



## **DÁIL ÉIREANN**

*Déardaoin, 11 Márta, 2021*  
*Thursday, 11th March, 2021*

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**RIAR NA hOIBRE**  
**ORDER PAPER**



*Déardaoin, 11 Márta, 2021*  
*Thursday, 11th March, 2021*

*An Lárionad Coinbhinsiúin, Baile Átha Cliath*  
*Convention Centre Dublin*

10 a.m.

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**ORD GNÓ**  
**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

30. Ráitis agus Ceistanna agus Freagraí ón Aire Sláinte maidir leis an gClár um Leathnú Amach Vacsaíni.  
Statements and Questions and Answers by the Minister for Health on the Vaccine Rollout Programme.
31. An Bille um Cheartas Coiriúil (Cionta Gadaíochta agus Calaoise) (Leasú), 2020 [*Seanad*]  
— Ordú don Tuarascáil.  
Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2020 [*Seanad*] — Order for Report.
32. (l) An Bille um Nós Imeachta Coiriúil, 2021 — Ordú don Tuarascáil.  
(a) Criminal Procedure Bill 2021 — Order for Report.
2. An Bille um Cheartas Coiriúil (Sciúradh Airgid agus Maoiniú Sceimhlitheoireachta) (Leasú), 2020 — Leasuithe ón Seanad.  
Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Bill 2020 — Amendments from the Seanad.
142. (l) Tairiscint *maidir leis* an Scéim um Iasacht Cothromais Chomhroinnte (*vótáil a cuireadh siar*).  
(a) Motion *re* Shared Equity Loan Scheme (*postponed division*).
29. An Bille fán nGníomhaireacht um Fhorbairt Talún, 2021 — An Dara Céim (*vótáil a cuireadh siar*).  
Land Development Agency Bill 2021 — Second Stage (*postponed division*).
1. Bille na Leanaí (Leasú), 2020 [*Seanad*] — An Dara Céim  
Children (Amendment) Bill 2020 [*Seanad*] — Second Stage

**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA**  
**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

143. (l) Tairiscint *maidir le* Daoine Óga agus rochtain ar Bhreisoideachas agus ar Ardoideachas.  
(a) Motion *re* Young People and access to Further and Higher Education.

**FÓGRA I dTAOBH GNÓ NUA**  
**NOTICE OF NEW BUSINESS**

- 9a.** An Bille um Cheathrú Chultúir 1916, 2021 — An Chéad Chéim.  
Ceathrú Chultúir 1916 Bill 2021 — First Stage.
- 27a.** Tairiscint *maidir le* Tuarascáil ón Roghchoiste um Chuntais Phoiblí dar teideal  
‘Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2020’.  
Motion *re* Report of the Select Committee of Public Accounts entitled ‘Annual Report  
2020’.

## I dTOSACH GNÓ PHOIBLÍ AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS

### *Billí ón Seanad: Bills from the Seanad*

1. Bille na Leanaí (Leasú), 2020 [*Seanad*] — An Dara Céim.  
Children (Amendment) Bill 2020 [*Seanad*] — Second Stage.

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2. An Bille um Cheartas Coiriúil (Sciúradh Airgid agus Maoiniú Sceimhlitheoireachta) (Leasú), 2020 — Leasuithe ón Seanad.  
Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Bill 2020 — Amendments from the Seanad.

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### *Billí a thionscnamh: Initiation of Bills*

#### *Tabhairt Isteach: Introduction:*

- 9a. An Bille um Cheathrú Chultúir 1916, 2021 — An Chéad Chéim.  
Ceathrú Chultúir 1916 Bill 2021 — First Stage.

Bille dá ngairtear Acht do dhéanamh socrú maidir le comhlacht a bhunú ar a dtabharfar Ceathrú Chultúir 1916 Teoranta, do mhíniú a fheidhmeanna i ndáil leis an gceathrú chultúir stairiúil laistigh de Limistéar Mhachaire Catha Shráid an Mhúraigh a chaomhnú, a aisiriú agus a bhainistiú de réir na bhfeidhmeanna, na n-aidhmeanna agus na gcuspóirí atá leagtha amach dó san Acht seo agus do dhéanamh socrú i dtaobh nithe gaolmhara.

Bill entitled an Act to provide for the establishment of a body to be known as *Ceathrú Chultúir 1916 Teoranta*, to define its functions in relation to the preservation, restoration and management of the cultural historical quarter within the Moore Street Battlefield Area in line with the functions, aims and objectives set for it in this Act and to provide for connected matters.

—*Aengus O'Snodaigh, Seán Crowe, Dessie Ellis, Chris Andrews, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell.*

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### *Fógraí Tairisceana: Notices of Motions*

**27a.** “Go dtabharfaidh Dáil Éireann dá haire an Tuarascáil ón Roghchoiste um Chuntais Phoiblí dar teideal ‘Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2020’, ar leagadh cóipeanna di faoi bhráid Dháil Éireann an 10 Márta 2021.

That Dáil Éireann shall take note of the Report of the Select Committee of Public Accounts entitled ‘Annual Report 2020’, copies of which were laid before Dáil Éireann on 10th March, 2021.”

—*Brian Stanley,  
Chairman of the Select Committee of Public Accounts.  
[11 March, 2021]*

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**ORDUITHE AN LAE  
ORDERS OF THE DAY**

- 29.** An Bille fán nGníomhaireacht um Fhorbairt Talún, 2021 — An Dara Céim (*vótáil a cuireadh siar*).  
Land Development Agency Bill 2021 — Second Stage (*postponed division*).
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- 30.** Ráitis agus Ceisteanna agus Freagraí ón Aire Sláinte maidir leis an gClár um Leathnú Amach Vacsaíní.  
Statements and Questions and Answers by the Minister for Health on the Vaccine Rollout Programme.
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- 31.** An Bille um Cheartas Coiriúil (Cionta Gadaíochta agus Calaoise) (Leasú), 2020 [*Seanad*] — Ordú don Tuarascáil.  
Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2020 [*Seanad*] — Order for Report.
- 
- 32.** (l) An Bille um Nós Imeachta Coiriúil, 2021 — Ordú don Tuarascáil.  
(a) Criminal Procedure Bill 2021 — Order for Report.
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**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA  
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

*Gnó a ordáíodh:  
Business ordered:*

- 125.** An Bille um Fhorbairt Peitríliam agus Mianraí Eile (Leasú) (Bearta Éigeandála Aeráide), 2018 — Ordú don Choiste.  
Petroleum and Other Minerals Development (Amendment) (Climate Emergency Measures) Bill 2018 — Order for Committee.

—*Brid Smith, Richard Boyd Barrett, Gino Kenny, Paul Murphy, Mick Barry.*

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*Fógraí Tairisceana:  
Notices of Motions:*

*Tairiscint (vótáil a cuireadh siar):  
Motion (postponed division):*

**142.** “That Dáil Éireann:

notes that:

- after much delay the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O’Brien, has brought forward his affordable housing plan;
- much of that plan, including the Land Development Agency, the Serviced Sites Fund and the Cost Rental Scheme, are continuations of the last Government’s housing

policy;

- the only new element that the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, has brought to the plan is an Affordable Purchase Shared Equity Scheme for first-time buyers;
- this scheme was not included in Fianna Fáil's election manifesto or previously stated Fianna Fáil policy;
- the origins of the scheme are two policy papers published by Irish Institutional Property and Property Industry Ireland in March and May 2020;
- these proposals were based on a shared equity loan scheme in operation in England and Wales since 2013;
- in 2015, a report by Shelter concluded that the English scheme 'increased house prices by 3 per cent';
- in 2019, a report by the House of Commons National Audit Office (NAO) found that house price inflation for new build homes was 3 per cent higher than for second-hand homes since the shared equity scheme was introduced;
- in 2020, a report published by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics (LSE) found that in London the Shared Equity Loan Scheme 'led to a 6 per cent increase in house prices';
- while the NAO report concluded that the scheme increased the supply of new homes by 14 per cent, it also increased demand by 37 per cent, while the LSE report stated that the scheme 'stimulated housing construction in the wrong areas';
- in 2019, a report by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee concluded that 'three-fifths of buyers who took part in the scheme did not need its support to buy a property';
- in September 2020, officials in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform expressed concern that a shared equity loan scheme 'will push up prices';
- in September 2020, the Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Robert Watt, said 'the property industry wants an equity scheme because it will increase prices';
- in September 2020, at a meeting between the Department of Finance and the Central Bank of Ireland, concerns were raised that the shared equity scheme could 'impact on prices';
- on 16th February, 2021, the Economic and Social Research Institute told the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage that the proposed shared equity scheme 'will very likely lead to higher house prices'; and
- on 22nd February, 2021, nine Fine Gael Councillors on Dublin City Council, including a close political associate of the Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe, wrote to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, urging him to scrap the Affordable Purchase Shared Equity Scheme as it risked a 'return to failed housing policies of the Celtic Tiger era';

is of the strong view that:

- the Government's shared equity scheme does not make homes more affordable;
- the scheme risks pushing up house prices and burdening working people with

unsustainable debt;

- the scheme will benefit significant numbers of people who already have sufficient funding to purchase a home;
- the scheme will expose the State and taxpayer to significant liabilities in the event of a future property downturn; and
- the scheme will breach the Central Bank of Ireland’s macro-prudential lending rules if the banks are allowed to become participants in the equity loan; and

urges the Government to:

- remove the Affordable Purchase Shared Equity Scheme from the General Scheme and final version of the Affordable Housing Bill 2020; and
- re-profile the €75 million allocated to the Affordable Purchase Shared Equity Scheme in Budget 2021 to the Serviced Sites Fund, to allow for an increased delivery of local authority and Approved Housing Bodies affordable homes to rent and buy.” — *Eoin Ó Broin, Chris Andrews, John Brady, Martin Browne, Pat Buckley, Matt Carthy, Sorca Clarke, Rose Conway-Walsh, Réada Cronin, Seán Crowe, David Cullinane, Pa Daly, Pearse Doherty, Paul Donnelly, Dessie Ellis, Mairéad Farrell, Kathleen Funchion, Thomas Gould, Johnny Guirke, Martin Kenny, Claire Kerrane, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell, Imelda Munster, Johnny Mythen, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Ruairí Ó Murchú, Louise O'Reilly, Darren O'Rourke, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Maurice Quinlivan, Patricia Ryan, Brian Stanley, Pauline Tully, Mark Ward, Violet-Anne Wynne.*

[3 March, 2021]

*Leasú (atógáil):*

*Amendment (resumed):*

1. To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

“notes that significant progress has been made on an extensive range of measures included in the Programme for Government - Our Shared Future, building on the initiatives already undertaken and in progress, which are now being brought forward by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, to support individuals and families to access affordable housing, in particular:

- this Government is delivering on its commitment to ensure that everybody has access to good-quality housing, to purchase or rent at an affordable price;
- Budget 2021 included €3.3 billion for housing, a 24 per cent increase on 2020, and the highest investment in housing by any Government in a single year;
- the Minister, working across Government and with all housing delivery partners, is delivering on the Government’s Programme for Government objectives to:
  - put affordability at the heart of the housing system;
  - bring forward proposals for State-backed affordable home purchase schemes to promote home ownership; and
  - deliver the State’s first ever cost rental homes;
- to this end, since taking Office, the Minister has already published the Affordable Housing Bill 2020 and introduced the Land Development Agency Bill 2021 to the Oireachtas;
- both of these significant pieces of legislation will facilitate immediate direct delivery



of affordable housing, targeting middle income earners facing high rents and often out of reach purchase prices for new high-quality homes, while supporting the expansion of the affordable housing sector in Ireland over the short to medium-term;

- to provide financial support for affordable housing, €620 million was provided in Budget 2021 for new and existing affordable housing measures, with a focus on immediately stimulating supply;
- Budget 2021, together with focusing on delivering over 6,200 directly supplied homes by local authorities under the €310 million Serviced Sites Fund, introduced a new Affordable Purchase Shared Equity Scheme to target first-time buyers with a help to buy scheme;
- Budget 2021 also introduced a new Cost Rental Equity Loan, to deliver the first ever cost rental properties by Approved Housing Bodies in areas of high demand and high housing costs, with the Exchequer funding supplemented by Housing Finance Agency low cost, long-term finance, making €135 million available in total; and
- the Minister has already announced the first 390 new cost rental homes targeted to be delivered this year under the new scheme, with the additional 50 cost rental homes at Enniskerry Road, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown which are also due to be completed this year and supported by the Department's Serviced Sites Fund;

in terms of new measures, further notes that:

- the Irish housing system needs to provide additional new homes to meet current and future demand while new homes cost more than second-hand homes due to the enhanced quality and energy efficiency making viability an issue and meaning that home ownership is pushed further away from individuals and families starting out in life;
- in recent years, first-time buyers have increasingly shifted to buying second-hand homes and the stock of such homes for sale is diminishing;
- planning permissions for new homes have maintained strong growth but commencements have decreased recently;
- it is critical that new supply of affordable starter homes is encouraged and that overall supply increases by circa 40 per cent over the immediate period ahead, to meet the demand as Ireland's economy recovers from Covid-19; and
- relying on any one measure or one channel of supply would be very high risk and would be limited by each sector's capacity to deliver, instead all channels, State and non-State, are being mobilised to support affordable housing delivery;

in terms of the new Affordable Purchase Shared Equity Scheme, also notes that:

- the scheme is one short-term, targeted measure in a multi-faceted approach to increasing housing affordability;
- the scheme was devised in consultation with other Government Departments and housing delivery partners, in order to provide an immediate boost to first-time buyers for new homes;
- the proposal has gone through the rigorous cross-Government policy development processes with a mandate given to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to design the scheme for Government consideration;
- the scheme continues to be developed in close consultation with relevant Government Departments, housing delivery partners, international comparator bodies and other

key stakeholders;

- with final parameters of the shared equity scheme close to finalisation, but not yet announced, the stance taken by the opposition is premature and based on incomplete information;
- the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has examined and assessed the impact of similar schemes in other jurisdictions, including England, learning from experience in developing the Irish scheme;
- the United Kingdom (UK) scheme, for example, has supported some 250,000 home purchases, and is considered to have met its objectives with a 2019 report from the UK National Audit Office finding that the English ‘Help to Buy: Equity Loan’ scheme increased overall supply by 14.5 per cent, while increasing purchase prices for buyers in the scheme by less than 1 per cent on a like-for-like basis;
- the Irish shared equity scheme will be more targeted than other international schemes to ensure it delivers on its objectives of helping first-time buyers, who need it, into new homes sooner, while at the same time encouraging and increasing new build supply to meet that realisable demand;
- the State’s financial exposure in the shared equity scheme is €75 million, just over 2 per cent of the State’s housing budget in 2021, and this can support an estimated 2,000 first-time buyers to realise their aspiration of buying a new home, representing 10 per cent of new homes built last year, and overall a targeted and time bound scheme could support 8,000 new home purchases over a three year period;
- taking on board legitimate concerns that any new market-based scheme could have unintended consequences, the Government are ensuring safeguards are being built in to tailor eligibility to meet individual affordability needs only, and to manage prices through area-based price caps; and
- the scheme will be reviewed after one year to ensure it remains on track to meet objectives; and

furthermore, notes the Government’s intention to:

- accelerate and expand affordable housing delivery in the context of the ongoing review of the National Development Plan and the new housing strategy being prepared by the Minister;
- fully utilise the provisions of the Affordable Housing Bill 2020 and the Land Development Agency Bill 2021, to support affordable housing delivery by local authorities, approved housing bodies, the Land Development Agency (LDA) and through all other channels;
- accelerate delivery of affordable homes by local authorities under the €310 million Serviced Sites Fund, to deliver 6,200 new affordable homes and bring forward proposals to expand the scope and potential of the fund;
- maximise the existing Help to Buy Scheme, which has already seen approvals of more than 22,000 applications, and the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan, which has lending of €354 million since 2018;
- expand Part V of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, to encompass affordable as well as social housing;
- mobilise the LDA to work with local authorities, State agencies and other stakeholders to deliver affordable housing by leveraging its expertise and the €1.25 billion in Ireland Strategic Investment Fund funding and land bank available to it; and
- build sustainable mixed communities, avoiding over-concentration of any particular

housing types in areas, by requiring local authorities to complete Housing Need and Demand Assessments to inform the delivery of an appropriate mix of housing typologies to cater for the needs of disparate household types and sizes, and thereafter by delivering affordable housing to complement the planned increase in the social housing stock of more than 50,000 homes, to help meet those needs.” — *An tAire Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta*.

#### 143. “That Dáil Éireann:

notes that:

- Covid-19 and public health restrictions have imposed significant hardship and sacrifice on young people, students and all those in education, seriously diminishing the educational experience and negatively impacting on mental health and general wellbeing;
- even before the Covid-19 pandemic, this cohort of people faced very significant stresses and hardships, including:
  - the serious stress and anxiety among students generated by the Leaving Certificate and intense competition for access to apprenticeships or places in the further and higher education courses of their choice;
  - an unacceptable level of social inequality in accessing third-level education, where, for example, 99 per cent of young people living in Dublin 6 go on to higher education, while only 16 per cent of those from Dublin 10 continue in education after school;
  - widespread poverty and financial hardship among many third-level students, particularly because of extortionate rents for accommodation in both purpose-built student accommodation and the wider rental sector;
  - the financial hardship imposed on many undergraduate students and their families by having to pay €3,000 per year in registration fees and a full cost of up to €7,000 for many, the highest across the European Union (EU);
  - the inadequacy of the Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grant system, where too many students are ineligible, and the grants do not cover the full costs of education;
  - the significant additional costs of third-level education also include textbooks that often must be bought new, IT, vaccines for those training in the health professions, uniforms, travel and transport etc.;
  - many groups of students having to work without pay on placements, including student nurses and midwives, social care students, allied healthcare trainees and others;
  - an alarmingly high number of students suffering poor mental health and depression, where, for example, a recent National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) survey showed that a third of all their students were suffering from depression;
  - one in six students dropping out of university in their first year;
  - students who live in digs and private student accommodation being

classified as ‘licencees’ or subject to private contracts rather than being ‘tenants’, and not being governed by the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, and being denied access to the Residential Tenancies Board;

- extremely high postgraduate fees and difficulties with visas for non-EU students;
- the €16,000 plus, per year, fees for some courses such as Graduate Entry Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy;
- PhD stipends set at a dreadfully low level, far below a living income, even with the increase in the Irish Research Council’s Postgraduate Scholarship Programme stipend in 2021;
- PhD researchers and other postgraduates being treated as students and not workers, despite their indispensable role in research and teaching in all higher education institutions, with responsibilities of PhD and postgraduate students having grown as a result of reduced Government funding to third-level institutions; and
- widespread precarious working conditions, with temporary, short-term badly paid contracts for those working in higher education, and with over 50 per cent of lecturing staff and 35 per cent of lecturers on temporary or part-time contracts and ‘hourly paid staff’ not being entitled to sick leave, maternity leave and excluded from the unfair dismissal protection;

believes that:

- after the hardships and anxieties impacting young people during Covid-19, the Government owe a particular debt and have a particular obligation to support our young people and students;
- the Government expenditure on third-level education is inadequate at less than 0.6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with the latest Universitas21 study finding that Ireland is 46th out of 50 comparable countries for the level of Government expenditure as a share of GDP when it comes to third-level investment, a fall of 29 places since 2017;
- higher and further education is reliant on big business to fill the gaps in funding, with areas of study such as humanities, languages and social sciences, deemed to not bring a profitable return and not getting the investment needed, and the courses and what is studied in courses should be determined by academic interest and not by profit;
- due to limited places on third-level courses, with approximately 80,000 people chasing 52,000 places with the Leaving Certificate, and with the Central Applications Process (CAO) points system playing a role in rationing out places in third-level institutions, the system operates as a crude market mechanism where students are pitted against each other, and as such is riddled with unfairness, especially for those from low and middle-income backgrounds, who have additional needs and face other barriers such as disability, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, and is a system that distorts education at second and third-level;
- there is a direct connection between the level of educational achievement and the life and career opportunities available to those after they leave education and seek to access the workforce;
- access to the highest levels of education should be a right for all and that access to third-level should be seen in the same way as access to second-level was in the late 1960’s, when second-level was expanded for all;
- with the ceaseless development of science, technology, innovation, artistic and

cultural endeavour in the modern world, it makes no sense to limit or ration access to higher levels of education or to impose financial or other barriers to completing such education; and

- it is in the interests of our society to remove all obstacles, provide all the supports and all the needed investment to ensure the maximisation of human potential through education; and

therefore, calls on the Government to:

- abolish the Leaving Certificate Examination as an unnecessary stress on young people, a distorter of the education system and a barrier to accessing higher education and the life opportunities that flow from it;
- provide open access for all to higher education courses or apprenticeships of their choice, without fees or barriers;
- expand the number of higher education and apprenticeship places to meet demand (approximately 25,000 additional places), increase academic staffing levels commensurately, and introduce more omnibus entry courses, especially in areas where there is high demand;
- end the reliance on big business to fill the gaps in funding from central Government;
- invest to expand further education access programmes, to increase the participation of those from disadvantaged areas, marginalised groups or communities;
- commit to supporting the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Education for All pledge to end fees, cut rents and increase student supports;
- end the ‘study now, pay later’ and ‘earn and learn’ policies and move to a publicly funded higher education at the heart of the Government policy;
- abolish all registration fees and tuition fees for all apprenticeships, undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and increase grants and supports to cover the real cost of education;
- return fees paid by students for the academic years affected by Covid-19;
- extend the Back to Education Allowance to cover postgraduate courses, allow students to be eligible for the Housing Assistance Payment and restore Job Seeker's Allowance rates for young people to the standard rate, and extend other social welfare supports, such as the Working Family Payment, to those in education;
- provide free access for all students and apprentices to counselling and personal education services at the point and time of need;
- fund and staff Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services teams, to the levels recommended in Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone;
- pay students properly for work on placements, including student nurses and midwives, students of social care, allied health professionals and others who are doing genuine work while on placement, while protecting the degree status of these courses, and work with student representatives and CORU to resolve the issues of placement requirements that have emerged as a result of Covid-19 limiting placement hours available;
- recognise PhD researchers as workers, not students, with contracts of employment outlining major research and teaching responsibilities, collective bargaining rights and public pension contributions, paying at least a living wage;

- comprehensively integrate access routes and student supports from second-level and further education, through to higher educations;
- end precarious working conditions for all academic staff, hiring the 11,200 staff, mainly women, currently on these short-term/part-time contracts;
- urgently commence a major publicly funded programme of building genuinely affordable, publicly owned student accommodation and establish a charter of student/tenant rights; and
- abolish the licensee classification and the private contracts for students living in private student accommodation or digs and give full tenant rights to all students.” — *Richard Boyd Barrett, Mick Barry, Gino Kenny, Paul Murphy, Bríd Smith.*

[10 March, 2021]

*Leasú:*

*Amendment:*

1. To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

“notes that:

- the establishment of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science is a clear demonstration of the strength of the Government’s commitment to deliver on the far-reaching goals for the entire tertiary education system strongly articulated in the Programme for Government - Our Shared Future;
- at the heart of this commitment, as set out in the recently published Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 for the new Department, is the objective of ensuring that Ireland’s further and higher education and research systems support everyone, regardless of their age, gender or address, in achieving their full potential;
- the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives of young people but, in general, both young people and students continue to respond superbly, adopting new approaches that ensure the continuity of their learning and demonstrating high levels of attention to public health guidance to ensure their own safety and that of their friends, families and communities;
- a comprehensive crisis response has been implemented across the further and higher education sectors, involving a partnership between the Government, educational institutions/providers, staff and students;
- continuity of education and research has been maintained throughout the pandemic with provision primarily online other than where onsite attendance is essential;
- in summer 2020, the Government provided a €168 million package of supports for further and higher education institutions and students, to cover costs incurred by institutions during the 2019/20 year and to provide further supports for the current academic year;
- this includes expansion of mental health supports through the student counselling service, a doubling of the Student Assistance Fund and provision of devices and other equipment to assist disadvantaged students;
- additional supports were provided in Budget 2021, including a financial contribution of €250 to each fulltime undergraduate student in publicly funded institutions costing €50 million, an €8 million Mitigating Educational Disadvantage Fund for the further education and community education sectors, enhanced Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grant supports for postgraduate students and increased support for the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) access initiative to increase

participation in higher education from the most economically disadvantaged students; and

- for the 2021/22 SUSI scheme, the fee grant for postgraduate students will rise from €2,000 to €3,500 and the income threshold for eligibility for these grants will increase from €31,500 to €54,240; and

furthermore, notes that:

- a review of the SUSI scheme has commenced, as committed to in the Programme for Government, which will consider issues such as grant rates, income thresholds, adjacency rates, postgraduate supports and part-time provision;
- the State currently provides very substantial financial support to undergraduate students in higher education towards the cost of their studies and this commitment is demonstrated through the Free Fees Initiative under which the Exchequer currently contributes €340 million to meeting the tuition fee costs of eligible undergraduate students in higher education, and in addition, the Exchequer pays the student contribution of €3,000 per annum in full or part, through SUSI, for approximately 44 per cent of students at a cost of over €180 million;
- a comprehensive economic evaluation of the funding options presented in the report of the Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education entitled ‘Investing in National Ambition: A Strategy for Funding Higher Education’ is underway, supported by the European Commission Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support programme, and this review is expected to be concluded over the first half of this year and will support an informed debate on the future planning and funding of higher and further education provision;
- significant progress has been made under the third National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021 and work on the development of a new national access plan for 2022-2026 is already underway;
- a National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework is in place to address issues of student mental health and an additional €5 million in funding for student mental health supports was provided last year, and the Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland (PCHEI) partnership through Text 50808 (a free 24-hour text service) allows students who are suffering from distress or mental health issues to speak with counsellors and access supports, and also a Student and Learner Wellbeing and Engagement Working Group has been established to monitor student wellbeing arising from the pandemic, review the implementation of existing measures and identify further initiatives;
- the Government is fully implementing ‘Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone’, including its comprehensive approach to improving the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- actions taken to support the provision of student accommodation include:
  - legislation to extend rent predictability measures to students residing in student-specific accommodation in rent pressure zones and to bring student accommodation under the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), giving students access to the RTB’s dispute resolution procedures;
  - empowering the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) to lend directly to higher education institutions for the development of new student accommodation, with a total of €157 million in loans for higher education institutions approved by the HFA; and

- the active engagement by the university sector on accommodation refunds, with all universities confirming that students who opted to leave their university-owned student accommodation as a result of reduced on-campus activity will be offered refunds or rental credits;
- the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is finalising its report on reform of the Senior Cycle, and this review will encompass the wider purposes of the Senior Cycle including the aim that it should continue to educate the whole person and help every student to become more enriched, engaged and competent as they further develop their knowledge, skills, values and dispositions in an integrated way, reflecting the fact that higher education is just one of the pathways that students follow after completion of the Leaving Certificate;
- the Government strongly recognises the value and benefit of an integrated tertiary education system with the availability of diverse pathways for all learners and is committed to promoting the complementary roles of further and higher education and facilitating enhanced information for school-leavers and for all seeking learning opportunities, providing a wider choice at transition points and enabling progression pathways across and between different institutions;
- the Government continues to invest to provide additional student places in higher education, with €18 million provided in Budget 2021 for this purpose for the academic year commencing September 2021, resulting in overall investment of nearly €80 million to address demographic pressures since 2018, ensuring that a higher proportion of Central Applications Process (CAO) applicants secure a place on one of their top three CAO options, and these places to meet demographic need are in addition to the 1,330 additional places commencing in 2021, funded through the Human Capital Initiative Pillar 2, which will be on undergraduate courses in areas of priority skills needs;
- the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science is working with the Higher Education Authority (HEA), higher education institutions, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and professional regulators, to identify further interventions that may be required to assist with additional places, and the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science will update the Government on this in April;
- the Government will shortly finalise an action plan on apprenticeships, promoting uptake in a growing range of apprenticeships as an attractive educational and career choice for increasing numbers of young people;
- a Researcher Career Development Framework has been introduced by the universities and Budget 2021 provided funding for increased opportunities for early career researchers and a 16 per cent increase in the Irish Research Council's Postgraduate Scholarship Programme stipend;
- the Minister has advised the House that his Department is engaged with the HEA and sectoral stakeholders, to gather information on the teaching duties of PhD students and relevant funding arrangements and consideration will be given to this matter by a sub-group of the National Advisory Forum for Ireland's National Framework for Doctoral Education;
- the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform are currently updating the Employment Control Framework within which individual higher education institutions manage their staffing;
- legislative proposals to reform the Higher Education Authority Act 1971 will be brought forward, to ensure that the higher education sector is enabled to meet the



vision for an excellent higher education and research system which is innovative, adaptive and inclusive and which contributes to social, economic and cultural development; and

- this comprehensive programme of reforms clearly demonstrates the Government's ambition for a high-quality tertiary education system which supports everyone to achieve their full potential." — *An tAire Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta.*

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## SCRÍBHINNÍ A LEAGADH FAOI BHRÁID NA dTITHE DOCUMENTS LAID BEFORE THE HOUSES<sup>1</sup>

<i>Reachtúil</i>	<i>Statutory</i>
<i>Tairiscint Ceadaithe ag Teastáil</i>	<i>Requiring Motion of Approval</i>
Níl aon scríbhinn á leagan faoin gCatagóir seo	None
<i>In-neamhnithe le Tairiscint</i>	<i>Open to Motion to Annul</i>
Na Rialacháin Dleachta Stampa (Malartáin agus Margaí a Ainmniú) (Uimh. 1), 2021 (I.R. Uimh. 72 de 2021). (D)	Stamp Duty (Designation of Exchanges and Markets) (No.1) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 72 of 2021). (D)
An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostaíochta. (Feidhmeanna Aire a Tharmhligeán), 2021 (I.R. Uimh. 71 de 2021).	Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) Order 2021 (S.I. No. 71 of 2021).
An tOrdú fán Acht um Íocaíochtaí Iomarcaíochta, 1967 (Alt 12A(2)) (Covid-19), 2021 (I.R. Uimh. 103 de 2021).	Redundancy Payments Act 1967 (Section 12A(2)) (Covid-19) Order 2021 (S.I. No. 103 of 2021).
Rialacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh (Bearta Srientacha i leith na hIaráice) (Uimh. 2), 2021 (I.R. Uimh. 90 de 2021).	European Union (Restrictive Measures concerning Iraq) (No. 2) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 90 of 2021).
Rialacháin fán Acht um Cheartas Coiriúil (Cionta Sceimhlitheoireachta), 2005 (Alt 42) (Bearta Srientacha i leith Daoine agus Eintitis Áirithe d'fhonn Sceimhlitheoireacht a Chomhrac), 2021	Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) Act 2005 (Section 42) (Restrictive Measures concerning Certain Persons and Entities with a view to Combating Terrorism) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 91 of 2021).

<sup>1</sup> I gcás nach leagtar scríbhinn ach faoi bhráid aon Teach amháin, cuirfear (D) – Dáil nó (S) – Seanad ina diaidh dá réir sin.

Where a document is laid before one House only it will be appended with (D) – Dáil or (S) – Seanad accordingly.

(I.R. Uimh. 91 de 2021).

Na Rialacháin fán Acht Iompair (Tionscnóirí Turas agus Gníomhairí Taistil), 1982 (Eisíocaíochtaí as an gCiste), 2021 (I.R. Uimh. 105 de 2021).

#### *Eile*

Sábháilteacht Uisce na hÉireann. Na Ráitis Airgeadais don tréimhse ón 1 Eanáir 2018 go 17 Feabhra 2019.

An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí. An tAcht um Inscne a Aithint, 2015. An Tuarascáil Bhliantúil don bhliain 2019. 11 Samhain 2020.

An Foras Taighde ar Oideachas. Na Ráitis Airgeadais don bhliain dar chríoch an 31 Nollaig 2019.

#### ***Neamhreachtúil***

Sábháilteacht Uisce Éireann (Sábháilteacht Uisce na hÉireann roimhe seo). Na Ráitis Airgeadais don tréimhse ón 18 Feabhra 2019 go 31 Nollaig 2019.

An Conradh ar an Aontas Eorpach: Doiciméid a fuarthas de bhun an Phrótaicail maidir le ról Parlaimintí Náisiúnta san Aontas Eorpach, 2 Samhain – 8 Samhain 2020.

An Tuarascáil Athbhreithnithe Neamhspleách i dtaobh Clárucháin Breitheanna Mhíchearta. Arna coimisiúnú ag an Aire Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige. Bealtaine, 2019.

An tOrdú fán Acht um Tharraingt Siar na Ríochta Aontaithe as an Aontas Eorpach (Forálacha Iarmhartacha), 2020 (Cuid 4) (Tosach Feidhme), 2021 (I.R. Uimh. 98 de 2021).

An tOrdú um an Acht Comhdhlúite Cánacha, 1997 (An Scéim Tacaíochta um Shrianta Covid) (Céatadáin a Choigeartú), 2021 (I.R. Uimh. 104 de 2021).

An Tuarascáil ón mBinse Fiosrúcháin

Transport (Tour Operators and Travel Agents) Act, 1982, (Disbursements from Fund) Regulations, 2021 (S.I. No. 105 of 2021).

#### *Other*

Irish Water Safety. Financial Statements for the period from the 1 January, 2018 to the 17 February, 2019.

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Gender Recognition Act 2015. Annual Report for 2019. 11 November, 2020.

Educational Research Centre. Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December, 2019.

#### ***Non-Statutory***

Water Safety Ireland (formerly Irish Water Safety). Financial Statements for the period from the 18 February, 2019 to the 31 December, 2019.

Treaty on European Union: Documents received pursuant to Protocol on the role of National Parliaments in the European Union, 2 November – 8 November, 2020.

Independent Review Report into Incorrect Birth Registrations. Commissioned by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. May, 2019.

Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2020 (Part 4) (Commencement) Order 2021 (S.I. No. 98 of 2021).

Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (Covid Restrictions Support Scheme) (Percentage Adjustment) Order 2021 (S.I. No. 104 of 2021).

Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into the

maidir le Cás Leanaí Chiarraí, Éire agus  
Ordú an 18 Nollaig 2020 ón Ard-Chúirt.

Kerry Babies Case, Ireland and High  
Court Order of 18 December, 2020.