

# The Economy

## a Workers Party discussion paper



**WORKERS**  
  
**PARTY**

***“The Workers Party wants an economic plan for full employment . People in jobs in the public, private and voluntary/community sectors earning a good living and paying taxes expecting good quality health, education and local services in return.”***

The scale of the problems facing the Northern Ireland economy are not to be underestimated.

The recent British Treasury paper on rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy takes a very critical view of its current state.

It points out that **the lowest wages in the UK and Ireland are found here.**

We have the highest energy costs and the **highest levels of fuel poverty.**

As prices in the shops, electricity, heating oil, petrol forecourts and for public transport continue to rise, take home pay for the majority of workers has been frozen or has fallen.

**40,000 people lost their jobs** here between June 2008 and March 2011. Low paid workers remain disproportionately female, part-time and concentrated in the private sector.

**20% of workers now earn less than a living wage** – the amount needed to pay for all the basic necessities of food, heat, clothes and accommodation. Working people are already living in poverty. We are not all in this together.





- Highest levels of fuel poverty

The British Treasury paper also confirms that Northern Ireland has suffered the worst impact from the recession with the highest economic inactivity rate over 28% against a UK average of 23%.

Northern Ireland is also **over-represented in low pay sectors** such as agriculture and food processing.

The Workers Party points to those sectors as representing low wages, poor employment protection and widespread use and abuse of economic migrant workers.

## An Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland – to include:

- Regulation of the current banking system, tackle tax avoidance, and the creation of a National Bank under public ownership;
- Reform of the current utility regulators with real powers to intervene in the prices of energy such as oil, electricity and gas, extended to home heating oil;
- A Skills strategy set inside a single Department of Education and Skills;
- A cross-departmental Programme of Infrastructure development;
- Research and Development incentives for existing companies and the universities;
- A strategy to support SMEs away from dependence and a reward incentive for innovation;

The 'boom and bust' cycle of capitalist economics means that economic 'crises' come around with regularity.

The current 'crisis' was not a natural phenomenon. It was the work of local and global financiers confident that if their greed bubble burst, the public would bail the private banks out.

The debt they have incurred is not a sovereign or government debt. It belongs to companies, corporations and speculators.

Capitalism demonstrated its failure on the global stage. The crisis in 2011 has been allowed to become not just the solvency of banks but the solvency of states and governments too.

This marks the continuing failure of governments to control and regulate financial markets.

**We need to change the system.  
Socialism is the alternative**

## The socialist alternative

Many of those guilty of the greed and financial collapse still remain immune from prosecution and public exposure.

There is an alternative to capitalism and that system which is now struggling across the world to survive and justify its avarice and greed.

The alternative is socialism and a planned economic framework which regulates the global enterprises that currently look to politics and government as a convenient bail out facility when things go wrong.

The Workers Party has been consistent in its economic programme – nationalise the banks and gear them for public good not as private profit machines.

Tax those people who can afford it and reduce taxes for the people on lowest incomes. Be clear about the values that are important in society and ensure greed is not one of them.





- The reality of unemployment affects an increasing number daily

## The realities

In the real world of Northern Ireland today, working people and families face pressure from the squeeze on pay, the cost of living in energy, food and increased local taxation.

The reality of unemployment, part-time working and job insecurity affects an increasing number as every day passes. Real wages for those in both public and private sector have fallen below all measures of inflation, and welfare benefits for those unable to work are under more intensive

scrutiny and attack than ever. We are not all in this together.

Longer term, pension provision is now under attack to squeeze more from workers being forced to work longer to receive less. The penalty paid by the working class in the past has been emigration, and now bankruptcy and impoverishment in older age are back on the agenda.

The prospects for our youngest are stark. Even the fuel allowance for the elderly has been cut to help prop up the debt of the bankers.





## Incentives for Tourism, Arts and Culture & the Creative Industries.

Cutbacks and a recession mentality put people on the dole.

A get positive Government needs to **stop cutting and INVEST public resources** in all of our futures.

Creating a national bank for the long term and investing public money into development of infrastructure would revitalise the construction workforce and that industry.

Providing incentives for local companies to bid for local contracts, in line with other European countries .

The private sector generally has traditionally failed to step up to the plate in Northern Ireland and re-invest its profits here.

That failure is now compounded by the banks that have been recapitalised with taxpayers' money and are holding on to that cash.

The Workers Party want **no more casino economics** gambling with all of our futures. Target public investment and the private money will follow when they realise you are serious.



## Further Information & Contact Details

If you would like to know more about Workers Party policy on the economy, or any other policy area, please log on to our website

[www.workerspartyelection.wordpress.com](http://www.workerspartyelection.wordpress.com)

You can also email us at  
[workersparty@indigo.ie](mailto:workersparty@indigo.ie)

### Comments

If you have a comment about the Party or any of its policies let us know. You can email your views to the above address or you can comment via the Party website.

### Look Left

The Party produces a bi-monthly discussion magazine called '*Look Left*'. It's available from most good newsagents. You can also take a look on line at  
[www.lookleftonline.org](http://www.lookleftonline.org)

### Join the Workers Party

If you'd like to join the Party please contact us by email or via the Party website



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