



People Before Profit Workers Charter:

Strike Back With People Before Profit

People Before Profit campaigns to put the rights of workers before the profits of the few. Our representatives have been the loudest voice for the trade union movement in Stormont and Councils, and we stand with workers when they choose to fight for their rights.

In 2022 Gerry Carroll MLA introduced a Trade Union Freedom Bill which was designed to dismantle Thatcher's anti-union laws. Stormont has devolved power to give workers more rights yet this was the first attempt to overhaul them for the better. A majority of MLAs, including from the DUP and the Alliance Party, voted the Bill down.

Our vision is one that sees workers united to fight back against poor conditions and sectarian division. We have been on the picket lines with all those workers who have taken strike action to demand decent pay increases and funding for better services. Our view is that the best way for workers to improve their conditions is to join and get involved in their union.



PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT
FIGHTING FOR WORKERS & ECO-SOCIALISM

People Before Profit Workers' Charter contains our basic demands for protecting and advancing the rights of all workers. We demand:

1. Pay Increases in excess of inflation to protect workers living standards.

- The Cost of Living Crisis has been caused by greedy profiteering. Real weekly earnings recorded the largest annual decrease on record (4.5%) in 2022.
- NI had the joint lowest increase in earnings across the 12 UK regions and now ranks third lowest of the regions, with weekly earnings £48 below the UK average in 2022.

2. A Living Wage of £15 an hour for all age groups.

- Around 13% of all jobs in NI were low-paid in 2022: the third highest proportion of the 12 UK regions. The current minimum wage of £10.42 is clearly too low.
- Those under 20 years of age are paid less than this with those between 18 and 20 getting £7.49.
- Apprentices and students/workers such as nurses should be paid the Living Wage.
- Acknowledging the inability of some small businesses to pay higher wages while paying the same tax as larger corporations, state relief could be provided to ensure all workers can receive £15/hr regardless of workplace.

3. Equal Pay for Equal Work

- The gender pay gap for all employees in NI was 8.4% in favour of males in 2022. This gap has increased from 4.7% in 2021.
- While less figures are readily available, the trend of ethnicity pay gaps is seen right across the UK, with BAME workers paid less than their white counterparts.

4. For a 35 Hour Week Without Loss of Pay

- In 2020 full time workers in the UK worked 42 hours a week. The average in Europe was 39.7.
- We need a reduction in core working hours to drive down the long hours people are working.

5. For Increased Holidays

- Annual leave entitlements are 20 days here while the average in Europe is 24.5.
- We get 8 public holidays while the average in Europe is 10.3.
- We are working over a week extra every year.

6. The Right To Organise

- Allow trade unions greater access to workplaces.
- Mandate more employers to recognise a trade union: All workplaces with 5 or more workers should be covered by legislation on union recognition.
- Remove limitations on workplace negotiating: Our trade unions are limited to negotiating with employers on matters linked to pay, hours, and holidays. Allow unionised workers to be represented on all issues they are concerned with.

7. The Right to Take Effective Strike Action

- Legalise solidarity action.
- Bring balloting into the 21st century: there is no excuse for forbidding unions from balloting electronically, or even in person, especially when postal ballots are so costly.
- Shorten and simplify notice periods before strike action can be taken: We would reduce the requirement to give a notice period from seven days to two.
- Provide greater protection for workers dismissed for taking industrial action: We would expand the time frame under which an employee who was dismissed unfairly can challenge this decision to five years.

8. End Precarious Work

- Ban unnecessary agency working, prolonged temporary contracts and zero-hour contracts. Workers who have been employed for a certain length of time should be offered a permanent contract with guaranteed hours and fair conditions.
- Artists, musicians and other creatives face precarity in their work because of its often transient nature. A basic income should be provided by the state to address the financial instability faced by many working in the arts.

9. Full Paid Maternity and Paternity Pay Leave & Free Childcare

- Maternity pay here compares badly with other countries
- As a percentage of average pay we are amongst the lowest in the OECD
- Maternity pay should be paid at full rates for the first year after birth
- Partner's leave should also be extended and paid at the full rate
- Many workers, predominantly women, are being forced to leave the workplace after having a child because their wage doesn't cover the cost of childcare. This kind of social care should be provided by the state, funded through taxation like healthcare, with childcare workers given pensionable wages and the right to organise in a trade union.

10. Sick and Bereavement Pay

- Statutory sick pay here is much worse than other countries: on average workers only get 20% of their wages, and nothing at all for the first three days. Lower paid workers are not covered.
- Sick pay should be full rate from the first day of illness.
- Every worker should be entitled to two weeks bereavement pay when a close family relative passes away, including miscarriage.

11. Pensions

- Reduce the retirement age for state pensions to 65 or after 35 years in work
- No to further increases in the pension age
- Compensation for women adversely affected by changes to their pension age

www.pbp.ie/le2023



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