

- **Labour restored the Minimum Wage to €8.65 in 2011**, after Fianna Fáil cut it.
- Labour restored the system of Joint Labour Committees (JLCs) and Employment Regulation Orders (EROs), which give **higher minimum rates of pay for retail, security, cleaning, hairdressing, etc.**
- Labour passed legislation to strengthen **collective bargaining rights** for workers.
- Low paid **workers were progressively removed from the Universal Social Charge.**
- **Labour prevented any further cuts to core welfare rates**, after Fianna Fáil cut payments.
- Labour provided more than **30,000 training places each year** to get people get back into work.
- **Labour increased the old age pension** by €3 per week, and **increased Child Benefit** by €5 per month.

Fine Gael's 2011 manifesto is full of references to shrinking the State and public sector numbers. **Labour preserved vital spending on the services that matter most to people**, and avoided additional loss of public sector jobs. What was achieved was closer to a 50:50 balance between taxes and cuts. Fine Gael set out to privatise. **Thanks to Labour, more public land and enterprises** were kept in public ownership.

Hard left protestors attack Labour relentlessly on social media. But they did not come up with any realistic plans to rescue the country. Hard left experiments in Greece and in South America led to economic failure and prolonged hardship for working people.

Labour was unable to persuade the "troika" of international lenders to stimulate demand and economic growth rather than focus on cuts. Since then, IMF publications admit their policies were flawed, but at that time the IMF, ECB and European Commission officials were not flexible.

Labour's 37 TDs were in a coalition national government, outnumbered by Fine Gael's 76 TDs. For everything that Labour achieved, Fine Gael got some of what they wanted. Labour did over-promise during the 2011 election, and later implemented policies it argued against, including water charges, higher VAT, excise on wine and increases in DIRT. It was a mistake to allow Town Councils to be abolished, and Brendan Howlin brought in a Restoration Of Town Councils Bill 2018 to correct this mistake. Labour attempted to fix how the welfare system treated lone parents, and to avoid penalising lone parents with loss of payments if they formed a new relationship. Some people were better off as a result of these reforms, but other lone parents were unable to secure full-time work on decent pay, and the changes left too many lone parents worse off. Labour has devised policies, including in alternative budget proposals, to correct these mistakes.

Labour's public communications throughout the period of government were flawed, and failed to win public understanding for why difficult policies were required.

<p>When Fianna Fáil left government in March 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment was 15% • The national debt was 92.4% of GDP • The deficit was 10% of GDP • Exports were €93 billion 	<p>When Labour left government in March 2016, the economy was stable and growing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment was down to 8.8% and falling • The national debt was 78.5% of GDP • The deficit was reduced to 2.7% of GDP • Exports grew to €119 billion
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The recovery in the economy is partly due to a range of measures by Labour, to stimulate the economy and counter-act austerity: €500 million jobs stimulus; Strategic Investment Bank; development of non-EU trade.

Ireland formally exited its programme with the IMF, European Commission and ECB in December 2013.

Independent academic analysis shows that Labour fulfilled 80 pledges from our 2011 manifesto in full, and partially fulfilled another 36 of them, although 70 pledges were not fulfilled. Labour fulfilled more pledges than Fine Gael, despite having fewer than half their number of TDs (Costello, O’Neill and Thompson 2016).

- Labour achieved a referendum on marriage equality
- Labour insisted the Citizens Assembly discuss termination of pregnancy
- Labour delivered a constitutional amendment to recognise children’s rights
- **Labour passed the Climate Change Bill**
- Labour strengthened the Freedom of Information Act, which gives access to official documents, and created legal protection for whistle-blowers
- Labour brought in **protections for tenants in the private rental sector**

From 2014 onwards, Labour began to expand health and social services:

- Greater access to Medical Cards for people over 70
- **Free GP care for under-6s**
- **Free pre-school childcare for children from three years of age**
- Action to reduce fuel poverty and to reduce child poverty
- Capping bankers’ pay and ending the bonus culture in State-owned banks

Material deprivation and income inequality reduced in the period 2011 to 2016, and average household incomes grew (in real terms above inflation).

Labour never betrayed the people of Ireland. It would have been so much easier politically for Labour to protest from opposition, as others have done, while Fine Gael and the “troika” engaged in much worse austerity, but instead Labour did our best to serve the public good. We didn't always get it right, but Ireland was a better place in 2016 than would have been the case without Labour trying to protect the public for five years.