently endorsed by the Congress Executive Council.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, ONE Cork has engaged with local media, politicians, community groups and workers to highlight these proposals, which envisage local authorities playing a lead role through a major programme of public housing construction.

ONE Cork has also engaged with Strategic Policy Committees in the local authority and with Councillors, on this issue.

A motion was tabled by the CCTU representative on the Housing SPC that would require Cork City Council to commit to use direct labour as part of a programme of public housing construction and also establish an apprenticeship programme. The motion was passed unanimously.

There has also been considerable engagement with local media in Cork on the housing crisis and our proposals.

In September 2017, a ONE Cork Housing Seminar was attended by over 70 trade union members and officials. The seminar saw contributions from housing NGOs, local authority workers, trade unions, student unions and specialist academics.

Representatives of ONE Cork met with the then Housing Minister Simon Coveney in March 2017 and later (May 2017) with Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin and with Sinn Fein housing spokesperson Eoin O’Broin (June 2017), to discuss the ONE Cork proposals.

ONE Cork representatives have also spoken at several union conferences, a Labour Housing seminar and a Fianna Fail housing policy event and has also engaged with councillors from other parties.

ONE Cork participated fully in the Congress Housing Charter lobby of TDs and met with all politicians in Cork during the period February – June 2018.

It is a key aim of the ONE Cork housing campaign to encourage and influence Cork City Council to implement a public housing pilot programme (on public land with directly hired contract construction workers with apprentices) to assess how this might work on a broader national scale.

ONE Galway Campaign

The ONE Galway initiative was established in the summer of 2017 and comprises eight participating trade unions and three student unions (Irish Second Level Students’ Union, NUI Galway Students’ Union and Galway-Mayo IT Students’ Union).

The steering group agreed to develop a housing campaign as part of the programme of work. ONE Galway participated fully in the Congress Charter lobbying campaign, meeting with a number of TDs in the area.

In September 2018, we hosted a two-day event to highlight the impact of the housing crisis on student accommodation and their living conditions.

This will effectively kick-start the ONE Galway housing campaign which will see initiatives such as a petition to local politicians, an awareness campaign, formal engagement with student unions and young workers, lobbying of local politicians in advance of local elections in 2019.

It is intended that the housing campaign in Galway will complement the ongoing and wider Congress housing campaign.

Raise the Roof

Congress has organised a rally on housing outside Leinster House for lunchtime on Wednesday, October 3. The rally has been called to coincide with an agreed, cross-party opposition motion on the housing crisis that is to be scheduled to be debated in the Dail that afternoon. The motion is supported by Sinn Fein, the Labour Party, the Green Party, People Before Profit, the Social Democrats, Solidarity and Independents4Change. The motion corresponds closely with Congress policy on housing, as outlined in the Charter. The rally is being supported by the National Homeless & Housing Coalition, the National Women's Council and the Union of Students in Ireland, under the banner of **Raise the Roof**.

OUTCOME OF TD HOUSING LOBBY CAMPAIGN (BY CONSTITUENCY)

Carlow Kilkenny	Bobby Aylward FF	Met on 21 May	Broadly supportive refer to party
	John McGuinness FF	Met on 24 May	Broadly supportive
	John Paul Phelan FG	Met on 4 May	Broadly supportive refer to party policy
	Pat Deering FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
Cavan Monaghan	Brendan Smith FF	Met on 24 May	Broadly supportive
	Heather Humphries FG	Met on 25 May	Awaiting Response
	Niamh Smith FF	Met on 14 May	Supportive, reservations on some points
Clare	Joe Carey FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Pat Breen FG	-	No response
	Timmy Dooley FF	Met on 24 May	Very supportive
Cork East	David Staunton FG	Met on 11 June	Awaiting Response
	Kevin O'Keefe FF	Met on 18 May	Broadly supportive refer to party spokesperson
Cork North Central	Dara Murphy FG	Met on 23 Feb	Broadly supportive of Charter
	Billy Kelleher FF	Met on 26 Feb	Broadly supportive refer to party spokesperson
Cork North West	Michael Creed FG	Briefed on phone	Broadly supportive
	Aindrias Moynihan FF	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Michael Moynihan FF	Met on 28 May	Broadly supportive bring to Party
Cork South Central	Simon Coveney FG	Met on 18 May	Supportive but has issue with referendum
	Michéal Martin FF	Met on 8 June	V supportive, issue with referendum
	Micheal McGrath FF	Met on 26 March	V Supportive Refer to P/Spoke

Cork South West	Jim Daly FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Margaret Murphy O'Mahony FF	Met on 14 May	Supportive refer to P/Spoke
Donegal	Charlie McConologue FF	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Joe McHugh FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Pat The Cope Gallagher FF	-	Unable to secure meeting
Dublin Bay North	Finian McGrath Ind	Met on 23 Feb	Very supportive
	Richard Bruton FG	Met on 19 May	Referred to Party Policy
	Sean Haughey FF	Met on 27 Feb	Supportive with reservations
Dublin Bay South	Eoghan Murphy FG	Met on 16 May	Refer to Party Policy
	Jim O'Callaghan FF	Met on 11 April	Very supportive
	Kate O'Connell FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
Dublin Central	Paschal Donohoe FG	Met on 21 March	Supportive
Dublin Fingal	Alan Farrell FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Darragh O'Brien FF	Met on 29 March	Very supportive
Dublin North West	Noel Rock FG	Met on 19 Feb	Supportive but noncommittal on full charter
Dublin Mid West	Frances Fitzgerald FG	Met on 7 March	Supportive of Point 5 of Charter
	John Curran FF	Met on 7 March	Supportive of Point 5 of Charter
Dublin Rathdown	Josepha Madigan FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Shane Ross Ind	Met 17 May	Awaiting response
Dublin South Central	Catherine Byrne FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
Dublin South West	Colm Brophy FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	John Lahart FF	Met on 12 March	Supportive with reservations
	Katherine Zappone Ind	Met on 8 March	Very Supportive

Dublin West	Jack Chambers FF	Met on 11 May	Very Supportive
	Leo Varadkar FG	GS to meet	Awaiting response
Dun Laoghaire	Maria Bailey FG	Met 24 April	Refer to Party Policy, has reservations on some points
	Mary Mitchell O'Connor FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Sean Barrett FG	Met on 19 April	Very supportive
Galway East	Ciarán Cannon FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Sean Canney Ind	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Anne Rabbitte FF	-	Unable to secure meeting
Galway West	Séan Kyne FG	April	Wouldn't commit
	Hildegarde Naughton FG	April	Broadly supportive
	Éamon Ó Cuív FF	April	Broadly supportive, refer to Party Policy
Kerry	Brendan Griffin FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	John Brassil FF	Met on 17 May	Very supportive
Kildare North	Bernard J Durkan FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Frank O'Rourke FF	Met on 14 May	Generally supportive
	James Lawless FF	Met on 4 May	Very supportive
Kildare South	Fiona O'Loughlin FF	Met on 27 Feb	Fully supportive
	Martin Heydon FG	Met on 26 Feb	Referred to Party Policy
Laois	Charles Flanagan FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Sean Fleming FF	Met on 5 March	Supportive with reservations
Limerick City	Michael Noonan FG	Doesn't hold clinics	Unable to secure meeting
	Willie O'Dea FF	Met on 11 May	Very supportive
Limerick County	Niall Collins FF	Met on 4 May	Very supportive
	Patrick O'Donovan FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Tom Neville FG	Met on 14 May	Supportive with reservations

Longford Westmeath	Kevin Boxer Moran Ind	Met on 26 March	Very Supportive
	Peter Burke FG	Met on 9 April	Broadly Supportive
	Robert Troy FF	Met on 30 April	Broadly Supportive
Louth	Declan Breathnach FF	Met on 20 April	Broadly Supportive
	Fergus O'Dowd FG	Met on 23 March	Broadly Supportive
	Peter Fitzpatrick FG	Met on 18 May	Broadly Supportive
Mayo	Dara Calleary FF	Met on 19 Feb	Supportive, referred to Party Policy
	Enda Kenny FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Lisa Chambers FF	Met on 26 Feb	Supportive with reservations
	Michael Ring FG	Met on 19 Feb	Supportive with reservations
Meath East	Helen McEntee FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Regina Doherty FG	Meet with GS	Awaiting response
	Thomas Byrne FF	Met on 16 March	Broadly supportive
Meath West	Damien English FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Shane Cassells FF	Met on 16 May	Broadly supportive
Offaly	Barry Cowen FF	Met on 12 June	Broadly supportive
	Marcella Corcoran Kennedy FG	Met on 12 June	Broadly supportive
Roscommon	Denis Naughten Ind	Met on 20 April	Supportive of some points
	Eugene Murphy FF	Met on 16 April	Broadly supportive
Sligo Leitrim	Eamon Scanlon FF	Met on 26 Feb	Awaiting Report
	Marc McSharry FF	Met on 26 Feb	Broadly supportive
	Tony McLoughlin FG	Met 12 March	Broadly supportive
Tipperary	Jackie Cahill FF	Met on 11 May	Supportive with reservations
Waterford	John Deasy FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	John Halligan Ind	Met on 12 June	Awaiting Response
	Mary Butler FF	Met on 14 May	Referred to Party Policy

Wexford	James Browne FF	Met on 9 March	Broadly supportive
	Michael Darcy FG	Met on 5 May	Broadly supportive
	Paul Kehoe FG	Met on 26 May	Broadly supportive
Wicklow	Andrew Doyle FG	-	Unable to secure meeting
	Pat Casey FF	Met on 6 April	Broadly supportive
	Simon Harris FG	Met with GS	Awaiting response
	Stephen Donnelly FF	-	Unable to secure meeting

Section Three

Congress Housing Survey

Survey Reveals True Cost of Housing Crisis for Workers

In June 2018, Congress undertook an extensive survey of young workers to uncover how the housing crisis has impacted on their lives and living standards. More than 1,500 trade union members under the age of 34 responded to the survey, which was conducted online between June 1-14.

The survey revealed how young workers across the economy were struggling with massively-inflated rents, insecure tenancies and the prospect of purchasing their own homes receding with each passing day. The findings amounted to an emphatic indictment of the claim that official housing policy was working and that the housing market was functioning normally.

The survey found that 50% of young workers struggled to cover their housing costs and often went without meals and other essentials as a result. In terms of housing costs, 40% of all young workers spent in excess of the recommended limit for housing affordability – the rent to income ratio suggests a spend of no more than 30% of income.

Yet the survey showed half of these workers spent up to €40 out of every €100 take-home pay, on their rent, while a further quarter spent up to €50 and the rest spent more again. In other words, one in 10 young workers spends more than half their wages on housing.

As a result, over half (54 per cent) of all young workers struggle to cover housing costs, with many forced to borrow in order to meet their rental or mortgage costs, or sacrifice basic needs such as food, heating or transportation.

Inevitably, one in six young workers has now fallen into arrears with their housing costs. For many, the dream of owning their own home is no longer a realistic prospect and some 45% of those surveyed expressed frustration at being ‘trapped’ in the rental sector or being forced to remain the family home indefinitely.

In fact, the vast majority (74%) of young workers have little or no confidence in being able to buy a home in the future should they wish to. Almost one in six young workers were found to be ‘very frustrated’ with their living arrangements and saw little chance of a change for the better.

In addition, one third of all young workers now have their lives blighted by housing insecurity, with one in three having little or no confidence in being able to continue living in their current home for as long as they would wish.

Critically, a clear majority of all young workers say the housing crisis will influence how they vote in the next election.

54% **OVER HALF**
 OF ALL YOUNG WORKERS
ARE STRUGGLING
 TO COVER THEIR HOUSING COSTS
WITH 1 IN EVERY 2
 BORROWING OR SACRIFICING
ANOTHER BASIC NEED
 TO PAY THEIR RENT

Key findings



46%
 OF ALL YOUNG WORKERS ARE
FRUSTRATED
 THAT THEY ARE RENTING
 OR THAT THEY REMAIN
 LIVING AT HOME
 WITH THEIR PARENTS

Key findings



74%
 HAVE LITTLE OR
 NO CONFIDENCE
IN BEING ABLE
 TO BUY A HOME
 SHOULD THEY WISH TO

Key findings



1 IN 3
 HAVE LITTLE OR NO CONFIDENCE
 IN BEING ABLE TO CONTINUE TO LIVE
IN THEIR CURRENT HOME
 FOR AS LONG AS THEY WOULD WISH

Key findings



40% ARE SPENDING OVER
 €30 IN EVERY €100
 THEY EARN ON RENT
10% ARE SPENDING OVER
 €50 IN EVERY €100
 THEY EARN ON RENT
 WHICH REPRESENTS **1 IN 10**
 OF YOUNG WORKERS PAYING
MORE THAN HALF
 OF THEIR WAGES ON HOUSING

Key findings



8 IN 10 SAY
HOUSING
 WILL INFLUENCE
 HOW THEY VOTE
 IN THE NEXT ELECTION

Key findings



**Irish Congress of Trade Unions
31-32 Parnell Square
Dublin 1
D01 YR92**

www.ictu.ie

PRINTED AND PRODUCED BY TRADE UNION LABOUR