

**P R O G R E S S I V E
P O L I T I C S N I
T H E C H A R T E R
O F C H A N G E**



OUR AIMS & PROMISES

Using the policy areas highlighted on this Charter we at Progressive Politics NI will seek to build a progressive movement in Northern Ireland to fight for equality and social justice by carrying out the following;

- Working with & supporting progressive politicians, parties, activists & governments who seek equality & social justice
- Fostering cross-party cooperation to achieve progressive objectives
- Work with organisations & lobbying groups who are working on securing legislative change on human rights of equality & social justice
- Setup groups region-wide to tackle inequality & social justice issues all over NI
- Oppose oppressive politicians, parties & governments

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1. SHARED FUTURE

- Integrated education
- Mixed communities & inclusive public spaces
- Commissions to resolve contentious issues
(flags, parading, the past)
- No paramilitary flags, symbolism or territory marking
- Political parties, politicians and activists need to acknowledge that the killing of innocent people is always wrong & there can never be any excuse for it. Whether it be by the armed forces or paramilitary organisations, we must never seek to hero worship them



2. FIXING OUR POLITICS

- Reassess the terms of the GFA including moving away from mandatory coalition, abolishing or reforming the Petition of Concern and ridding the Assembly of Unionist/Nationalist designations.
- End the secrecy of historical party donations.
- Right to vote from the age of 16.
- Reform the House of Lords so Lords are elected by the public & not chosen by political parties.
- Special advisors in Stormont to be selected via employment trawl rather than chosen by Ministers.
- Automatic voter registration once a person turns 16 years of age.
- Easier access to mail in voting.
- Investigations into the incorporation of electronic voting to our current system.
- Look at moving “polling day” for all elections being on public/bank holidays, and/or changing them to be over at least 2 days so as to encourage greater public participation in elections.
- Reform the libel law in Northern Ireland.
- Ban on MLAs employing family as staff.
- Reduction of Assembly terms from 5 years to 4 years to strengthen accountability and give the public a say in direct democracy more often.

3. HEALTH & SAFETY

- Properly funded health service.
- Address the problems in Emergency Departments and Waiting Lists in Hospitals.
- No to privatisation of our NHS.
- More resources to tackle the issue of human trafficking.
- Improvement of support services for refugees & migrants.
- 15% pay raise for NHS workers.
- Mandatory First Aid and Medical & Digital Literacy Training in education.
- National Care Service – bring care services under public control just like the NHS.
- Force the social media giants to take realistic steps to tackle all forms of online abuse.
- Ban the smacking of children.
- Defibrillators must be compulsory in all public buildings including education & sports venues.
- Conspiracy Theories Action Plan should be developed to address the disturbing rise of them in society & their negative influence on public life.

4. MENTAL HEALTH

- Restructuring of Mental Health Services.
- Additional Funding for Mental Health Services.
- Fully deliver the Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- All workplaces to have Mental Health First Aiders.
- Greater education of mental health issues in schools, further education environments & workplaces.
- Fully fund treatment and research of psilocybin-assisted therapy for mental disorders such as treatment-resistant depression and major depressive disorder.
- Fully funded mental health wellbeing centres as an alternative to psychiatric wards.



5. HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

- Urgent legislation to tackle the growing homelessness problem.
- Tax landlords for empty properties.
- Have rent caps on properties.
- Abolish application administration fees.
- Human Right to Housing.
- Vacant land tax on those who own land but do nothing with it.
- Further regulation of Houses of Multiple Occupancy.
- Tenants to have greater rights to security of tenure in private rental housing and protection from no fault eviction.
- Legislation to prohibit the discriminatory practice of refusing tenancies to those in receipt of social security benefits.
- Propose a legislative cap on holiday homes, in seaside towns.



6. EDUCATION

- Higher education to be free at the point of use.
- Greater education on areas like LGBT rights, Mental Health, Money management and Sex Education.
- Greater awareness of dyslexia and dyspraxia in schools
- Return the student nurse bursary & extend bursaries to all health & social care students.
- Compulsory, comprehensive and standardised relationships and sexuality education (RSE) in schools.
- Greater need for political education in schools, higher education & workplaces.

7. FAMILY

- Government should provide the option of free & quality childcare for all 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
- All employers to provide a minimum of 4 weeks paid parental leave for new fathers.
- Government to subsidise school uniforms so they are supplied to all free of charge.
- Free school meals for those pupils who need them.

8. CLIMATE

- An end to environmentally damaging processes such as fracking and toxic mineral extraction methods.
- Modern developments to our utility and transport infrastructures to aid with the transition period to a circular economy.
- A crackdown on environmentally harmful acts & the strengthening of legislation regarding this.
- An independent Environmental Protection Agency for NI to provide oversight and regulation across both the private and public sector.
- Reduce CO2 emissions through the promotion of renewable & sustainable methods – introduce a Climate Change Act and incentivise the switch away from fossil fuels.
- Achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2035 through a gradual change to entirely sustainable materials, services and energy generation methods whilst utilising carbon capture & recycle method.
- Rights of Nature to be passed in legislation.
- Ban petroleum licensing.
- Update the 1960's petroleum legislation to reflect modern climate science.
- Support for Alliance's Green New Deal & Clare Bailey's Climate Change Bill as the absolute minimum we should be doing to tackle to climate crisis.
- Firewall between policymakers and mine / fossil fuel industries.
- Department for the Economy should release the Hatch Report, commissioned from Hatch Generis on the economic feasibility of natural gas extraction in Northern Ireland.

9. Ethnic Minorities

- All points in the Racial Equality Strategy 2015 – 2025 are implemented.
- Ethnic Monitoring to be implemented.
- Race Relations Order 1997 to be updated.
- Refugee Integration Strategy to be implemented
- Education in schools on race and minority issues including Black History Months in both primary & secondary schools.
- Change of CTA rules to extend rights and privileges to non CTA residents with rights to work, study and live in the island of Ireland.
- Stormont should appoint an Independent Advisor on Racial Equality to provide expertise, insight & advice to the Executive on achieving progress.
- Develop a Regional Roma Integration Strategy to address the inequality of the community in four key areas; Housing, Education, Employment & Healthcare.
- Recognise the cultural rights of the Irish Traveller Community to live their traditional lifestyle and to provide appropriate sites for Traveller accommodation with sufficient access to essential utilities
- End the Immigration Health Surcharge.

10. LGBTQ+

- Ban conversion therapy.
- Lift the 3 month deferral period on MSM blood donations.
- Gender Recognition Act for NI.
- Support trans women right to be on all-women shortlists.
- Support for greater education on trans issues for all ages in schools & workplaces.
- Stop homophobic & transphobic bullying in schools & workplaces.
- Adoption equality for LGBT couples.
- Trans healthcare services needs to improve.
- Data collection by public & government agencies on LGBT hate crimes needs to improve.



11. WOMENS RIGHTS

- Services should be commissioned by the Health Minister to allow for free, safe & legal abortions.
- Protest Buffer Zones of at least 1 mile outside abortion services buildings.
- Introduce gender quotas for elections.
- Highlight the need to stop female genital mutilation.
- Free sanitary products available in public & council owned buildings.
- The impletation of a Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy in Northern Ireland.
- The NI Assembly passing the Justice (Sexual Offences & Human Trafficking) Bill.
- The abolishment of the 'Rough Sex' defence, and the criminalisation of the threats to publish so called 'Revenge Porn.'
- The introduction of Non-Fatal Strangulation legislation
- The passage of the Protection from Stalking Bill



12. WORKER'S RIGHTS & BUSINESS

- Automatic pay raises in line with inflation for all front line public services workers.
- Support for the rights of trade unions including supporting Gerry Carroll's Trade Union Freedom Bill.
- Legislation brought through to protect workers tips from their employers.
- Give workers "working from home" flexibility where applicable.
- Move to a 4-day working week where possible.
- Outlaw fire & rehire.
- £15 per hour minimum wage.
- Ban zero hours contracts.
- No reduction to corporation tax & increase it to 26% for larger companies.
- Stricter transfer pricing regulations. With the added clause that no existing large company may offshore their HQs within ten years of the start of the legislation.

13. AUSTERITY

- Every adult to receive Universal Basic Income.
- Current welfare programs like Universal Credit, PIP & Work Capability Assessment need reformed.
- Abolish the Social Sector Size Criteria.
- Reverse austerity cuts in the community in important sectors such as the arts, youth clubs and sports.
- Scrap pay-to-use ATM machines.
- Supermarkets, restaurants cafes & other businesses must donate unused food to food banks.

14. REGIONAL INVESTMENT

- Require infrastructure spending and capital investment in the most deprived regions, based on need - not just Belfast.
- Improve transport routes in the West with a high priority on train routes.
- Councils program for regeneration of town centres.
- Councils to take greater steps to pedestrianise streets in towns & cities.

15. PUBLIC SECTOR

- Broadband free to all at the point of use
- Stop the creeping privatisation into our public services like the Housing Executive & Translink.
- Review of the PSNI and their procedures including but not limited to the reaction to the Black Lives Matter protest in the summer of 2020, as well as their decision to train authoritarian regimes in Oman & Israel.
- Public Enquiry in Invest NI
- Statutory support & funding for the recovery from the pandemic & a public enquiry into the handling of it by government

16. DRUG LAW REFORM

- Creation of a safe & regulated market for the selling of & personal use of cannabis.
- Decriminalise drug use so it is not viewed as a criminal justice matter & to focus on a healthcare based approach.
- Expansion of support services to help those who misuse drugs to quit.
- Recognise the Cancard as a validated indication of medical cannabis usage.

17. DISABILITY RIGHTS

- Incorporate United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) into law in NI.
- Greater education of disabilities taught in schools, further education & workplaces.
- Develop legislation which recognises that children under 16 (including disabled children) can exercise legal capacity with support.
- Repeal the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) benefit and associated assessment for a better alternative.
- Repeal the Work Capability legislation, including the associated assessment and adopt a human rights approach.
- Protected time off work for carers.
- Harry's Law – legislation to protect children with disabilities in education.
- Reform the Mental Capacity Act 2016 to remove discrimination on the basis of disability in the context of deprivation of liberty.
- Re-open the Independent Living Fund to new applicants.
- Develop Adult Safeguarding legislation to create single source of evidence on violence, exploitation and abuse of d/Deaf and disabled people within care systems in NI.
- Data monitoring by public & government agencies must be improved.

18. LANGUAGES

- Irish Language Act and protections for Ulster Scots.
- Sign Language (British & Irish) to be protected languages.
- Government subsidies on foreign language courses.

19. ANIMAL WELFARE

- Outlaw animal hunting with a dogs (fox hunting, etc.)
- Ban on puppy farms and other third-party sales of animals.
- Seabins to be installed at docks and marinas to protect marine life.
- Harmful pesticides & insecticides to be banned.
- Support for bee keepers to maintain colonies over seasons
- Oppose factory farming.
- Review of badger culling to include a science-led control of bTB, which involves frequent testing and vaccination programmes.
- Stricter sentencing for those convicted of animal cruelty offences and a publicly available animal cruelty register.

20. SECULARISM

- Separation of church and state.
- Equality of all religions and beliefs before the law
- Equality for nonreligious and minority faith groups
- End the Blasphemy Law

21. INTERNATIONALISM

- Oppose unnecessary military involvement in local or foreign conflicts
- No hard border in Ireland
- Irish border poll
- Support the BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanctions) movement
- Solidarity with culturally distinct regions to have the democratic right to self-determination, for e.g. Catalonia, Palestine, Hong Kong, etc.



PROGRESS POLITICS NI
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