

**Children in poverty must not be victims of political limbo
Political horse-trading must be replaced with policies to smash cycle of child poverty
YoungBallymun provides model for communities across the country**

Remarks by Sr Stanislaus Kennedy at YoungBallymun

Children must not be left trapped in poverty by the political limbo following the General Election, according to the Social Justice Campaigner Sr Stanislaus Kennedy.

Speaking at YoungBallymun, a community based initiative on Dublin's Northside, Sr Stan said voters have clearly rejected the notion of a two-tier recovery and politicians must listen.

The founder of Focus Ireland and the Immigrant Council of Ireland says it's a time for austerity and cutbacks in vital services to be replaced with a National Programme to Combat Child Poverty.

Sr Stan added:

"The outcome of the General Election shows that voters have rejected policies which place a greater focus on balancing the books than meeting the needs of the people.

Our lawmakers now have a duty to listen. People do not want months of political horse-trading they want leadership which will deliver fair policies to end a vicious cycle which has seen the number of children living in poverty double to 130,000 since 2008.

Our new Government must end the practice of task-forces and reports and take firm action through a National Programme to Combat Child Poverty, modelled on community initiatives such as YoungBallymun.

While those in Leinster House have failed to address the needs of families in poverty YoungBallymun has shown the way.

Through a planned and comprehensive approach focused on prevention it is making a real difference in the lives of children.

It is an incredible achievement that 70% of babies born in the local community access the Parent-Child Psychological supports of YoungBallymun and this level of engagement continues right through to transition year.

In addition engagement with community groups, teachers, schools and many other local services have ensured a co-ordinated approach which works.

There is no reason why this cannot be translated into a national programme to impact on communities across the country.

I would argue that such a roll out would be the proper way to commemorate 1916 rather than pomp and ceremony – surely it is through our policies and actions that we truly show that we cherish all of the children of the Nation equally."