

Women's Sector Lobbyist – Political Party Manifestos and Commitments to Women

Northern Ireland Assembly Election – 5th May 2022

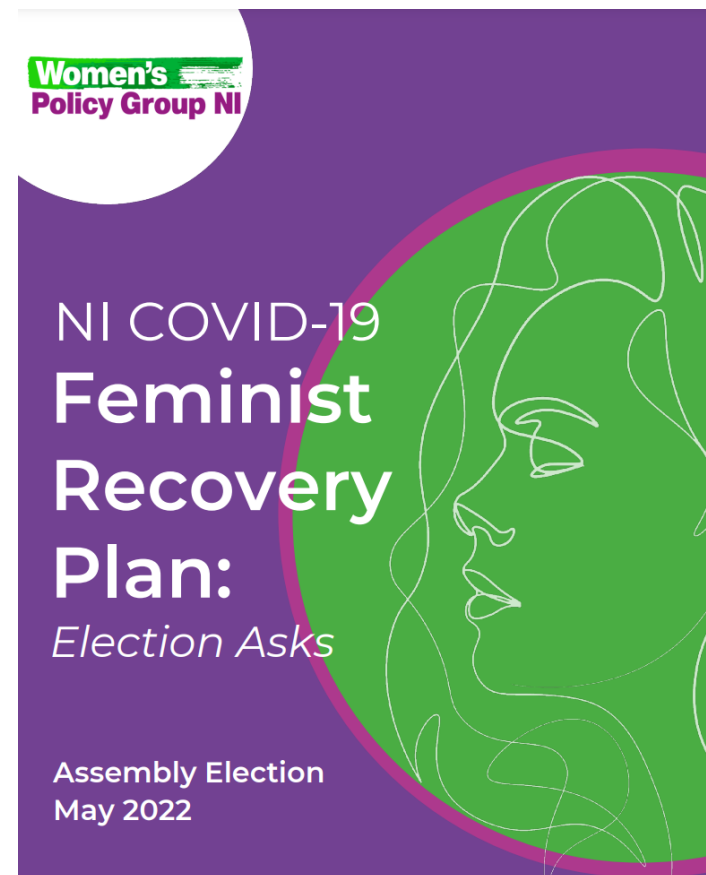
With the Northern Ireland Assembly Election (AE22) happening this week – I thought it was important to analyse the different manifestos of the main political parties to see whether they have prioritised the needs of women.

The Women's Policy Group (WPG) published our [Key Election Asks](#) based on some of the outstanding recommendations from our [Feminist Recovery Plan](#) (FRP).

I will now look at the election manifestos from Sinn Féin, UUP, SDLP, Alliance, Green Party, People Before Profit and the TUV. Please note – as the DUP only published a 5-point plan and not a full manifesto, a brief summary will be provided instead.

Manifestos:

- Sinn Féin [Manifesto](#)
- DUP [Five-Point Plan](#)
- SDLP [Manifesto](#)
- UUP [Manifesto](#)
- Alliance [Manifesto](#)
- Green Party [Manifesto](#)
- People Before Profit [Manifesto](#)
- TUV [Manifesto](#)



Some of the main topics from the feminist recovery plan include:

- women's employment,
- childcare,
- addressing violence against women and girls and misogyny,
- supporting LGBTQ+ women,
- racial equality,
- supporting refugee and asylum seekers,
- parental leave and flexible working frameworks,
- a bill of rights for Northern Ireland,
- reproductive justice including abortion access and IVF, perinatal mental health support,
- addressing the gendered nature of poverty and austerity,
- Standardised RSE,
- Addressing NHS waiting lists,
- Tackling rural access poverty,
- Women's representation in public life and much more.

There are many more recommendations within the FRP, but at a glance, here's what each party had to say about our key election asks:

Summary of Asks

1. Address the unequal distribution, and undervaluing, of caring responsibilities and Implement the Childcare Strategy/Government Funded Childcare Provision.
2. Implement Gender Pay Gap Legislation and create a Women's Employment Strategy.
3. Address gendered nature of poverty and austerity policies (particularly in current context of cost of living crisis and opposition to gender neutral policy making).
4. Ring-fenced and sustainable funding for women's organisations and women's centres.
5. Implement NDNA commitments to increase access to IVF cycles, commission abortion services and implement robust perinatal mental health care services (including mother and baby units).
6. Address Rural Access Poverty and Digital Divide.
7. Address NHS waiting lists.
8. Address underrepresentation of women in politics, public life and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland.
9. Support and fully resource a women-centred VAWG strategy, recognising misogyny as a statutory aggravator of hate crime.
10. Introduce standardised, compulsory and inclusive RSE in schools.
11. Introduce a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.
12. Introduce Social Inclusion Strategies.
13. Implement WRDA' Guidelines for Public Authorities on Putting Women at the Heart of Public Consultation.

1. Childcare and Caring Responsibilities:

Childcare and Caring Responsibilities	
Sinn Féin	<p>We can use this opportunity to create an all-Ireland National Health Service, sustainable housing policy, universal childcare, and ensure transition to a carbon neutral economy.</p> <p>Sinn Féin wants to improve access to further and higher education for all young people including those with disabilities; those from low-income families; those with childcare responsibilities; and those with care experience, to name a few.</p> <p>Lack of affordable childcare is also a barrier to accessing employment.</p> <p>Sinn Féin Minister Deirdre Hargey introduced upfront childcare costs for the first month for parents on low incomes moving into employment. This is an important intervention in supporting people back to work however the delivery of a childcare strategy for the north is vital to understanding the needs of parents and ensuring we have a sustainable childcare sector providing a high standard of childcare going forward.</p> <p>SINN FÉIN'S PRIORITIES FOR WORKERS RIGHTS ARE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End Zero-Hour Contracts • Devolve powers to set minimum wage and replace with the Real Living Wage • Remove the restrictions on trade union recognition in workplaces with 20 workers or fewer • Develop legislation to introduce paid leave for carers • Deliver a childcare strategy to support good quality affordable childcare • Legislate to improve access to flexible working and the right to disconnect • Legislate to end fire and rehire tactics • Create good quality jobs
DUP	<p>As part of our plan to help working families we will deliver in the next mandate 30 hours free childcare per week and we will ensure there is fair access to pre-school places.</p>

Childcare is one of the most significant household bills faced by many families across Northern Ireland. Last year we surveyed over 1,000 parents and found that nearly 85% of people had their return to work impacted by childcare costs. Almost a quarter of parents also said that childcare subsumed nearly a full wage within the household.

The most recent Employers for Childcare survey highlighted an average cost of £170 per week, which represents a very significant financial hurdle, yet Northern Ireland lags behind other UK regions in supporting working families. The DUP is determined to see this changed. Whilst some other parties have no plan other than a divisive border poll, we are focused on what matters - building a better Northern Ireland.

There is also pressure on childcare providers, and when this sector was facing collapse during lockdown, it was a DUP Minister who stepped up to support them. We want to do more however and our 5-point plan for Northern Ireland includes a commitment to help working families through delivering 30 hours of free childcare per week for 3 and 4 year olds. Northern Ireland should come into line with the rest of the United Kingdom in this area.

We want to provide greater access to affordable childcare, which can benefit families, our economy and the whole of Northern Ireland. DUP Ministers have supported the sector with £36 million being paid to childcare providers, to enable the sector to remain viable and childcare places to be available for families, at a time when the essential role played by early education and childcare to our broader society and economy was demonstrated more clearly than ever.

Now we want to do more. We will prioritise affordable, flexible, high-quality early education and care initiatives for families with children aged 3-4. We will support working families by ensuring the availability of 30 hours free childcare per week. As working arrangements change, we support the introduction of flexible childcare.

We will engage with parents and employers to ensure the right model is codesigned going forward, and wrap around school provision will be improved to ensure access to childcare is strengthened. We will also work with the private sector to develop in-house programmes that work for both the employer and employee.

- **Fair access to pre-school places**

We believe that all children should have fair access to pre-school places, regardless of their parents' employment status. Every child in Northern Ireland deserves the same opportunities to succeed and early years learning and support is vital to helping each child reach their full potential. We will bring forward a review of pre-school place criteria and push for reforms to ensure that working families are not placed at a disadvantage.

<p>UUP</p>	<p>Commit that we will work to remove barriers to women’s participation in employment, providing accessible, affordable childcare and access to education, training and transport.</p> <p>Back Rates Relief - Ulster Unionists supported the recent extension of Business Rates holiday in the Assembly with some businesses receiving a further three-month break in payments including retail, hospitality, tourism, leisure, childcare and airports.</p>
<p>SDLP</p>	<p>We believe that no parent should be forced to choose between caring for their children and pursuing their chosen career, particularly women who are often most adversely affected by the high costs of childcare.</p> <p>We will increase the provision of free pre-school childcare from 12.5 hours per week to 30 hours per week:</p> <p>Parents everywhere are struggling to meet their childcare bill and many have been forced to change jobs or cease employment entirely to pay for this vital infrastructure. Many parents have cited extortionate childcare costs that are more expensive than mortgages per month and many parents work extra shifts or an entire second job simply to pay for their childcare.</p> <p>We believe that no parent should be forced to choose between caring for their children and pursuing their chosen career, particularly women who are often most adversely affected by the high costs of childcare. Our proposal includes the expansion of free pre- school childcare from 12.5 hours per week to 30 hours per week for all parents. This can be delivered on a flexible basis to meet the needs of the parents across the working week.</p> <p>The pandemic has changed the way we all work and has shone light on the advantages of a more flexible approach to working both for employers and employees. During the pandemic, businesses and workers have adapted to working from home which has not only had benefits for productivity but importantly has given people a better work-life balance.</p> <p>In the past people, and especially working mothers, have made the decision not to request flexible working as they believe that this would be viewed negatively by their employer or limit opportunities. Modern working practices need to be made more inclusive for parents and those with caring responsibilities and this means ensuring that there is an availability of good quality jobs offered on a more flexible and part-time basis.</p>
<p>Alliance</p>	<p>Setting robust targets for the uptake in Northern Ireland of UK-wide childcare schemes, as part of a comprehensive Childcare Strategy.</p>

Alliance will introduce a universal childcare system to meet the needs of families, subsidised by Government and centred on the child, ensuring that women and low-income families can fully participate in the new green economy.

Early years services and access to quality childcare and pre-school places are essential for children to have the best start in life.

Many professionals, countries and families look to Scandinavian nations as setting the standard for childcare, education and family life. The childcare provision in these countries are among the most generous in the world, supporting parents from the early days of pregnancy, to school and beyond. It recognises that childcare is a part of our economic infrastructure and is integral to child development.

Childcare provision benefits us all: parents, carers, employers, communities and, most importantly, children. It is vital the Executive introduces policies that safeguard the development of our youngest children and mitigate the long term effects that the lack of strategic policies have had on early education and childcare in the past.

Alliance will continue to implement the recommendations within the Fair Start report, ensuring cross-departmental collaboration and sharing of information to ensure an outcomes-based Executive strategy.

Alliance will also introduce the following policies:

- A Childcare Strategy, co-designed and co-produced by stakeholders and professionals which ensures the annual budget is spent well. This is an overdue commitment from New Decade, New Approach which must be realised.
- A full costed analysis of the resources required to deliver a full time, high quality childcare place.
- A universal, affordable childcare scheme, with fully funded hours paid directly to providers.
- An awareness campaign to provide families with the information on assistance for the financial costs of childcare.
- A review of SureStart funding and expanding to include the additional 22 areas targeted in 2021.
- Movement towards universal full-time provision for all pre-school children and a standardisation of the school day for these children.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of early childhood development with a focus on nurturing for pre-school aged settings, including nurture rooms, outdoor learning and play.
Green Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for proper skills training and paid apprenticeships across industries. Create targets for paid apprenticeships to ensure gender balance. Work to address barriers to access, such as childcare and transport. • Promote and encourage employers to implement family and carer- friendly working policies such as childcare leave, working from home, the right to switch off outside working hours, a day-one right to sick pay, maternity leave, shared parental leave, and paid family leave across all sectors. • Introduce a full childcare strategy that will meet the needs of working parents.
People Before Profit	<p>People Before Profit propose 30 hours of free, high-quality childcare for working parents: Parents in Scotland, England and Wales have access to 30 hours of free childcare a week, while our 3 and 4-year-olds are only entitled to 12.5 hours of pre- school a week, which is useless for working parents. Most people are forced to use family for childcare since parents pay up to £170 a week for formal childcare – that’s almost £9,000 a year for just one child.</p> <p>carers receive a maximum Carer’s Allowance of just £67.60 per week—the equivalent of less than £1.83 per hour. Carers are disproportionately women and girls. This highlights how the unpaid labour of women throughout their lifetime is too often taken for granted.</p> <p>A living wage for Carers.</p> <p>Remove unnecessary restrictions on applicants for Carer’s Allowance: such as the requirement to have lived here for at least two of the last three years before making a claim.</p>
TUV	No mention

2. Women’s Employment and Gender Pay Gap Legislation

Women’s Employment and Gender Pay Gap Legislation	
Sinn Féin	<p>Sinn Féin has been progressing legislation to ban Zero Hour Contracts and we will continue this in the next mandate. We also want to bring in legislation that will introduce paid leave for carers; improve access to flexible working; and make trade union membership accessible to more workers. Lack of affordable childcare is also a barrier to accessing employment. Sinn Féin Minister Deirdre Hargey introduced upfront childcare costs for the first month for parents on low incomes moving into employment. This is an important intervention in supporting people back to work however the delivery of a childcare strategy for the north is vital to understanding the needs of parents and ensuring we have a sustainable childcare sector providing a high standard of childcare going forward.</p> <p>SINN FÉIN’S PRIORITIES FOR WORKERS RIGHTS ARE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End Zero-Hour Contracts - Devolve powers to set minimum wage and replace with the Real Living Wage - Remove the restrictions on trade union recognition in workplaces with 20 workers or fewer - Develop legislation to introduce paid leave for carers - Deliver a childcare strategy to support good quality affordable childcare - Legislate to improve access to flexible working and the right to disconnect - Legislate to end fire and rehire tactics - Create good quality jobs
DUP	No Mention
UUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit that we will work to remove barriers to women’s participation in employment, providing accessible, affordable childcare and access to education, training and transport. • Move to enhanced flexible working and parental leave reserved for both parents • Make progress towards gender responsive budgeting <p>Ulster Unionists are committed not just to wealth creation and supporting business but also protecting workers rights. We believe that access to good jobs, where workers have a voice, a decent income, security of tenure, satisfying work in the right quantities and decent working conditions should be integral to public policy given how this contributes to better health and wellbeing by tackling inequalities, building self-efficacy and combating poverty.</p>

	<p>Ulster Unionists will work closely with the trade union movement as well as business representatives to build a better, prosperous and fair Northern Ireland.</p>
<p>SDLP</p>	<p>We believe that no parent should be forced to choose between caring for their children and pursuing their chosen career, particularly women who are often most adversely affected by the high costs of childcare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental leave should be a right made available to all workers. Our full-rate equivalent maternity leave is one of the lowest across Europe and the OECD. We believe the Real Living Wage should be used as a baseline for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) from weeks 7 to 52. Until the eligibility criteria for SMP is expanded, Universal Credit Regulations must be amended so that Maternity Allowance is treated as ‘earnings’ instead of ‘unearned income’. This would mean that women are not left worse-off than their counterparts who qualify for SMP. We support the introduction of a Paternity Allowance. In addition, we will implement an expansion of the Sure Start Maternity Grant- similar to the Best Start Grant in Scotland which is made up of three one-off payments; Pregnancy and Baby Payment, Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment, to help towards the costs of being pregnant and looking after a child. • Gender discrimination must be made a thing of the past. Stronger protection is required for women from discrimination in pay and promotion. <p>The pandemic has changed the way we all work and has shone light on the advantages of a more flexible approach to working both for employers and employees. During the pandemic, businesses and workers have adapted to working from home which has not only had benefits for productivity but importantly has given people a better work-life balance.</p> <p>In the past people, and especially working mothers, have made the decision not to request flexible working as they believe that this would be viewed negatively by their employer or limit opportunities. Modern working practices need to be made more inclusive for parents and those with caring responsibilities and this means ensuring that there is an availability of good quality jobs offered on a more flexible and part-time basis.</p> <p>Workers’ Rights:</p> <p>Employment law is a devolved power and Stormont must take advantage of this to strengthen the protection of employees. The SDLP was the only Northern Ireland party in the House of Commons to support a ban on the practice of hiring and re-hiring – a gross exploitation of workers. Employment rights are an essential protection from exploitation, and they should apply from day one of employment. All employees must have the right to belong to a</p>

	<p>trade union. We are committed to fair pay agreements for all workers, including those who work in our vital public services.</p> <p>Gender discrimination must be made a thing of the past. Stronger protection is required for women from discrimination in pay and promotion.</p>
Alliance	<p>Promoting and improving Shared Parental Leave and flexible working arrangements which Alliance introduced via the Department for Employment and Learning.</p> <p>Promoting gender considerations into careers promotion, particularly in relation to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) opportunities.</p> <p>Renewing efforts to tackle Equal Pay and implement regulations about public audits of the gender profile of pay by large employers</p> <p>To support improved skills outcomes, Alliance will intensify support for STEM in higher education and further education, including promotion of Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), with targets to have at least 30% representation by 2030.</p>
Green Party	<p>Implement mandatory gender pay gap reporting in line with the rest of the UK.</p> <p>We promote a vision of a better, socialist society where there are top quality free public services, decent wages for working people, full rights for ethnic minorities, women and the LGBTQ+ community, and a real effort to stop our planet being destroyed by climate change.</p>
People Before Profit	<p>People Before Profit is for An end to gender and racial pay gaps in Further and Higher Education</p> <p>We promote a vision of a better, socialist society where there are top quality free public services, decent wages for working people, full rights for ethnic minorities, women and the LGBTQ+ community, and a real effort to stop our planet being destroyed by climate change.</p>
TUV	No mention

3. Poverty and Austerity

Poverty and Austerity	
Sinn Féin	<p>Throughout the pandemic, despite the huge efforts of workers, we have seen some deplorable actions taken by large companies in the shape of ‘fire and rehire’ tactics which aim to re-employ workers on worse contracts than they previously were entitled to. One of the worst examples of exploitation of workers was the sudden firing of 800 staff – including workers from the north – by P&O with no regards to their employment rights.</p> <p>Sinn Féin is committed to strengthening workers’ rights and ensuring they are protected in law. We also want to tackle low pay and insecure jobs which cause in-work poverty by improving workers’ pay and conditions and removing the barriers to work. Sinn Féin Finance Minister Conor Murphy has made the Executive a Living Wage Employer and has also made payment of the Living Wage a requirement for any company receiving a government contract. Sinn Féin has been progressing legislation to ban Zero Hour Contracts and we will continue this in the next mandate.</p> <p>We also want to bring in legislation that will introduce paid leave for carers; improve access to flexible working; and make trade union membership accessible to more workers.</p> <p>Lack of affordable childcare is also a barrier to accessing employment. Sinn Féin Minister Deirdre Hargey introduced upfront childcare costs for the first month for parents on low incomes moving into employment. This is an important intervention in supporting people back to work however the delivery of a childcare strategy for the north is vital to understanding the needs of parents and ensuring we have a sustainable childcare sector providing a high standard of childcare going forward.</p> <p>We want a model of local economic development that tackles inequality and poverty by redirecting wealth and public spending into communities.</p>
DUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially support hard-pressed families with an Energy Support Payment. • Deliver Energy Efficiency schemes to support better-insulated homes. • Support calls for a Windfall Tax on energy firms. • Make going green affordable to homes in NI.

	<p>Financially support hard-pressed families with an energy support payment Recent energy price rises are impacting on every person and business in Northern Ireland. This is happening because of the global price volatility that comes with fossil fuels. The massive increase in energy demand as we came out of the pandemic lockdowns and the Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused an unprecedented increase in energy costs. Even before these events energy costs had been increasing at a steady rate. The result is that thousands of low and medium income families have been plunged into debt and forced to make hard choices when it comes to how they spend their limited budgets. The DUP has been constantly lobbying both at Westminster and in Northern Ireland for short-term relief with energy bills and a long-term re-examination of energy policy. In the short-term we have asked the government to: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce the VAT on electricity bills. 2. Lift some of the green taxes from electricity bills. They currently stand at 14% of the average bill. 3. Raise revenue for reliefs through levying a windfall tax on the profits of those companies who have had unexpected increases in profits due to the increase in world prices. 4. Consider reducing some of the taxes which are based on a percentage of fuel costs and which as prices rise have given the government a windfall increase in tax revenues. 5. Use trading standards and other means to monitor price increases at the pumps and other places where it is obvious some businesses are taking advantage of the current crisis. <p>We support introducing building control policies and financial schemes to reduce the use of energy in homes and cut down electricity bills. We will deliver a priority programme of energy efficiency schemes focused on retrofitting both private and public housing across Northern Ireland and establish minimum energy efficiency standards in the domestic private rented sector. New packages encouraging greater efficiency in the home are vital.</p> <p>Following a more environmentally friendly lifestyle and adapting homes to do this is something many people in Northern Ireland are keen to do. However, the costs involved can often be a barrier. In order to make the green transition, we have to ensure that it is affordable and provides value for money. We will look at options for support schemes for energy sources and heat installation measures across the home.</p> <p>The cost of school uniforms can be extortionate, a problem that is increased depending on the number of children in a household. This can cause both financial difficulties and unnecessary concern to many families across Northern Ireland. We support a cap on the cost of school uniforms.</p>
UUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and provide financial guidance and support as women approach retirement age

The Russian Federation's war on Ukraine will inevitably produce a new world order. While the shape of things to come may take time to become clear, the impact on the cost of living is immediately apparent. This will impact everyone's standard of living, with the vulnerable worst affected. The Ulster Unionist Party believes there is much that government can do to help at council, regional and national level. The UK Government can address issues such as energy costs. We support the lowering of fuel duty for all, with an additional rebate for essential users, not least carers who travel extensively to provide vital support to those who are unable to look after themselves.

At Assembly level, we should ensure home heating oil provision comes under the remit of the Utility Regulator of Northern Ireland, ensuring parity of regulation with gas and electricity. The Assembly must also work in tandem with local councils to identify need, tailoring support packages for those most exposed to the impact of the cost of living. Ulster Unionists have long been concerned at fuel poverty and its effect on those on low incomes. We have consistently called for the Communities Minister to establish a Fuel Poverty Task Force and will ensure one is set-up early in the new mandate. We will also work to have the GB 'Warm Homes Discount' rolled out in Northern Ireland, in addition to the Winter Fuel Payment. The Warm Homes Discount is a sum of money credited to an electricity (and in some circumstances gas) account of the eligible recipient. In winter 2021/2022 this amounted to £120. We will:

- Ensure Home Heating is brought under remit of the Utility Regulator
- Work in tandem with local councils to identify need and tailor packages
- Call on Westminster to lower fuel duty for all, with additional rebate for essential users, not least care workers
- Establish a Fuel Poverty Task Force
- Work to introduce 'Warm Homes Discount' to Northern Ireland

Support Workers Rights - Ulster Unionists are committed not just to wealth creation and supporting business but also protecting workers rights. We believe that access to good jobs, where workers have a voice, a decent income, security of tenure, satisfying work in the right quantities and decent working conditions should be integral to public policy given how this contributes to better health and wellbeing by tackling inequalities, building self-efficacy and combating poverty. Ulster Unionists will work closely with the trade union movement as well as business representatives to build a better, prosperous and fair Northern Ireland.

Ulster Unionists will have the Dept. for Education conduct a review of Free School Meals during the next Assembly with a view to providing a free meal every day to all primary age children. A daily Free School Meal for every child would enable Northern Ireland to start tackling child poverty and ensure that no child goes hungry. Broader benefits would include increasing healthy eating across the whole school, widening the range of food pupils eat,

	<p>enhancing social skills at mealtimes, and improvements to conduct and achievement. Universal free school meals for young learners would also go some way to achieving Net Zero targets through prioritising local food producers. Eligibility for Free School Meals is an important indicator of social disadvantage for many government policies and strategies, but we are confident that other measures can be devised for this.</p>
<p>SDLP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tackle poverty and build a fair society, SDLP will: Vote for pension justice for the generation of WASPI women. The SDLP opposed the rubber-stamping of this unjust policy and sought to protect women here. The decision to increase the state pension age has unfairly impacted 77,000 women here born in the 1950's. The SDLP will seek to reverse this punitive decision, reduce the State Pension Age and protect pensioners who have fallen victim to this draconian policy. <p>We'll tackle the cost-of-living crisis by giving every household a minimum of £200, with a family with two children on free school meals receiving over £1200 between now and December.</p> <p>We will double the current level of investment in the Social Housing Development Programme to combat the shortage in social housing.</p> <p>We'll invest £500 in every child's future when they're born, with an additional £500 when they turn 10 in a Children's Future Fund.</p> <p>People in Northern Ireland are facing a devastating cost-of-living crisis. A perfect storm of spiralling energy costs, rising national insurance costs and cuts to Universal Credit all mean that families, single parents and workers are facing difficult decisions about how they will put food on the table and heat their homes.</p> <p>The SDLP's six-point Cost-of-Living Action Plan will make a real difference to people across the North, with every household receiving a £200 payment and more support for those who need it. Under our plan, a family with two children on free school meals would receive over £1200 between now and December.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pass emergency legislation to free up £300 million of funding to tackle the cost-of-living emergency 2. Provide a direct £200 payment to all households and extend the £100 Emergency Fuel Payment Scheme. 3. Relaunch the Free School Meal Payment Scheme from 1 April for the remainder of the year including through the Summer. 4. Reduce the cap on energy market profits and ensure savings are passed to consumers. 5. Press the British Government to introduce a one-year VAT holiday for domestic energy charges. 6. Press the British Government to introduce a windfall tax on energy companies.

Alliance

Reforming the pension system to ensure it is based on residence, recognising that women are more likely to take breaks from contributions or make lower levels of contributions.

Cost of Living:

- Introduce a home heating support grant voucher scheme, targeted at low-income households.
- Roll out a £20 per week child payment to protect children already vulnerable to poverty.
- Work closely with the local banking sector to monitor the impact of rising interest rates.
- Explore initiatives to improve the affordability of food, particularly local produce.
- Bring home heating oil within the remit of the Utility Regulator

Sound public finances are essential for a strong economy and investment in public services. As a region that relies on a significant financial subvention, Northern Ireland is particularly vulnerable to changes or deficiencies in public expenditure decisions taken in Westminster, and there is a particular challenge to ensure that available resources are used efficiently and strategically.

Repeated deadlock and dysfunction undermine the provision of public services and results in missed opportunities, financial waste and general economic and political instability, to the detriment of our businesses and citizens. This financial situation is being exacerbated by the cost of living crisis: people are struggling to make ends meet and face further and prolonged increases in energy and other costs. The most vulnerable members of society, including children in low income families, face continued hardship.

To maximise the impact of the Northern Ireland budget, we believe four key areas of reform are needed:

1. Reducing the costs of division.
2. Reforming the public sector.
3. Improving budget processes.
4. Reviewing existing and potential revenue raising options.

The cost of living crisis facing millions of households is a cross-departmental problem, requiring a range of interventions to protect vulnerable households and, as such, it is being treated as a distinct issue in this manifesto.

As discussed in the Finance section of the manifesto, Alliance is uniquely placed to enable additional, much needed, public funds via eliminating the costs of division. Now, more than ever, it is essential that we reduce the wastage associated with funding a divided society to ensure that all public funds are used responsibly, effectively and for the benefit of all citizens.

	<p>The Alliance Party is increasingly concerned about the cost of living crisis in Northern Ireland. With so many households already struggling to make ends meet due to the pandemic, we are now facing the biggest fall in living standards since comparable records began, as inflation continues to erode the value of wages and benefits.</p> <p>Not only is the cost of living crisis likely to worsen poverty levels and inequality, but it also presents a threat to economic recovery. The squeeze on disposable incomes is likely to result in reduced consumer spending, in the wake of an already difficult period for businesses. If this destabilises economic recovery, this could cost jobs and further reduce living standards.</p>
<p>Green Party</p>	<p>IT'S TIME TO ENSURE THAT EVERYBODY LIVES IN A WARM HOME & THAT FUEL POVERTY BECOMES A THING OF THE PAST.</p> <p>The Green Party NI will provide more financial support to households in fuel poverty.</p> <p>The cost-of-living crisis, driven by the profiteering of big oil corporations and heightened by geopolitical insecurity, cannot be solved without addressing our economy's dependence on fossil fuels. Greens first called on the Executive to ban fracking and fossil fuel extraction over a decade ago. Despite our repeated calls, the traditional parties failed to act. This persistent failure on many environmental issues has left us with a shameful record.</p> <p>As people struggle to heat or eat, Stormont has failed to protect those most impacted. Hundreds of millions of pounds of emergency funding have been left unspent by the traditional parties, who have prioritised manufacturing crises over addressing the crises we already face. We are in the midst of a housing crisis, a cost-of-living crisis, a waiting list crisis, a mental health crisis. And of course, the impact of the climate crisis is only becoming more obvious. These are the issues that need our attention, and these are the issues the Green Party NI is committed to delivering on.</p> <p>Time and again, traditional parties have shown us that they are not equipped to deal with crisis. The politics of deadlock and division will not address the cost-of-living crisis, the waiting list crisis and the housing crisis.</p>
<p>People Before Profit</p>	<p>We have been told there is no money to fund jobs, healthcare, a fair benefits system, etc. The past two years have shown this to be an utter farce. When the pandemic hit politicians found money overnight for various handouts, not least £155 million for retail vouchers and hundreds of millions more on an "eat out to help out" scheme. People Before Profit demand the same type of urgency to deal with the crippling cost of living crisis, to revitalise our health</p>

service, our housing stock, and our other public services. As hardship increases, a radical and transformative approach toward politics and economics is needed more than ever.

The Cost of Living Crisis:

Too many households are facing the same impossible choice: heat or eat. The big parties laid the groundwork for this crisis by freezing wages and implementing austerity and benefit cuts that marginalised working-class communities. Now that fuel prices and inflation are soaring, people are struggling to cope.

We are told that there is nothing our politicians can do, that the market sets inflation, and we must tighten our belts to get by. Meanwhile, multinational fuel and energy corporations are bringing home record profits.

People Before Profit takes an entirely different approach – we want to see radical measures taken to protect people from the harshest realities of this crisis, and to ensure billions in profit cannot be hoarded by fuel and energy corporations.

We would:

- Launch an Emergency Hardship Fund: distribute a direct payment of £1,000 to households hit by the cost of living crisis, including all but the top fifth of earners. This could be generated by imposing greater taxes on the wealthiest.
- Impose emergency price controls: The Stormont Executive should impose price controls on energy, fuel, and food where necessary. Cutting VAT is not enough because it allows companies to hike prices and profit even more from the difference.
- Cut rents and increase housing benefit: Rents are rising quickly as energy prices soar. We need legislation to cut and freeze rents and increase the Local Housing Allowance on which housing benefit rates are based.
- Ban companies imposing extra charges on payment metre users: 30,000 low-income households who use prepaid metres are being hit with an extra charge which should be scrapped.
- Take the private energy companies back into public ownership: Private monopolies have carved up our gas and electricity markets. A single market has been created for different companies to bid. We need an allisland, not-for-profit public energy company to cut prices.
- Increase the minimum wage to £15 an hour, with government subsidies for small businesses: The current rate of £8.91 is pathetic and creates a low wage economy. Workers deserve a decent wage that they can live on.
- Support inflation-busting pay rises for all workers

	<p>People Before Profit also supports the efforts of workers taking industrial action to improve their wages in line with inflation, and defend their living standards during this crisis. Hovis workers in Belfast set the standard when they won an 8% pay rise, and they have been followed by a host of other workers. We reject the argument that higher wages 'set off a spiral of price hikes'. Wage increases are a valid response to price hikes that have already occurred. Bosses and shareholders should not be allowed to profiteer from rising prices while workers suffer.</p>
TUV	No mention

4. Ring-Fenced Funding for Women's Organisation

Ring-Fenced Funding for Women's Organisation	
Sinn Féin	No mention
DUP	No mention
UUP	No mention
SDLP	No mention
Alliance	No mention
Green Party	No mention
People Before Profit	No mention
TUV	No mention

5. Commissioning of Abortion Services, Access to IVF Treatment and Robust Perinatal Mental Health Services

Commissioning of Abortion Services, Access to IVF Treatment and Robust Perinatal Mental Health Services	
Sinn Féin	<p>The British Tory government cannot be allowed to slow down the change that is coming. It must deliver on its commitments regarding the Irish language rights and reproductive health services for women.</p> <p>Sinn Féin will work to immediately form a new Executive and to: Deliver Acht Gaeilge and reproductive rights for women – both of which are long overdue.</p> <p>We want women to be able to access the safe and legal health services they are entitled to.</p> <p>SINN FÉIN’S PRIORITIES INCLUDE:</p> <p>Immediate provision of modern reproductive health care</p>
DUP	No mention
UUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide age-appropriate universal sex and relationships education in schools and educational institutions • Maintain momentum in IVF treatment availability. Ulster Unionists are proud to have secured the commitment of providing up to 3 publicly funded cycles of IVF treatment in the NDNA. We’ve brought fertility lists back down to pre-pandemic levels and we’ve made real progress in putting in place the staffing and infrastructure to deliver the additional cycles. • Ensure Northern Ireland will play a leading role in the UK Menopause Taskforce to strengthen coordination and raise awareness of the menopause and its impact across the UK, under the shared aim of improving care and support for women experiencing the menopause. <p>We published the detailed Mental Health Action Plan, with 38 actions including a dedicated specialist perinatal mental health service, the development of managed care networks for child and adolescent mental health services and enhanced support for mental health in primary care.</p>

SDLP	We will expand ante-natal support for all parents: We will ensure that ante-natal support & services currently provided to expectant mothers are expanded to include ante-natal nurturing programmes, support groups for new parents, and direct referral to additional services where required.
Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced and more informative birth control services that empower women. • A single IVF system meeting standards elsewhere in the UK. • A post-natal ‘MOT’ which includes assessing maternal physical and mental well-being. • Population Health means focusing on the general well-being of the population as a whole in everything we do, including through A new Women’s Strategy, additional Intervention Framework and enhanced Mental Health Strategy. • Better resourcing for investigative diagnostics for gynaecology and improved care pathways for conditions such as endometriosis. • Specialist menopause clinics. • The maximisation of opportunities to unite menopause, sexual health and fertility clinics, allowing women to access services such as smear tests and reproductive advice in the same location.
Green Party	<p>The Green Party NI has always led the way on equality issues in Northern Ireland, advocating for the decriminalisation of abortion and marriage equality long before the traditional parties.</p> <p>The Green Party will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure free, safe, legal and local access to reproductive healthcare, including the full commissioning of abortion services, accessible without harassment. • Oppose cuts to frontline health services and increase investment in mental health services.

People Before Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We salute the thousands of women who have stood up to the dinosaurs of the DUP in asserting their right to control their own bodies and have abortion services in the North. We salute the young people who are rising and demanding climate action now! • Women and LGBTQ+ and BAME people have been failed by Stormont and continue to face barriers and inequalities in society. People Before Profit advocates for the urgent implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) recommendations relating to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and services; including: Commissioning of abortion services locally, including telemedicine access to medical abortion, Age-appropriate, inclusive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health, Increased funding for domestic abuse and rape crisis services.
TUV	TUV's moral compass means we are resolute in opposing terrorists in government, amnesty, destruction of the unborn and the dilution of marriage and gender identity as determined at birth. Just as we support the rights of the unborn, so at the end-of-life stage we oppose euthanasia. We believe in the sanctity of life.

6. Rural Access Poverty and Digital Divide

Rural Access Poverty and Digital Divide	
Sinn Féin	<p>Sinn Féin is also committed to increasing the number of social homes in rural communities. The challenges that exist in the provision of rural housing including difficulties in demonstrating need and the lack of wastewater and sewage infrastructure must be addressed.</p> <p>Rural Communities:</p> <p>To protect the right of rural families to build in their communities in line with best planning practice N To improve rural broadband, infrastructure and access to public services N To reintroduce an ANC payment for Hill Farmers N To deliver a Future Agriculture Policy that protects the family farm including retention of payments to farms of three hectares and above N To deliver a rural development policy that involves grassroots organisations in identifying and bringing forward projects that support the economic and social development of rural areas N Secure the North's inclusion in an all-island Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for Irish grass-fed beef N Support more sustainable farming practices through Just Transition Fund for Agriculture N Oppose abolition of the</p>

	<p>Agriculture Wages Board N Initiate an Organic strategy that will assist farmers to make the transition to organic production, ensure that organic produce is marketed and promoted sufficiently so that Organic food production is a profitable endeavour</p>
DUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Northern Ireland 100% fibre broadband.
UUP	<p>Support the production of high-quality climate friendly food while transitioning to a net zero carbon society where agriculture and the environment can thrive in harmony whilst sustaining rural communities and businesses.</p>
SDLP	<p>The SDLP is committed to ensuring that farming communities and the rural way of life is protected in the North of Ireland and that our Government at all levels works for all our communities. In government we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure proper funding for farming and rural development • Propose an NI Agriculture Bill • Secure proper rural broadband • Improve water quality • Enhance animal welfare
Alliance	<p>Alliance is committed to championing the participation and recognition of rural women across all of government.</p> <p>Targeting a proportion of rural development money at creating rural employment through renewing and maintaining our agricultural heritage of agricultural buildings, and bringing these up to standard as either tourist accommodation or for rural business use.</p> <p>Strengthen the connectivity of homes in urban and rural areas with significant sewerage infrastructure investment, energy investment, public transport and active travel infrastructure and ensuring access to broadband for homes regardless of location.</p> <p>Alliance has long championed equal opportunities for rural communities. We envision a future for Northern Ireland with sustainable rural communities at its heart, where even the most remote areas thrive and are valued. Alliance is committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that policy development by central and local government includes both a rural impact analysis and a gender impact analysis, to identify and mitigate all potential adverse impacts of proposed policies on rural communities. • The universal provision of digital infrastructure; improvements to rural road infrastructure; innovative demand-led public transport in rural areas; investment in grid capacity and preparing for a net zero future.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of superfast broadband and mobile phone signal to all rural communities, with speeds and costs equitable to those in urban areas. • Fair funding for the delivery of public services and rural development. • Rural communities having greater influence on the decisions which affect them in relation to energy production and supply. • Delivering policies to rebalance the impacts of tourism in rural areas and strategic investment promoting alternative destinations. • Championing the participation and recognition of rural women across all of government. • Tackling rural crime – such as vandalism, anti-social behaviour, wildlife crime and livestock theft. We will call for accountable rural policing that is sensitive to local priorities and issues.
Green Party	<p>IT'S TIME FOR A PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK THAT SERVES RURAL AREAS & MEETS THE ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.</p> <p>The Green Party will Expand public transport, especially in rural areas AND explore reopening railway connections, to ensure that towns and cities across NI are adequately serviced and connected to each other.</p>
People Before Profit	<p>Oppose privatisation of Translink and expand free public transport: Privatisation leads to fragmentation, unnecessary costs, and leaves low income and rural communities behind. Translink must be kept in public hands and must begin to explore rolling out free public transport on green hydrogen bus fleets, to increase public footfall and decrease carbon footprint. This should include a North-South and East-West Rail expansion and a Derry-Dublin rail line as a matter of urgency</p>
TUV	<p>TUV understands and shares the frustration of many over the failure to provide adequate expenditure on road maintenance particularly in respect of the rural road network. Neglect to fix the potholes is a basic failure that must be addressed.</p>

7. NHS Waiting Lists and Women’s Health

NHS Waiting Lists and Women’s Health	
Sinn Féin	<p>Increase the health budget by £1 billion by 2024/25 in order to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle Hospital Waiting Lists, such as investing in elective care centres and funding transformation of health and social care • Recruit and retain more nurses, doctors and health and social care workers • Ensure fair pay and conditions for health and social care workers • Improve access to GP appointments and care packages in the community • Deliver a fully funded Mental Health Strategy
DUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing an extra £1billion to cut waiting lists using a partnership with the independent sector. • Deliver an additional 750,000 hospital assessments and procedures • Train more GPs per year • Reward staff and end dependence on overpriced agency sector • Introduce a social care cap • Implement Bengoa reforms for a better health service.
UUP	<p>We unveiled a landmark £700m Elective Care Framework setting out a range of immediate, medium term and long term actions for tackling Northern Ireland’s hospital waiting lists. In the meantime we also established a Regional Prioritisation Oversight Group to ensure that all available surgical resource is fully optimised.</p> <p>Rebuilding the Health Service:</p> <p>In January 2020 Northern Ireland had some of the worst hospital waiting times in Europe. Far too many patients were being forced to wait for far too long. This was contributing to an increasingly unfair system whereby people who could afford to pay were treated quickly and those who couldn’t were left to wait on increasing lists. Tragically – like virtually every other country in the world - the pandemic had a major impact on our already stretched hospital services.</p> <p>It is now therefore more important than ever before that we recover from the harm caused and fully restore services as quickly as possible. However, it won’t be enough to simply get back to pre-pandemic levels – we need</p>

	<p>to do more. Much more. The Ulster Unionist Party wants to see every single opportunity to increase our health service capacity maximised. This Party has already led the way by publishing the detailed 5-year Elective Care Framework which set out a range of short, medium term and long-term actions. If we are to sustainably rebuild our services we need to look at providing them very differently to how they were delivered before 2020. That includes much greater utilisation of theatre capacity by working longer into the evenings and weekends, supporting and properly incentivising the move towards a genuine 7 day a week health service, and delivering services at scale through the increased rollout of mega multi-disciplinary clinics wherever possible. If the pandemic has taught us anything it is that there is unquestionably a willingness from both patients and clinicians to travel longer distances if it means receiving care and support in a more timely manner. It is essential that the opportunities currently before us are not lost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stabilising the Workforce - Improving our mental health - Protecting and enhancing our cancer services - Strengthening health service accountability and oversight
<p>SDLP</p>	<p>We'll reduce waiting lists by investing £1 billion in the health service, and supporting a 6% pay increase for nurses.</p> <p>Our health and social care system is suffering from a state of slow-motion collapse, the effects of which are being felt by families and individuals of all ages. Today's health service is one in which people are experiencing long delays for ambulances, emergency treatment, hospital beds and planned procedures. Our Twelve-Point-Plan will improve our health service, reduce waiting lists, and save lives. It is a plan to save our health and social care service and preserve a free, accessible NHS for generations to come.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will demonstrate political leadership 2. We will create elective surgical hubs 3. We will support nurses in their work to nurse our system back to health 4. We will invest in mental health treatment and support 5. We will provide more care outside hospitals 6. We will build a world-class workforce for a world-class service 7. We believe prevention is better than cure 8. We will expand cross-border healthcare co-operation 9. We will build multi-disciplinary teams across all sectors 10. We will cut cancer waiting times

	<p>11. We will do everything possible to immediately reduce waiting times</p> <p>12. We will invest in primary care</p>
<p>Alliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance has published ambitious plans for the reform of our health service in our ‘Fighting Fit’ document, with policy proposals on a wide range of issues, from the aims and principles of our health and social care system to the workforce, and from preventative health to a <u>specific women’s health strategy</u>. • Population Health means focusing on the general well-being of the population as a whole in everything we do, including through A new Women’s Strategy, additional Intervention Framework and enhanced Mental Health Strategy. • Better resourcing for investigative diagnostics for gynaecology and improved care pathways for conditions such as endometriosis. • Specialist menopause clinics. • The maximisation of opportunities to unite menopause, sexual health and fertility clinics, allowing women to access services such as smear tests and reproductive advice in the same location. • Improved screening for female cancers. • Enhanced and more informative birth control services that empower women. • A single IVF system meeting standards elsewhere in the UK. • A post-natal ‘MOT’ which includes assessing maternal physical and mental well-being.
<p>Green Party</p>	<p>It’s time to tackle the waiting list crisis, the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Time and again, traditional parties have shown us that they are not equipped to deal with crisis. The politics of deadlock and division will not address the cost-of-living crisis, the waiting list crisis and the housing crisis.</p> <p>The pandemic has exposed the damage to our health service caused by systemic funding cuts and the Executive’s failure to properly reform our health service. As we face growing health inequalities, staff shortages and a mental health crisis, our health service is held together by underpaid workers who are stretched to the limit and starved of resources. As health service reform strategies gather dust following years of inaction from the Executive, hundreds of thousands languish on waiting lists, people struggle to access dental care, and ordinary people suffer the effects of a chronic shortage of GPs.</p> <p>The Green Party Will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the healthcare sector at all levels to identify priority reforms & resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oppose cuts to frontline health services, increase investment in mental health services, and resist any further outsourcing of services. • Oppose any attempts to privatise healthcare services. • Ensure that all health service staff have fair pay and working conditions with meaningful consultation on all changes to contracts. • Support better integrated and more accessible healthcare - from GP to hospital. • Retain free prescriptions for all. • Treat drug addiction as a health issue and advocate for the decriminalisation of drugs. We will support the introduction of drug testing facilities and safe injection rooms. • Ensure free, safe, legal and local access to reproductive healthcare, including the full commissioning of abortion services, accessible without harassment. • Seek an independent review of the provision of support for older people at home. Ensure that such a review examines the rights of carers, both paid and unpaid. • Introduce the urgently needed Clean Air Strategy and mandate the use of air quality monitors outside hospitals. Air quality standards must be raised to be in line with World Health Organisation guidelines. • Deliver health education in schools and support increased physical education and time outdoors from an early age. • Promote health through the provision of safe walking and cycling routes, public parks and green spaces that are accessible to all. Leisure centres should be brought back into local authority ownership to ensure continued affordability. • Seek an independent public inquiry to examine the NI Executive’s pandemic response and to prepare for the future. • Support dignity in dying.
<p>People Before Profit</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the crisis in our local health service, but spiralling waiting lists, the cancellation of life-saving operations, and overworked, underpaid healthcare staff who were pushed to breaking point were a reality before the pandemic. Stormont expects the public to foot the bill for its reckless culture of mismanagement and misspending. In late 2021, an official Health Department document revealed a wish-list of measures the Stormont Executive is aiming to introduce in the next Assembly, including patients paying for GP and A&E visits, and increased charges for prescriptions, domiciliary care charges, early years registration, and community care. People Before Profit firmly believe that healthcare is a public service that must be free at the</p>

point of delivery, must be based on clinical need not ability to pay and must ensure that health and social care staff are meaningfully respected and valued through fair pay and trade union recognition.

IF ELECTED, PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT MLAS PLEDGE:

Proper Pay for NHS

Staff Successive Health Ministers denied pay parity, proper pay, and safe staffing, forcing overstretched healthcare staff to take strike action in 2019 in order to improve patient safety and end unequal pay. Robin Swann—with the support of all the Executive parties—has added insult to injury by awarding a below-inflation pay offer to the same staff this year, after their heroic pandemic efforts, that amounted to a pay cut in real terms. Investing in the NHS must include investing in its staff. All NHS staff need a decent pay rise, especially as the cost of living soars. This will also make working in health and social care an attractive public service career. It will help fill vacancies and so reduce the waiting list backlog. People Before Profit stood on pickets with health workers and supported their demands for fair pay. We would:

- Work with trade unions to amplify their demands at the Assembly level.
- Support inflation busting pay rises to all health workers and offer solidarity and practical support during pay-negotiations including full support for strike action if the staff deem that necessary to remedy unequal and unfair pay, terms and conditions.

End Privitisation:

- Oppose and reverse privatisation within the NHS locally.
- Bring care homes back under NHS control ensuring that domiciliary carers would get the same pay, training, holiday, sick pay etc as Trust staff and that older or disabled people see an end to the 15-minute visits that are an insult to anyone needing care.
- Raise conditions for care home residents to NHS standards.
- Grant trade union membership and equal pay to all care home staff.
- End agency usage to save millions and ensure that all NHS staff are afforded permanent, protected contracts with full employment rights and equal pay.
- Bring private hospital care under the NHS control so that all medical resources and health resources are available to the public.

- Increased investment in general practice by 15% to alleviate pressure at local levels and expand the workforce, to help to reduce unsustainable workload.
- Implement a multi-disciplinary team model at GP level to ensure equal and local access to mental health and social workers, physiotherapists, etc.

Tackle the Waiting List Crisis

People Before Profit consider this situation to be untenable and we would make reducing waiting lists a priority:

- Long term, multi-year investment.
- Push the British Home Office to grant right to work permits to refugees and asylum seekers with professional backgrounds as doctors, nurses, surgeons, etc. so they can take up positions in the NHS.

A Proper Mental Health Strategy

- An immediate doubling of funding for mental health services to bring it, at least, in line with levels of funding for mental health services in Scotland, England and Wales.
- Long-term investment to restructure mental health services based on human rights and best international practice, and prioritising local community-based responses.
- Multi-annual core funding for services that currently depend on piecemeal funding.
- Increased access to early intervention services including family support hubs and via schools.
- A strategy on loneliness.
- Introduction of waiting time targets for counselling based on those put forward by the 123 GP campaign.

A COVID-19 Public Inquiry

- An assessment of the impact of austerity in the NHS and the outsourcing of residential and domiciliary care to private for-profit care homes. Hospital beds have been cut by 20% in Belfast and 10% across Northern Ireland over the past decade. This led to the discharging of potentially COVID-positive hospital patients into care homes so as to free up hospital beds.
- The financial resources that care homes had, specifically during the first wave of the pandemic, when there was a delay of PPE supplies to care home staff.
- The decisions taken to cancel life-saving surgeries and reduce urgent treatments and what impact this had on excess deaths since March 2020

	<p>Oppose Bengoa Reforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment led reorganisation toward a more preventative, community based system; alongside local hospitals, statutory residential homes, etc. • Regional specialisms alongside local hospitals - not instead of. • Local hospitals with A&E departments must remain open to deal with less severe medical emergencies. • More ambulances and air ambulances to guarantee improved response times to medical emergencies and reduce transit times to local hospitals and regional centres. • Recruit 100 more Cancer Nurses Specialists. • A catch-up programme to implement HPV vaccination. <p>An All-Ireland NHS</p> <p>COVID showed the dysfunctionality of operating two different health systems on either side of the border. A single all-Ireland NHS would benefit from economies of scale, allowing for savings in the long term. It would also help to solve the shortage of specialist doctors, nurses and other health care workers in border areas.</p> <p>There is already a range of cross border health services, such as the North West Cancer Centre which serves Donegal as well as Derry, as well as the paediatric cardiac service which is based in Dublin for the whole island. The Stormont Executive has no problem relying on private healthcare services in the South of Ireland through the Reimbursement Scheme set out in the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive so there is no reason not to start the move towards an All-Ireland National Health and Social Care Service.</p>
<p>TUV</p>	<p>Waiting lists are appalling. This is due to Stormont's failure to prioritise health. Under DUP/SF rule hundreds of beds and associated staff have been removed from Northern Ireland hospitals - we now have fewer ICU beds per capita than Romania!</p> <p>All because Stormont, shamefully, had greater priorities. Today we are paying the price. Sustaining long term investment in health is a TUV priority. While others would squander millions on the Irish language, north/south structures and so called 'rights agendas,' we say put the money into more nurses, doctors and beds in our hospitals.</p> <p>Our top spending pledge is Put Health First. TUV recognises the importance of facing up to the mental health problem. TUV supports increased funding for Community Mental Health services to support people experiencing</p>

mental ill-health in their recovery and to further support early intervention strategies which will help prevent the need for hospital admissions.

We also believe that there is a need for adequate acute psychiatric beds so that anyone who requires an acute hospital bed should be able to access it within their Trust area. No patient should be forced to travel outside their Trust area where they are less likely to benefit from the support of family and friends – something which is vital when it comes to mental wellbeing.

Our Health Service must return to being exactly that, not just a Covid Service. Strenuous efforts are now required to make up the lost ground in meeting general needs, particularly in respect of cancer. A readily accessible GP service must also be restored, which of itself eases the burden on Emergency Departments. The haemorrhaging of skilled nurses and realignment to agencies is robbing our health service of vital staff.

The level of reliance on agency staff is astounding and debilitating. The drift to agencies must be disincentivised and loyalty to the NHS rewarded. The Covid experience demonstrated how swiftly our hospitals can be overwhelmed, not least because of lack of nursing staff. TUV, therefore, proposes that a Nursing Reserve Service should be created - somewhat akin to the Army Reserve - whereby retired and former nurses could be enlisted, required to keep up with relevant training, modestly remunerated as reserves and available to be called upon in emergency.

TUV supports the call by Macmillan Cancer Support to recruit one hundred more cancer nurse specialists by 2030 and for a new Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy to be introduced for Northern Ireland.

A March 2021 report by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists found that during the first lockdown 81% of children who had previously been in receipt of speech and language therapy received less therapy and 62% did not receive any therapy at all during lockdown.

TUV believes that the Department must ensure that all face-to-face sessions are returned, and additional monies must be provided to deal with the backlog and impact of the pandemic. Hospital services across Northern Ireland must not be denuded, but there is merit in centres of excellence for various disciplines, for example in respiratory medicine and strokes. However, any reorganisation must not, as in the past, simply result in even more administrators!

It is not more directors we need, but more clinicians. TUV supports a radical rebalancing within the health service to prioritise the frontline over highly paid bureaucrats. Reports gathering dust have served us ill. Where are the

	<p>outcomes on the Reshaping Stroke Care consultation, the workforce analysis - so key to workforce planning - still unpublished for a year after its completion?</p> <p>Prevention is key to good health care. So, TUV supports minimum pricing of alcohol and a new Tobacco Control Strategy, with smoking bans near schools and in play parks. The primary focus of our NHS is the saving of lives, yet some want it to become an agency for death through the full commissioning of abortion services.</p> <p>TUV, being unashamedly pro-life, opposes such demands by Sinn Fein, the Greens, and most Alliance MLAs. Halting the pandemic of destruction of the unborn, which abortion on demand represents, is a TUV goal. Thus, we will strongly support legislative and other moves in the Assembly to counter the appalling imposition of 2020 which left us with the most extreme abortion laws in Europe. It was a shocking indictment of the last Assembly that all Sinn Fein, 4 SDLP, 7 Alliance, Greens, PBP MLAs and Claire Sugden united to defeat the modest legislative attempt to remove Downs' Syndrome babies from the reach of abortion. TUV in the next Assembly will again fight for the voiceless, the unborn - the right to life!</p>
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8. Under-representation of women in politics, public life and peacebuilding

Under-representation of women in politics, public life and peacebuilding	
Sinn Féin	No mention
DUP	No mention
UUP	No mention
SDLP	No mention
Alliance	Establishing mentoring schemes to increase the number of women in decision making positions.
Green Party	No mention
People Before Profit	No mention
TUV	No mention

9. VAWG and Misogyny

VAWG and Misogyny	
Sinn Féin	The pandemic also marked a surge in domestic violence. The scourge of violence against women must be addressed and a violence against women and girls strategy must be delivered.
DUP	No mention
UUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that legislation tackling violence against women and girls is kept up to date and is both robust and responsive to developing challenges
SDLP	In 2021 there were over 88 domestic abuse incidents a day with domestic abuse crimes rising by 9% in the previous 12 months. In a recent poll, less than half of women stated that they felt safe walking the streets. Even more recent figures confirm the very low level of prosecutions that arise in rape and sexual abuse cases. We must ensure that the Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy is fully implemented and resourced.
Alliance	<p>Continuing our strong opposition to domestic and sexual violence by investing in welfare facilities, education and awareness programmes. This will include support for refuges and other support services for victims, and recognition that these services require specialist expertise and knowledge from providers.</p> <p>We will continue to tackle violence against women and girls by keeping the law around drink spiking and street harassment under review.</p>
Green Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GPNI will ensure a greater focus on tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse, including the provision of additional statutory support for victims. We will support and introduce a robust and funded strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls and seek to change legislation in line with the Gillen Review recommendations. • Update hate crime legislation to include misogyny and age-related crimes and ensure greater protections against disability hate crime. • Ensure greater support and safeguards for women from abuse, threats and harassment in public office, including seeking action from social media providers and effective and responsive policing.

People Before Profit	Urgent implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) recommendations relating to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and services; including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning of abortion services locally, including telemedicine access to medical abortion. • Age-appropriate, inclusive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health. • Increased funding for domestic abuse and rape crisis services.
TUV	No mention

10. Standardised Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationship and Sexuality Education	
Sinn Féin	This means modernising education to include age appropriate Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE), introducing a new focus and greater awareness of the climate change and biodiversity emergency, investing in digital skills and STEM subjects and putting an emphasis on emotional health and well-being. Modernise the curriculum with the inclusion of age appropriate learning on Climate Change, Relationship and Sexual Education, and emotional health and well being
DUP	No mention
UUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide age-appropriate universal sex and relationships education in schools and educational institutions
SDLP	Provision of standard Relationships and Sex Education to ensure that it is up-to-date, comprehensive and LGBT-inclusive.
Alliance	Introducing inclusive Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) into the school curriculum.
Green Party	Require the introduction of mandatory, comprehensive and inclusive Relationships and Sexuality Education.
People Before Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-appropriate, inclusive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health.

TUV	No mention
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11. Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

Bill of Rights	
Sinn Féin	Sinn Féin priorities include – Bill of Rights
DUP	No mention
UUP	No mention
SDLP	No mention
Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a comprehensive and cross-cutting shared future strategy to drive forward cohesion, sharing and integration. • Introduce a Single Equality Act for Northern Ireland covering age discrimination protections in goods, facilities and services. • Support a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland that reflects international human rights standards and meets the needs of all citizens, and which can be used as a pre- scrutiny tool for legislation and policy decisions across government.
Green Party	Deliver a Northern Ireland Bill of Rights and continue to fight inequalities based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class.
People Before Profit	No mention
TUV	No mention

12. Additional Issues:

- a. LGBTQ+ People**
- b. Racial Equality**
- c. Refugees and Asylum Seekers**
- d. Disability**
- e. Climate Change**

LGBTQ+ People	
Sinn Féin	Sinn Féin priorities include: Social Inclusion Strategies on Anti Poverty; LGBTQI+; Disability and Gender Equality
DUP	No mention
UUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ban the practice of conversion therapy in Northern Ireland. • Introduce a policy of zero new HIV diagnoses by 2030. • Ensure our transgender population and those who are questioning have access to timely information, services, support and care. • Provide fertility services that are accessible to all without discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. • Ensure equal access to adoption and/or fostering • Implement a zero-tolerance approach to hate crimes and harassment, whether in person or online, in our schools and educational institutions • Introduce universal Age-appropriate relationships and sex education
SDLP	We are committed to ensuring the full realisation of LGBT+ equality. As the party that introduced the first successful motion for equal marriage in the Assembly, we are determined to continue our passion for equality. We will introduce a comprehensive ban on all forms of conversion therapy. We would also take every necessary measure to ensure sufficient funding for LGBT+ organisations and support services, particularly in rural areas. It is of paramount importance that we stand up for trans people as well in their struggle for equality and access to appropriate healthcare.

	<p>SDLP also support the provision of standard Relationships and Sex Education to ensure that it is up-to-date, comprehensive and LGBT-inclusive.</p>
Alliance	<p>LGBTQI+ People Alliance has long supported the rights of LGBTQI+ people, who sadly still often face discrimination and stigma. Our priorities for improving LGBTQI+ rights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banning the harmful practice of so-called “Conversion Therapy”. • Producing guidance for schools on addressing prejudice and homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying in schools. • Asking every service to audit how their services are provided to LGBTQI+ people to ensure no accidental bias. • Developing a comprehensive Strategy for Transgender People, to ensure that the distinct needs of transgender people are reflected in public services and other areas of life. We will back this up with legislation if necessary. • Ensuring the provision of trans healthcare is human rights compliant and adheres to best practice globally. • Introducing inclusive Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) into the school curriculum. • Reforming and simplifying laws on gender recognition so that trans people can obtain • legal recognition with a simple administrative process based on the principle of statutory declaration, and without intrusive medical diagnosis requirements. • Delivering the long overdue Sexual Orientation Strategy.
Green Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQI+ couples struggle to access fertility treatments. And transgender healthcare is next to non-existent, with unsustainable waiting lists. • Ban ‘conversion therapy’ in Northern Ireland.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that LGBTQI+ relationships have access to the full rights and benefits currently enjoyed by heterosexual couples. • Update the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to provide transgender & non-binary people in Northern Ireland with gender recognition processes based on self-declaration.
People Before Profit	<p>We promote a vision of a better, socialist society where there are top quality free public services, decent wages for working people, full rights for ethnic minorities, women and the LGBTQ+ community, and a real effort to stop our planet being destroyed by climate change.</p> <p>Urgent implementation of the LGBTQI+ Strategy Expert Advisory Panel recommendations across the health, education, and legal sectors, including self-ID for gender identity and accompanying funding for delivery.</p>
TUV	<p>TUV's moral compass means we are resolute in opposing terrorists in government, amnesty, destruction of the unborn and the dilution of marriage and gender identity as determined at birth. Just as we support the rights of the unborn, so at the end-of-life stage we oppose euthanasia. We believe in the sanctity of life.</p>

Racial Equality	
Sinn Féin	<p>Sinn Féin is committed to an inclusive and diverse society based on equal rights and equal opportunities for all citizens. There can be no place for sectarianism, racism, misogyny or disability discrimination in our institutions and our society. We want to mainstream equality in all aspects of political and public life. This includes putting in place the necessary legislation to safeguard everyone's equality and human rights.</p> <p>We want to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive society for all including those seeking refuge from conflict. The north is home to refugees and asylum seekers from across the world including in recent times those from Syria, Afghanistan and most recently Ukraine. We need to be an inclusive society for all ethnic minorities, both indigenous - Irish Travellers – and those who more recently have made this island their home.</p>
DUP	No mention
UUP	No mention

SDLP	<p>Ethnic minority groups in Northern Ireland are diverse, and include newly arrived refugees, people seeking sanctuary, long-settled citizens, migrant workers and their families. The SDLP will work closely with the representatives of ethnic minorities to ensure Racial Equality and Refugee Integration Strategies that are fully resourced.</p> <p>The SDLP will actively support the campaign currently being conducted by representatives of ethnic minorities in the North to ensure that freedom of movement can be enjoyed by all our residents. The SDLP will ensure that the eradication of hate crime in Northern Ireland will be given the resources and political prominence it deserves. The SDLP supports the campaign for all refugees and people seeking sanctuary to have the right to work.</p>
Alliance	<p>Alliance is deeply concerned about the rise in racial and religious hatred in Northern Ireland in recent years. Our proposal for a Single Equality Act would bring racial equality legislation in line with the rest of the UK and could be used as an instrument to deliver on racial and religious protections.</p>
Green Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a Refugee Integration Strategy for Northern Ireland and commit to a Crisis Fund to ensure no asylum seeker is reduced to destitution. • Update and implement the Racial Equality Strategy.
People Before Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An end to local enforcement of Home Office Hostile Environment policies: no racist hard border in the Common Travel Area. • Equal rights for asylum seekers and refugees: including but not limited to housing, welfare, working, and voting, and an end to the policy of “no recourse to public funds”. • Fund the implementation of the Race Equality Strategy: collect and use ethnic monitoring data to allow public services to identify and respond to inequalities experienced by different social groups.
TUV	No mention

Refugees and Asylum Seekers	
Sinn Féin	<p>We want to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive society for all including those seeking refuge from conflict. The north is home to refugees and asylum seekers from across the world including in recent times those from Syria, Afghanistan and most recently Ukraine. We need to be an inclusive society for all ethnic minorities, both indigenous - Irish Travellers – and those who more recently have made this island their home.</p> <p>Sinn Féin Priorities Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refugee Integration Strategy
DUP	No mention
UUP	No mention
SDLP	<p>Ethnic minority groups in Northern Ireland are diverse, and include newly arrived refugees, people seeking sanctuary, long-settled citizens, migrant workers and their families. The SDLP will work closely with the representatives of ethnic minorities to ensure Racial Equality and Refugee Integration Strategies that are fully resourced.</p> <p>The SDLP will actively support the campaign currently being conducted by representatives of ethnic minorities in the North to ensure that freedom of movement can be enjoyed by all our residents. The SDLP will ensure that the eradication of hate crime in Northern Ireland will be given the resources and political prominence it deserves. The SDLP supports the campaign for all refugees and people seeking sanctuary to have the right to work.</p>
Alliance	<p>Alliance represents everyone in Northern Ireland, and as such, we have long opposed the UK Government's hostile environment. Migration is a normal part of human life: it enriches our culture, opens our minds, causes love and families to grow, and significantly improves our economy. From the humanitarian crises of Afghanistan and Ukraine to the deaths of migrants in the Channel, it is clear that the people of Northern Ireland reject the Conservative Government's callous approach and want to play their part in supporting refugees and creating an inclusive, vibrant and welcoming society. Immigration and asylum are reserved matters and opposing the Conservative Government's anti-immigration agenda is a major priority for Alliance at Westminster. Nevertheless,</p>

	<p>we believe there is scope to use devolved powers to create mitigations and strengthen migrant and asylum seekers' rights in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Refugees and people seeking asylum face significant barriers in accessing support to meet their basic needs, including physical and mental healthcare, education, financial security and support to rebuild their lives in a new place of safety.</p> <p>Alliance will ensure asylum seekers and refugees are integrated safely and inclusively into society. To do this, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to oppose the increasingly restrictive hostile environment policies, including the ban on working for those seeking asylum. • Implement the Refugee Integration Strategy on a cross departmental basis, in collaboration with the community and voluntary sector working with those who arrive in Northern Ireland. • Ensure a trauma-informed approach is applied to the physical and mental health support available to refugees and people seeking asylum, recognising they are a group particularly at risk of experiencing trauma prior to their arrival. • Ensure a human-rights based, case-by- case approach is applied to education policy and practice to remove barriers refugee children and children in the asylum system face in enjoying full access to education. • Fund the TEO Crisis Fund on a permanent basis, so that that refugees and people seeking asylum can access emergency support all year round to help them through the extreme hardships of destitution. • Provide refugee family reunion integration services on a sustainable, long-term basis.
Green Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a Refugee Integration Strategy for Northern Ireland and commit to a Crisis Fund to ensure no asylum seeker is reduced to destitution. • Update and implement the Racial Equality Strategy.
People Before Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An end to local enforcement of Home Office Hostile Environment policies: no racist hard border in the Common Travel Area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal rights for asylum seekers and refugees: including but not limited to housing, welfare, working, and voting, and an end to the policy of “no recourse to public funds”. • Fund the implementation of the Race Equality Strategy: collect and use ethnic monitoring data to allow public services to identify and respond to inequalities experienced by different social groups.
TUV	No mention

Disability Rights	
Sinn Féin	<p>Sinn Féin priorities include:</p> <p>Social Inclusion Strategies on Anti Poverty; LGBTQI+; Disability and Gender Equality</p> <p>Sinn Féin Priorities Include:</p> <p>Incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into local law</p>
DUP	No mention
UUP	<p>Ulster Unionists support the introduction of Changing Places Toilet (CPT) facilities in Northern Ireland and will initiate the necessary legislation. England already has over 1,500 facilities which meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis.</p> <p>Further to our support for CPT facilities we will set up a £5m Accessibility fund to offer Northern Ireland councils match funding to adapt and improve access to non-residential buildings and premises for disabled people.</p> <p>Ulster Unionists will also initiate a review of existing Disability Discrimination legislation with a view to updating the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) taking into account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as ratified by the UK in 2006. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Changing Places legislation to Northern Ireland • Set-up up a £5m Accessibility Fund to adapt and approve access to buildings for disabled people • Review the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 with a view to updating

<p>SDLP</p>	<p>We are committed to ensuring that the rights of people with disabilities are upheld and protected and that they do not face any barriers to their full participation in society.</p> <p>The SDLP is committed to ensuring the full incorporation of the UNCRPD into domestic law including through action where necessary at Westminster and the Assembly to ensure legal protection for people with disabilities against discrimination.</p> <p>Protections for people with disabilities must be realised in every area of government policy including through employment, tackling the disproportionate impact of the punitive welfare system on people with disabilities, ensuring a fully inclusive education system and delivering accessible social housing and public transport.</p> <p>We would ensure an adequate and fully resourced Disability Strategy with accompanying legislative commitments.</p>
<p>Alliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance will increase uptake of physical activity amongst those sections of the community that have lower participation rates, such as women, people with disabilities, and people from areas of social disadvantage. • Deliver the Disability Employment Strategy and invest in support services to help those with disabilities, such as learning difficulties or autism, gain training and employment opportunities. • Introduce disability and diversity training for social security office staff and employment support officers. • A review of concessionary fares to include consideration of providing full concessionary fares to those with a disability currently eligible for Half Fare SmartPass, and increasing the age to which half-fares are available for children and young people from 16 to 22 as part of wider public transport recovery and growth plans.
<p>Green Party</p>	<p>Update hate crime legislation to include misogyny and age-related crimes and ensure greater protections against disability hate crime.</p> <p>Fully implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).</p>

	<p>Much progress has been made in recent years, but much more remains to be achieved. Disabled people cannot get married or cohabit without running the risk of losing their benefits.</p>
<p>People Before Profit</p>	<p>A new non-taxable weekly child payment: for children aged 0-4 and those aged 5-15 who are in receipt of free school meals, alongside the current Child Payment for disabled children and young people until the age of 20.</p> <p>Expanded Sure Start provision: in the 30% most deprived Super Output Areas, with specific funding ring-fenced for the inclusion of disabled children and their families.</p> <p>Bring care homes back under NHS control ensuring that domiciliary carers would get the same pay, training, holiday, sick pay etc as Trust staff and that older or disabled people see an end to the 15-minute visits that are an insult to anyone needing care.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic brought these very serious issues to the fore. Families with disabled members found that the Direct Payments given to them as part of the “personalisation” agenda were useless during the pandemic but allowed the Health and Social Care Trusts to wash their hands of responsibility for their loved ones. Now many are discovering that they are recorded as receiving “Self Directed Support” (SDS) when, in fact, they are not directing the support they get at all.</p> <p>DISABILITY:</p> <p>During the COVID-19 global pandemic, we saw a disastrous and inhumane erosion of disability rights. Disabled people’s specific needs were not taken into consideration and many lives were lost due to governmental negligence and lack of care. Stormont has ignored disabled people’s calls for a robust disability rights framework and for prioritising investing in sustainable and effective disability services.</p> <p>Disabled people continue to be underrepresented in paid employment. Poverty levels among disabled people continue to be high and many carers for disabled people struggle to make ends meet on the meagre support offered by the government. For example, in 2014, only 37.7% of NI’s disabled people were in employment, compared to 75% of non-disabled people.</p> <p>Whatever chance there is of able-bodied people getting work, disabled people have even less chance and for many of them, even emigration isn’t an option.</p>

	<p>People Before Profit wants to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive action to encourage employers to employ disabled workers. • Updated and strengthened legislation to tackle discrimination against disabled people in the workplace. • An end to the austerity regime imposed on disabled people via Universal Credit. • A substantial increase of disability benefits to cover the steep rise of the cost of living and the rising rates of inflation. • Reinstate the Independent Living Fund. More robust legislation protecting disabled people from predatory private landlords taking advantage of the complex housing needs of disabled people and the lack of accessible housing. • More effective consultation with disabled people’s organisations on all matters concerning disability, as opposed to tokenism and empty promises. • Involving disabled people and their organisations in the drafting of all emergency responses to any future public health crisis to ensure a human rights compatible approach to distributing resources that affirms disabled people’s human rights. • Extend the full fare concessionary travel pass, Smart Pass, to all people who are unable to drive for medical reasons.
TUV	No mention

Climate Change	
Sinn Féin	<p>Modernise the curriculum with the inclusion of age appropriate learning on Climate Change, Relationship and Sexual Education, and emotional health and well being.</p> <p>Farmers and rural communities will also play an important role in meeting our climate change targets. Sinn Féin believe they must be supported in developing more sustainable practices and benefit from the opportunities presented by it.</p> <p>Sinn Féin was to the fore in delivering climate legislation for the north that is ambitious, fair and deliverable in reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 in line with the rest of Ireland.</p>

The north is no longer the only part of these islands without climate legislation.

Sinn Féin ensured that the climate legislation was firmly grounded on the principles of fairness and a just transition away from fossil fuel dependency and towards a fairer and greener society powered by renewable energy.

We need to develop our abundant solar, tidal, and onshore and offshore wind resources across the island and off our coast and develop the potential of green hydrogen.

A move towards renewable energy with a diversity of sources will increase energy security by reducing reliance on fossil fuel imports which are more susceptible to international markets and can also lead to the energy independence for the island of Ireland.

Meeting our climate change target of net-zero by 2050 can only be done successfully if it is done fairly and in partnership with workers, farmers and small businesses in the different sectors.

That means that farmers, workers, and families are not left behind.

It means that people must be supported to make the necessary changes and are able to access the opportunities that the move to a more sustainable society can bring.

It means the burden of the cost of reducing emissions isn't left on the shoulders of those least able to pay for it. A Just Transition Commission will be established to ensure we meet our climate objectives fairly.

The Commission will also identify and support opportunities for the creation of green jobs and industry.

A Just Transition Fund for Agriculture will provide funding to support farmers to adopt more sustainable practices. Reaching net-zero emissions, improving our environment and reversing biodiversity loss must also be progressed on an all-island basis.

Our countryside, rivers and mountains don't recognise the border so our policies to address the significant challenges that exist must be based on the reality that we live on a single geographical entity.

We need to reduce dependency on private cars by improving our public transport network including all-island rail links such as connectivity in the North West and the Dublin to Belfast corridor.

	<p>We also need to prioritise active travel infrastructure such as cycle lanes and greenways to encourage people to take up healthier forms of travel, such as the Sligo-Enniskillen Greenway. The electric vehicle charge points network must be made fit for purpose in order to support electric vehicle usage.</p> <p>An important first step in moving away from fossil fuel dependency is to introduce a ban on petroleum licensing, drilling, and extraction in the north of Ireland. This includes a ban on fracking which would end the prospect of fracking anywhere on the island. Sinn Féin will work with all sections of society to ensure measures, such as climate action plans, are developed that are fair and deliverable.</p> <p>SINN FÉIN’S PRIORITIES ON TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE ARE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward legislation in the Assembly to ban petroleum licensing, drilling, and extraction– including fracking • Ensuring Climate Action Plans are developed in partnership with farmers, workers and sectors and are economic, social, and rural proofed • Putting in place the structures provided for in climate legislation including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just Transition Commission – to ensure a fair and just transition • Just Transition Fund for Agriculture – to support farmers in adopting more sustainable practices • Climate Change Commission • Work on an all-island basis to meet climate, environmental and biodiversity objectives
DUP	<p>We support introducing building control policies and financial schemes to reduce the use of energy in homes and cut down electricity bills. We will deliver a priority programme of energy efficiency schemes focused on retrofitting both private and public housing across Northern Ireland and establish minimum energy efficiency standards in the domestic private rented sector. New packages encouraging greater efficiency in the home are vital.</p> <p>Following a more environmentally friendly lifestyle and adapting homes to do this is something many people in Northern Ireland are keen to do. However, the costs involved can often be a barrier. In order to make the green transition, we have to ensure that it is affordable and provides value for money. We will look at options for support schemes for energy sources and heat installation measures across the home</p>
UUP	<p>Support the production of high-quality climate friendly food while transitioning to a net zero carbon society where agriculture and the environment can thrive in harmony whilst sustaining rural communities and businesses.</p>

	<p>Fund Decarbonisation of Social Housing - Ulster Unionists are committed to Climate Change mitigation and supporting the UK's target of Net Zero by 2050. The UK government at Westminster has launched a £3.84bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and we will demand that the next Executive ringfences Northern Ireland's share of this fund, working towards a Net Zero carbon future while also supporting local jobs and businesses.</p> <p>Work with the industry and stakeholders to ensure farmers' opinions on climate change and the environment are properly considered by policy makers to deliver on all pillars of sustainability; economic, environmental, and social.</p> <p>The Ulster Unionist Party has declared a Climate Emergency and joined with other parties to put forward a Climate Change Bill. Northern Ireland has been the only part of the UK not to have Climate Change legislation and the Bill would have mandated the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive to prepare Climate Action Plans and join with the rest of the UK in Climate Change mitigation. Subsequently, the Dept. of Agriculture, Environment Rural Affairs (DAERA) Minister brought forward a second, official Climate Change bill and Ulster Unionists worked to amalgamate both bills to ensure a 'best of all worlds' final legislative solution. We were disappointed that the final bill did not PAGE 32 contain our proposal that Northern Ireland's 'fair contribution' to the UK Net Zero greenhouse gas target should be 82% by 2050. Northern Ireland is a significant net exporter of agri-food products with nearly 50% of all agri-food products produced in Northern Ireland consumed in the rest of the UK. As the smallest region within the UK Northern Ireland supplies a disproportionate amount of food, feeding approximately 10 million citizens in the UK annually. The independent Climate Change Committee has stated that for the UK to reach the Net Zero target a fair contribution from NI would be an 82% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. The Ulster Unionist Party welcomes this intervention from the independent committee and will continue to target an 82% or better reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 for Northern Ireland as part of our ongoing climate mitigation strategy. The next five years are the most important in mitigating Climate Change and Ulster Unionists will ensure Northern Ireland makes a 'Fair Contribution' to the goal of UK Net Zero.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Green Industrial Revolution - The Responsible Party of Unionism - Cycling - Woodlands
SDLP	<p>We can no longer shirk the challenge or neglect the opportunity before us to build on this strong record to protect Northern Ireland and play a part in combatting the climate emergency for future generations. Our promises are:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will ensure the NI Executive declares a climate emergency 2. We will ensure a just transition 3. We will build a Green Economy 4. We are committed to increasing renewable & clean energy supplies, 5. We will protect and restore our environment
Alliance	<p>The Alliance Green New Deal aims to make Northern Ireland one of the most innovative, inclusive and sustainable regional economies in Europe. The green economy can provide new and sustainable means of driving economic growth.</p> <p>To do this, we must radically invest, adapt and modernise, building on what made us prosperous in the past and harnessing the creativity and funding needed to create a thriving and equitable decarbonised economy.</p> <p>The new green economy must protect us and the planet. That’s why we are recognising skilled social care as essential infrastructure and investing in care jobs as green jobs for the future.</p> <p>We want a job-rich, low-carbon, worker-led transformation: from childcare workers to engineers, technicians to adult care workers, solar installers to building retrofitters, car manufacturers to environmental enforcement – the Alliance Green New Deal will pave the way for thousands of new jobs across Northern Ireland and will ensure all of us benefit from a new green economy.</p> <p>Moving to a green society and economy in which everyone can participate requires universal, child-centred childcare to meet families’ and providers’ needs.</p>
Green Party	<p>The Green Party NI’s leadership has ensured that the Climate Change Bill contains a net-zero target, an independent Climate Commissioner, soil and biodiversity targets, and a Just Transition. We have also ensured that the Bill is one of the first ever pieces of gender-proofed climate legislation in the world. The Bill sets out ambition beyond anything Northern Ireland has seen before.</p>
People Before Profit	<p>We promote a vision of a better, socialist society where there are top quality free public services, decent wages for working people, full rights for ethnic minorities, women and the LGBTQ+ community, and a real effort to stop our planet being destroyed by climate change.</p>
TUV	No mention