

Growing up in Poverty should be part of our history

END POVERTY AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

As we approach the centenary of the Easter Rising, there are children and young people in Ireland who are hungry, cold and have no home to go to. We want the next government to change that. No-one should grow up in poverty.

Start Strong, the Children's Rights Alliance and the National Youth Council of Ireland have come together to urge the next Government to end poverty among children and young people. This is the first time we've brought our 204 member and supporter organisations together, who between them work in every townland across Ireland with children and young people of all ages.

POVERTY HURTS AND THE RECESSION HAS HIT HARD:

The recession hit children and young adults hard – almost twice as many children live in poverty now as before the recession. 1 in 9 children live in consistent poverty, more than 134,000 children. Almost 1 in 5 of our young people in the labour force don't have a job, almost 2 in every 5 are at risk of poverty and many thousands have emigrated.

RECOVERY MEANS CHOICES:

As the economy begins to recover from recession and the public finances improve, political choices have to be made. Start Strong, the Children's Rights Alliance and the National Youth Council of Ireland urge the next Government to put children and young people first. We're asking all those running for election to commit to ending poverty.

134,000
children living in constant poverty



2 in 5
of our young people are
at risk of poverty

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST AIM TO DO:

End poverty among children and young people – no-one should grow up in poverty.

TO ACHIEVE THAT, THE NEXT GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO:

- ✓ **Halve the number of children and young people living in poverty within 5 years with a view to eliminating poverty amongst children and young people within 10 years.**
- ✓ **Ensure an accessible health service** – Provide free GP care for all children and young people, increase specialist support and reform the medical card scheme.
- ✓ **Make sure no child is hungry** – extend the school meals programme and subsidise healthy foods.
- ✓ **Give all children a good start in life** – introduce paid parental leave and ensure high-quality early care and education for all children.
- ✓ **Make sure every child can go to school** – remove barriers to education, introduce book rental schemes in all schools, address early school leaving and extend back-to-school payments.
- ✓ **Cherish all children** – implement the McMahon Report recommendations for those seeking asylum.
- ✓ **Give every young adult a chance** – ensure that no one under 26 years is long term unemployed (on the live register for more than 12 months), fully implement the Youth Guarantee, and restore the full Jobseekers Allowance to under 26s.
- ✓ **Make work pay** – increase the minimum wage to a living wage, reform 'in work' income supports, review the One-Parent Family Payment reforms and provide high-quality, affordable, accessible childcare for working parents.
- ✓ **Eliminate homelessness** – ensure appropriate emergency accommodation and long-term solutions.