



# Senator Marie Sherlock



## Spring Newsletter 2022

### No child left behind: Our fight to fix the National Childcare Scheme



Marie with childcare workers from Daughters of Charity Community Services, Henrietta Street at our protest outside Leinster House in October 2021.

For thousands of parents facing enormous childcare bills, the new National Childcare Scheme doesn't go far enough. For other families, we know that some of the most disadvantaged children were being excluded from State support under the scheme.

We brought together childcare workers and providers from across the northside of Dublin and from across the country to the gates of Leinster House to protest these childcare issues.

Following our protest, we were glad to see the Minister for Children make some changes to the scheme. However, the continued reduction of State support for certain children from disadvantaged homes remains a cause of huge concern for parents, providers and childcare workers in 2022.

The State must do more – much more – to ensure childcare is affordable, accessible and available to all.

#### Please get in touch

☎ (01) 618 4564

✉ [marie@mariesherlock.ie](mailto:marie@mariesherlock.ie)

🌐 [www.mariesherlock.ie](http://www.mariesherlock.ie)

🐦 @Marie\_Sherlock

📘 @MarieSherlockDublin

📷 @senatormariesherlock

### Fighting for a real right to flexible work



We must protect the gains of the past two years - for working parents, those with caring responsibilities and those who have made enormous savings with both the carbon and financial cost of commuting. We must also recognise that flexible working is crucial to keeping working mothers in work and ensuring that those with a disability and lone parents can access work.



*A chara,*

*We're conscious that the pandemic has been a very difficult time for many.*

*Our team has been working hard on the ground and in the Seanad on issues such as affordable and decent housing, rising energy bills, safe cycling and pedestrian facilities, support for the Arts, and ensuring all workers have a right to sick pay and flexible work.*

*If there are issues in your area or assistance that you need, we want to be able to help. Please do get in touch.*

*Déan teagmháil liom,*

*Marie*

**Seanadóir**  
**Marie Sherlock**

## No more suffering in silence: putting reproductive health leave on the agenda

For far too long, women have had to remain silent in their workplaces about the grief of early miscarriage, or have had to use their annual leave to attend appointments for IVF treatments.

My colleague Ivana Bacik and I have brought forward legislation that would provide up to 20 days' paid leave for women who suffer an early miscarriage, and 10 days for workers going through fertility treatment.

I'm delighted to say that our bill is now being supported by Government. We will keep fighting until women undergoing reproductive health challenges finally have the law on their side.



Marie with Dr Salome Mbugua and Dr Caroline Munyi in advance of speaking at the AkiDWA seminar on sexual, domestic and gender based violence in November 2021.



Vaccine equity: In December, Marie co-sponsored a successful Seanad motion calling for equal access to the Covid-19 vaccine for developing countries.

## Fire fighters and ambulance drivers need our support



Marie and Lord Mayor Alison Gilliland with Shane McGill at his retirement from Dublin Fire Brigade after decades of service as a fire fighter and union convenor.

Fire fighters and ambulance drivers are saving lives throughout the city in increasingly challenging conditions.

There has been an ongoing failure to recruit, plan for retirements and acquire new equipment for our fire and ambulance services. Services are now stretched to breaking point creating an unacceptable risk to firefighters and the city as a whole.

In recent weeks, some progress has been made between SIPTU & Forsa and management - immediate rise in the number of recruits and promise to look at new stations and modernising equipment.

## Tackling the disgraceful legacy of construction defects

Right now there are thousands of people across our community who can only dream of buying a home.

And yet for many who do own an apartment, their dream has become a nightmare with the discovery of life-threatening fire and structural defects.

I know of six blocks and over 900 apartments across our communities suffering from the deadly effects of boomtime construction shoddiness.

I have been meeting with those affected over recent months. Some are facing bills of up to €50,000 to make their apartments safe and liveable, with no support from the Government. While landlords can currently write off the cost of these works, ordinary homeowners cannot. This must change.

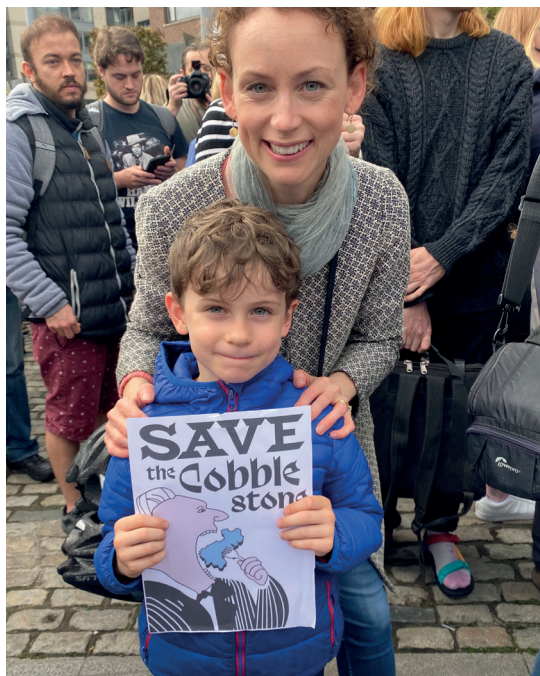
We need the State to step in and take accountability for its failure to properly regulate and hold bad builders to account. This is not just an issue for apartment owners but for anyone who hopes to be safe and secure in a home of their own.



Marie with Jim Hargis, Local Employment Services Manager, before presenting certificates to graduates of the Greener Homes training programme at the Docklands and Eastside Local Employment Service.

# Saving the Cobblestone: Victory must be turning point in battle for cultural spaces

Huge credit must go to all who campaigned against the Cobblestone hotel proposal.



*Is mór an tábhachtach go mbeadh cosaint láidir ar na ionad cultúrtha sa chathair.*

The local community came together and saved a vital cultural asset – but the battle is far from over. We must resist any further attempts to overturn the community's decision.

We must also reverse the decades-long hollowing out of cultural space within our City.

We've seen far too many unique spaces turned into indistinguishable hotels and offices: the State must start protecting and expanding cultural space by supporting the purchase of new properties for cultural and artistic use.

## Good News for Local Schools

**Clonturk Community College:** As a former Board of Management member, I was delighted that agreement has been secured to build a new 1,000 pupil school building on its existing site in Whitehall. This is great news for this thriving school community. It's the first second-level school established jointly by the City of Dublin ETB and Educate Together.

**Gaelscoil Coláiste Mhuire:** It seems that after almost 18 long years of waiting, the sod will hopefully be turned on the new school building site on Dominick Street this Autumn. Huge credit to the many families who've been campaigning so hard to get to this stage. I know for many, it will be a case of seeing will be believing. We'll keep up the pressure to ensure that this deadline is met!

**Gaelscoil Aine:** This new primary school is temporarily located on the grounds of Coláiste Chaoimhín on St. Mobhi Road. The Department of Education has committed to put arrangements in place for the continued location of the school there in September 2022. I understand that it will re-locate to a permanent site in Drumcondra over the next number of years.



*Marie with Damien Delaney, Coordinator of Cabra Youthreach on Ratoath Road. Damien and his team provide crucial second-chance education and training opportunities for young people who have fallen out of the education system.*

## Households need more help to cut emissions and energy bills



So many people want to cut their carbon emissions and lower their energy bills – but the barriers to access government retrofitting schemes are still too high, especially for renters.

The potential savings at stake from retrofitting are huge. A three-bed house with an "F" energy rating can cost €2,400 more to heat per year than a freshly retrofitted home. It can also release more than four times as much carbon into the atmosphere.

Current Government plans rely on too many homeowners borrowing money for improvements, while leaving renters powerless. We need to go much further in increasing grant funding – for our own sake and for the planet.



*Marie meeting with the Aosóg team on Prussia Street in November 2021. Geraldine, Tracey, Charlotte and all the staff team do an amazing job providing educational, therapeutic and family support services within the local community.*

## RENTS AND EVICTIONS

**Rent Increases:** Since December 2021, your rent can only rise by 2% on an annual basis.

However, it's important to know that the landlord can legally apply the 2% increase for every year of your tenancy since your rent was last changed.

You can use the Residential Tenancies Board's free calculator to help find out whether and by how much your landlord can legally raise your rent: [www.rtb.ie/calculator/rpz](http://www.rtb.ie/calculator/rpz)

**Rent Assistance:** If you can no longer afford to pay your rent, there may be support available. Please contact me for more information or assistance.



Marie supporting school traffic wardens Catherine, Mary, Paddy and Robert outside the Mansion House during their protest for fairer retirement conditions.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

**Dublin City Council** – 01 222 2222

**Dublin City Council** (Out of Hours) – 01 679 6186

**INTREO** office Parnell Street – 01 889 9500

**INTREO** office Navan Road – 01 882 3100

**INTREO** office Ballymun – 01 894 0000

**Residential Tenancies Board** – lo-call 0818 30 3037  
or 01 702 8100

**MABS** (Money, Advice, Budgeting Service) – 076 107 200

## HOUSING ADAPTATION GRANTS

Financial support is available for older people and people with disabilities to make their homes easier and safer to get around.

This can include adding ramps, stair lifts, accessible bathrooms and more.

Call **01 222 2195**, email [homegrants@dublincity.ie](mailto:homegrants@dublincity.ie) or contact me for assistance and information.

## Working with Senator Marie Sherlock: the local Labour team in your area



**Cllr Declan Meenagh**

087 680 6199  
[declan.meenagh@dublincity.ie](mailto:declan.meenagh@dublincity.ie)



**Lisa Connell**

087 418 3802



**Cllr Joe Costello**

087 245 0777  
[joe.costello@dublincity.ie](mailto:joe.costello@dublincity.ie)



**Cllr Jane Horgan-Jones**

086 837 5219  
[jane.horganjones@dublincity.ie](mailto:jane.horganjones@dublincity.ie)



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✉ [marie@mariesherlock.ie](mailto:marie@mariesherlock.ie)

🌐 [www.mariesherlock.ie](http://www.mariesherlock.ie)

🐦 @Marie\_Sherlock

📘 @MarieSherlockDublin

📷 @senatormariesherlock

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Páirtí an  
**Lucht Oibre**

Working for a Fairer City