

Renters' Charter

– What Social Democrats will do
to strengthen renters' rights



Proper Rent Caps

Currently, landlords are allowed increase rents by 4% a year in the 21 rent pressure zones around the country and by virtually any amount outside of these areas. This isn't working and rents have increased by 10% nationally in the past year. The Social Democrats would link rent caps to the rate of inflation (currently under 1%) and apply it across the whole country.

Scrap Stamp Duty

At present, tenants sharing accommodation where the total rent is above €2,500 face stamp duty on top of their rental bill. As rents rise, more and more renters will fall into this category. This is a ridiculous tax and only makes a bad situation worse. We will scrap this stamp duty.

Proper Regulation

We would strengthen the Residential Tenancies Board so that it is in a much better position to regulate the rental sector. Too often tenants have found themselves turfed out of their homes at a whim of a landlord. We need far better enforcement of the law in relation to rents and security of tenure, better information for both tenants and landlords, and a far more efficient dispute resolution process to serve tenants and landlords fairly.

Protect Buy-to-Let Tenants

We would update legislation to ensure that tenants of Buy-to-Let properties do not have to leave the tenancy when the property is transferred to a new landlord or receiver.

Longer Tenancies

We would legislate to provide for indefinite tenancies so that tenancies can't simply be ended at the end of each 6 year cycle.

Deposits

A Deposit Protection Scheme has been promised for years but not implemented. We would introduce a new scheme and also set down a new legal definition of deposit to mean one month's rent so that tenants cannot be fleeced.

Notice of Terminations

We would require landlords to provide at least three month's notice to tenants (currently as low as 28 days). We have recently introduced a Bill to the Dáil to give this extra protection to tenants.

Extra Charges

We would limit ancillary charges that landlords can apply - such as bin collection and car parking that in some cases are being used by landlords to side-step current rent caps. We would also ban the taking of deposits to view properties for rent.

Ban Bidding on Rents

In some cases, prospective tenants are being asked by landlords to bid on rents. The law on this activity is far from clear. Quite simply, it should be banned and we would introduce much clearer penalties for people soliciting bids on rents.

Supply of Housing

We would establish a new National Housing Delivery Agency to project manage the delivery of thousands of new homes, including thousands of new affordable rental homes. We would take far more stringent measures to free up vacant sites, vacant homes, and to tackle land-hoarding to encourage more supply of rental accommodation so that rents are forced down.

Stiffer Penalties

Current penalties for rogue landlords are too weak. We would significantly increase penalties for rogue landlords and rogue tenants.

Rents Register

Establish a register of rents so that incoming tenants can find out how much rent their predecessors paid. This will allow them to check if rents caps are being properly applied to their tenancy.