

ISSUE 56
JULY 2025

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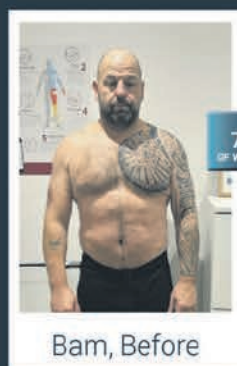
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Bam, Before



Bam, After



Fiona, Before



Fiona, After



Liam, Before



Liam, After



Lina, Before



Lina, After



John, Before



John, After



Emily, Before



Emily, After



Christy, Before



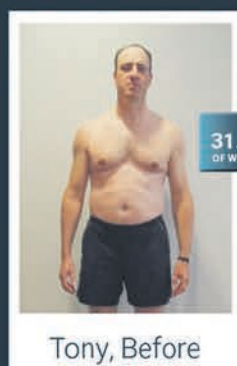
Christy, After



Gabriela, Before



Gabriela, After



Tony, Before



Tony, After



Holly, Before



Holly, After

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our July Edition of Little Village.
For all the over 70's it's good news. The Government have announced that the over 70's will be entitled to a companion travel pass which allows them to take a travel companion that is over 16 years with them for free on public transport. See our article on "Over 70's benefit from new companion pass".

Seasonal eating is becoming very popular. By shopping and cooking with what's naturally abundant each quarter, you get better flavour, save money and support local food producers. Read our article on "Cooking with the Seasons" and make your own mind up.

Finally, if you want to take a trip and not sure where to go then read our "Beyond the Pale Series" and maybe you might be persuaded to give wee Donegal town a visit. Until next time.

The Little Village Team

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- De Bruns
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- Laurel Lodge Community Centre
- 12th Lock
- Bradys Pub
- Wetherspoons
- Costa Coffee
- Blanchardstown Shopping Centre
- Draiocht
- Blanch Library
- Leisure Plex
- Super Valu Blanch
- Tesco Roselawn
- Blakestown Community Centre
- Mountview Community Centre
- Huntstown Community Centre
- Eurospar Hartstown
- Dunnes Ongar
- Cu Chulainns Ongar
- Lidl Clonee
- Aldi Clonee
- Lidl Blakestown
- Lidl Tyrrelstown
- Tyrrelstown Community Centre
- Peregrines Gaa Club
- Corduff Sports Centre
- Spar Waterville
- Centra Corduff
- Castleknock Golf Club
- Castleknock Hotel
- Elmgreen Golf Club
- Hollystown Golf Club
- Westwood Gym
- Westwood Golf Club
- Phibblestown Community Centre
- Costcutter Clonsilla Road
- Credit Union Clonsilla Road
- The Greyhound Blanch Village
- The Grasshopper Clonee
- Clonsilla Inn
- The Carpenter Inn
- The Carlton Hotel Tyrrelstown



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LITTLE VILLAGE MAGAZINE

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Little Village Magazine, 11 Cherryhill Avenue, Kells, Co. Meath.
Creative Top Publishing Ltd. publishes Little Village Magazine.

Company registration No. 534480

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€309,753 windfall for Fingal’s community hub

D15 centres get the largest slice

What's just been announced?

Last week the Department of Rural & Community Development released Call 3 of the 2024 Community Recognition Fund, awarding €309,753 to five projects in Fingal that will upgrade everything from sports lighting to laneway landscaping. Two of the five grants – worth €122,640 – land in the Blanchardstown-Mulhuddart area, giving Dublin 15 the biggest share of the latest package. fingal.ie

Area	Project	Grant
Balbriggan	Irish Institute of Music & Song – facility/ equipment upgrade	€57,113
Blanchardstown-Mulhuddart	Corduff Sports Centre – refurbishment works	€50,000
	Huntstown Community Centre – full window replacement	€72,640
Rush-Lusk	"Lusk's Forgotten Laneway" – upgrade & lighting	€50,000
Swords	Swords Celtic FC – conversion of grass pitch to all-weather astro	€80,000
TOTAL		€309,753

Source: Fingal County Council news release, 6 June 2025 fingal.ie

Why these centres, why now?

The Community Recognition Fund was set up in 2023 to thank localities that took in large numbers of Ukrainian and other families by upgrading facilities everyone can share. Fingal’s overall 2024 allocation is €1.54 million spread over three calls; Call 3 focuses on “medium-ticket” capital works (€50k–€100k). fingal.ie

- Corduff Sports Centre will use its €50k to modernise shower rooms and install gender-neutral changing cubicles — a long-running ask from its indoor football leagues and women’s boxing club.
- Huntstown Community Centre plans to replace 25-year-old single-glazed windows with A-rated units; manager Sinéad Browne says heating bills could drop 30 % next winter and the Centre will direct savings into youth programmes.
- Swords Celtic’s astro pitch means the club can host 60 extra training hours a week and open slots to neighbouring schools.
- Lusk’s Forgotten Laneway project will light and resurface a medieval shortcut beside St MacCullin’s church, making it a safer evening route for teenagers and commuters.

Who decides and how fast will work begin?

- Local vetting: Fingal’s Community Department ranked bids on inclusivity, environmental impact and community demand.
- Ministerial sign-off: Call 3 projects were cleared by Minister Dara

Calleary on 5 June.

- Deadline: All works must be contracted by December 2025 and finished by end-2026 or grants lapse.
- Centre managers told Dublin 15 Community News they expect tenders to issue “within eight weeks” once Fingal releases the grant agreements.

Voices from the community

- “This money is a tribute to every volunteer who keeps the doors open.”
— Cllr Brian McDonagh, Mayor of Fingal, announcing the awards fingal.ie
- “New windows aren’t glamorous, but they’ll slash our carbon footprint and free up cash for after-school clubs.”
— Sinéad Browne, Coordinator, Huntstown Community Centre
- “We’ve queues for pitch time. An astro surface means we can train in January without wrecking the grass—and rent slots to smaller clubs.”
— Eoin Phelan, Chair, Swords Celtic FC

The bigger picture for D15

- This isn’t an isolated windfall. In the past 18 months Dublin 15 hubs have also secured:
- €200k Sports Capital grant for Coolmine Rugby pitch drainage (Feb 2024)
 - €100k LEADER funding to fit solar panels on Mulhuddart Community Centre (Nov 2024)
- Add the €122,640 just announced, and local facilities have drawn over €422k in external capital grants since January 2024.

What happens next?

1. Tender watch – Fingal will publish mini-competitions on eTenders; local contractors can bid.
2. Community input – Each project must hold at least one public update meeting before construction starts.
3. Progress tracker – Fingal’s LCDC will post quarterly photos and spend data online so residents can follow the works.

Bottom line

The latest €309k package puts real money into doors, windows, floodlights and laneways—the unglamorous stuff that makes community spaces warm, safe and usable year-round. With two of the five grants landing in Dublin 15, the area continues its run of success at tapping national pots for local gain. Now the challenge shifts from getting the cash to getting the work done on time—so that by autumn 2026 the benefits are felt on cold training nights and bright community-hall mornings alike.



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IRELAND FAILING TO MEET EMISSION TARGETS

Ireland is not on track to meet its legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets, with projections showing major shortfalls by 2030—and both financial and environmental consequences loom if urgent action isn’t taken.

Current performance vs. targets

- According to the EPA (May 2025), Ireland is projected to reduce emissions by only 23–29% relative to 2018 levels by 2030—well below its legally mandated target of 51%.
- Sectoral ceilings under the first (2021–25) and second (2026–30) carbon budgets are set at roughly 4.8% and 8.3% annual reductions respectively.
- Emissions decreased by 6.8% in 2023, but remain significantly short of needed cuts in transport, agriculture, and buildings.
- Air quality emissions (e.g., SO₂, NO_x, PM_{2.5}) are compliant with EU limits, but climate-warming greenhouse gases are lagging far behind.

Consequences of underperformance

- 1. Financial penalties (carbon credit purchases)**
 - Under the EU Effort Sharing Regulation, Ireland must purchase unused emissions allowances from states exceeding targets—costing €7.5–26 billion by 2030, with conservative estimates at €8–28 billion.
- 2. Carbon budget carryover and compounding penalties**
 - Exceeding one carbon budget means excess emissions are carried forward, increasing deficit in the next budget. If land sector emissions overshoot from 2026 onward, penalties are compounded with multipliers, raising future reduction pressure.
- 3. Legal and reputational risks**
 - Ireland faces court challenges for failing statutory climate obligations; its 2017 plan was overturned in Climate Case Ireland (2020).
 - Domestically, advocacy groups like Friends of the Earth warn that existing plans lack real-world impact and call for stricter implementation.
- 4. Economic and social impacts**
 - A failure to decarbonise impairs competitiveness, exposes Ireland to volatile carbon markets, and risks diverted investment—while the general public faces higher energy costs and taxes to bridge the gap.
 - Infrastructure sectors (transport grid upgrades, EV rollout, retrofitting) must scale rapidly to avoid lock-in of high-emission systems.

What’s being done—and what’s missing

- Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) seeks to accelerate renewables, electrify transport and heat, introduce circular economy initiatives—but lacks detailed metrics on execution timelines.
- EPA notes that despite some progress, full implementation is needed to avoid missing budgets—especially in agriculture, transport, and residential sectors.
- Independent watchdogs (EPA, Fiscal/Climate Councils) demand faster deployment of grid upgrades, EV incentives, farm reform, and peatland restoration.

Summary

Area	Status
Annual GHG reduction	Behind pace; 23–29% vs. 51% target
Carbon budgets	Exceedances expected
Financial risks	€8–28 bn in carbon credit or related costs
Legal risks	Court challenges and compounding penalties

Ireland is currently failing to meet its emissions obligations, exposing itself to steep financial, legal, and environmental consequences. Without accelerated delivery of CAP25 and structural policy shifts in key sectors, the gap to targets will continue to widen—making corrective action both urgent and inevitable.



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DRONES OVER BLANCHARDSTOWN

An update

What's flying overhead?

Since late 2023, Irish start-up Manna Aero has been operating the world's busiest suburban drone-delivery hub out of Junction 6 in Blanchardstown. By June 2025, the service had completed more than 170,000 deliveries and continues to grow, with around 2,500 new deliveries happening each week.

These drones cruise at speeds of up to 80 km/h and typically deliver food or small parcels in less than three minutes, covering a radius of 3 to 4 kilometres. The delivery range includes everything from hot meals to small packages. In a notable expansion, Deliveroo joined the trial in June 2025, adding burgers and lattes to the menu. This partnership points to an ambitious goal: reaching two million drone flights per year by 2027.

Why people love them

Some local businesses are seeing big benefits. Kahuna Pops, a maker of ice-lollies, reported a spike in sales after introducing drone "sky-drops" at children's parties. They described the service as "absolutely incredible" and especially valuable for small businesses looking for a novel and efficient way to reach customers.

Why some residents aren't impressed

Not everyone is thrilled about the drone activity. The noise has been one of the most common complaints. Some residents say it feels "like living beside a helicopter," with drones flying overhead as often as 12 times per hour during peak times.

Between January 2024 and January 2025, Fingal County Council received 25 formal complaints related to the service, 18 of which were specifically about noise. Separately, Manna Aero itself has recorded 77 direct complaints, which it notes represent only about 0.05% of all flights.

Privacy is another concern, with some residents uneasy about the cameras mounted on the drones. Manna assures that these are only used to verify safe drop zones, not for surveillance.

There are also environmental and health concerns. Politicians such as TDs Gary Gannon and Ruth Coppinger have raised alarms about potential risks to local bird populations and impacts on sensory-sensitive areas. They've called for temporary drone-restriction zones, especially over parts of Dublin 15 and Drumcondra, to protect vulnerable residents and wildlife.

The rules (and the gaps)

Although drone activity is growing fast, regulation hasn't fully caught up. There are currently gaps in oversight, particularly when it comes to noise limits and flight paths over residential areas. New standards are in the works, but they're not yet in place.

Are the drones working for Dublin 15?

That depends on who you ask. For many, the drone service offers a futuristic level of convenience. For others, the disruption outweighs the benefits. The answer likely lies in how well future regulations can balance innovation with community wellbeing.

What happens next?

Regulation is on the horizon. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) plans to release a draft drone-noise standard by early 2026. This is expected to result in quieter propellers and possible restrictions on nighttime flight paths.



Expansion is also in the cards. Manna plans to open additional drone hubs in Dublin 24 and Cork, while competitors like Amazon Prime Air are watching closely and preparing to enter the space.

There are also plans to diversify drone cargo. Pilot projects are already underway to test delivery of critical items like defibrillators and prescription medication, expanding the service beyond just food and drinks.

Meanwhile, Fingal councillors are pushing for a new system that would allow communities to request no-fly zones over sensitive locations such as schools or quiet residential streets.

Bottom line

Drone delivery has made Dublin 15 a testing ground for the future—offering piping-hot kebabs from the sky and a constant hum overhead. For many, the novelty brings real convenience. But for others, the persistent noise is a daily frustration that current rules haven't addressed.

Whether drone delivery becomes as common as scooters or remains a flashy niche will largely depend on two things: protecting people's peace and quiet, and giving them a real voice in what flies over their homes. If policymakers can deliver on both fronts—by enforcing noise limits and supporting meaningful local input—Blanchardstown might just prove that fast food and liveable neighbourhoods can share the same sky.



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Dear Resident

I would like to give some updates on local issues that I have been working on. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

John

Local Updates

LAUREL LODGE PLAYGROUND

Fingal Council recently confirmed that following the successful completion of the procurement process, a specialist playground contractor has been appointed. The works are expected to commence in the fourth quarter of 2025 and take approximately 5 weeks to complete.

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN – ACTIONS FOR DUBLIN 15

I recently requested a commitment that all the actions in the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan for Dublin would be fully funded, following reports of shortfalls in funding for the biodiversity plan.

Motion: Councillor J. Walsh “That the Chief Executive ensures that all the actions in the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan, including the priority actions for this Local Electoral Area, are fully funded and implemented.”

Report: The key actions for Dublin 15 in 2025 are a hedgerow survey of the Dublin 15 area, a Swift survey, woodland management works in the Tolka Valley and Liffey Valley, two biodiversity makeovers at Ongar and Portersgate, a park development project at Park Drive and the setup of the implementation committee for the Liffey Valley Special Amenity Area. These projects are all budgeted for in 2025.

CASTLEKNOCK GREEN

Following requests from residents, the Operations department is developing a plan for improvements, including a new looped footpath, in Castleknock Green and is conducting a local non statutory consultation from 30th June to 18th July.

MASTER PLAN FOR OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CLONSILLA

The draft Master Plan for the Old School House Clonsilla has been put out on public consultation from the week of 23rd June for four weeks. This is a great opportunity to have your say on the protection and further appropriate use of the Old School House, one of the oldest buildings in Dublin 15.



John with Cllr. Mary McCamley



COOLMINE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The building for Coolmine Community School is 53 years old and a recent expert report indicated that the roof is severely damaged and leaking in at least 25 separate places. Coolmine is a dynamic, inclusive school community and it is completely unacceptable that staff and students have to work in such conditions.

I wrote to Helen McEntee TD, Minister for Education, seeking a commitment for:

- immediate allocation of emergency works funding to make essential repairs to the school roof
- a decision by the Department of Education to start the process of delivering a new school building for Coolmine Community School.

It is positive that the Department has now promised to fund emergency works on the roof, but this is a temporary stopgap. A commitment to a new school building is urgently needed as this can take up to five years to deliver.

DRONE DELIVERY SERVICE

I have received a wide range of complaints about the noise and frequency of the drone delivery service in Dublin 15. While drone technology has benefits, communities are currently experiencing an unrestricted drone delivery service which is not adequately regulated either at local or national level. The Irish Aviation Authority which granted the licence to the drone delivery service has indicated that it has no role in protecting residential amenity or quality of life.

- As two drone bases have been set up in Dublin 15 without any planning permission, I have asked Fingal Council to ensure that drone landing pads have to apply for planning permission to allow communities a chance for input through the planning system.
- I have also highlighted public concerns about unrestricted drone deliveries in the national media:

<https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/dublin/2025/06/02/like-living-near-a-helicopter-residents-fed-up-at-takeaway-delivery-drones-buzzing-over-their-homes/>

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/radio1/clips/22518839/>

The Government has taken a do-nothing approach towards regulation of drones and I will be campaigning with my colleague Cllr Mary McCamley to secure effective regulation of drones at national level.

Working with Cllr Mary McCamley

Labour ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Councillor JK Onwumereh

Newsletter May/June 2025

Thank you

As we conclude our first-year council term, I wish to once again thank residents for electing me as councillor in June 2024. I am grateful to my colleagues for the show of confidence and trust in electing me as Cathaoirleach of the Blanchardstown- Mulhuddart, Castleknock and Ongar LEA as well as the Deputy Mayor of Fingal County Council. I do not take this gesture for granted, it's an honour I cherish dearly.

I have outlined a few of my representation and local updates below:

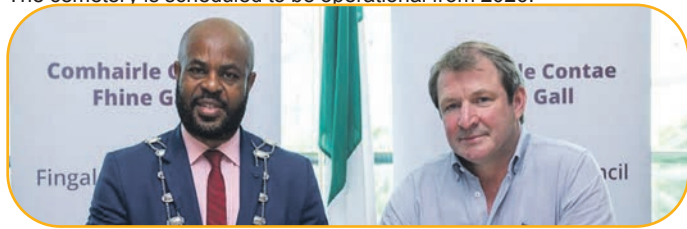


Autism Class Campaign

Delighted to mount a strong campaign to increase funding for additional classes and services for students with autism in Fingal and Dublin 15. I am happy that this matter is receiving attention and I will keep the advocacy up.

Kellystown Cemetery

I recently joined the Chief Executive of Fingal County Council AnneMarie Farrelly to sign a contract for a new cemetery at Kellystown in Dublin 15. The cemetery is scheduled to be operational from 2026.



Active Travel

Many thanks to the Active Travel department of the Fingal County Council for the bike racks in Mulhuddart Village and for completing a critical piece of cycle lane from Castlecurragh to Warrenstown. Delighted that the cycle lane has been upgraded to high standards by removing the dangerous potholes and annoying bubbles on the lanes on both sides of the road.

Increased Summer Project Funding

Absolutely delighted to report a progressive increased funding and engagement by Fingal County Council to summer projects in the county designed to engage young people during the summer months.

The purpose of the Summer Projects is to provide a supervised 20-hour programme of recreational and educational activities for young people during the summer period. Emphasis is placed on encouraging community involvement and the development of resources and groups within localities. Major area of focus includes:

- Community Safety
- Health & Wellbeing
- Skills Acquisition and Career Development
- Climate Action

• Integration. The maximum funding available to Summer Project groups is from €1,380 up to €2,760 depending on number of young people attending during the week. Please go to your local youth project to enquire about an opportunity to register your child.



Celebrating Communities and Achievements

It was an absolute pleasure to help residents, clubs, groups and organisations to celebrate numerous occasions such as sporting achievements, Tidy towns, cultural events, volunteerism, musical and performing arts festivals. It was great to be part of the opening of your housing estate, academic block, TY graduation programme, Climate Action and Biodiversity, Skills strategy, St Patricks Parade, Christmas Light ceremony and that anniversary, and commemoration.



Lanesborough Park Upgrade

Delighted with the ongoing rehabilitation of Lanesborough Park with the installation beautiful imposing gates, promenade walkways, and the planned wheelchair ramps for easy access to the sports ground. Many thanks to Fingal County Council for the beautiful playground and state-of-the-art community centre which have uplifted the community.

Reopening of St Margaret's Community Centre

Extremely happy that after some minor refurbishment works were carried out at St Margarets Community Hall, the Community Centre is now open for community use after several years of closure because of dereliction. The keys were handed to the committee on 14th of March 2025 to a local committee that was established with the support of the Community Development Office. St Margarets Amenities Committee CLG will operate the centre under a management licence.



The community office has also provided management assistance funding to the management committee to purchase furniture and white goods which will ensure the hall can be used by lots of groups and organisations going forward.

I hope that the facility would re-invigorate the social and community life in St Margarets. Congratulations to the committee and residents of St Margarets.

Contact me if you need to discuss any matter I can help with:

Councillor JK Onwumereh Fingal County Council

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MetroLink + BusConnects



1. Two headline projects, one west-side question

After decades of anticipation, two of Dublin's largest transport projects—MetroLink and BusConnects—are finally moving from paperwork to actual construction. For people living in Dublin 15, including areas like Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Clonsilla, and Ongar, this progress raises a familiar question: Will we finally see faster, more reliable public transport—or just years of disruption, noise, and traffic jams?

2. MetroLink: still coming—just later (and dearer)

Although the proposed 18.8 km underground MetroLink line doesn't directly pass through Dublin 15, it still has significant local impact.

Blanchardstown commuters could reach Dublin Airport in just 19 minutes by transferring from an express bus to the Metro at O'Connell Street or Glasnevin. Additionally, the MetroLink interchanges at O'Connell and Parnell stations will connect with the BusConnects E-Spine and the Maynooth rail line, making multimodal travel much faster for west-side residents.

However, every delay in the project contributes to growing traffic congestion on routes like the N3 and Navan Road—and increases the risk of budget overruns.

3. BusConnects: green light for the Blanchardstown corridor

BusConnects has six key components: redesigning the bus network, upgrading ticketing systems, transitioning to electric buses, adjusting fare structures, improving bus stop facilities, and building 12 Core Bus Corridors (CBCs).

For Dublin 15, the most impactful of these is the Blanchardstown–City Centre CBC. Planning permission was granted in 2024, with construction contracts expected to be awarded by mid-2025. Physical work is due to begin on the Old Navan Road in late 2025, with full completion targeted for 2030.

This corridor will include 14 km of uninterrupted bus lanes, segregated cycle tracks, narrowed roads at Ashtown, and smart traffic signals at Baggot Street. The goal is to reduce peak-hour travel times between Blanchardstown and the city from 55 minutes to just 35, and to improve bus punctuality by more than 40%.

Across the entire BusConnects programme, 11 of the 12 Core Bus Corridors had received approval by March 2025. The last—running from Kimmage to the city centre—was approved in May 2025.

In terms of the bus network itself, six out of eleven redesign phases have already been implemented. These changes have delivered a 23% increase in service frequency and a 48% rise in passenger boardings on the updated routes. The total capital budget for BusConnects

stands at €4 billion, covering 230 km of new bus lanes and 200 km of cycle tracks.

4. What Dublin 15 riders will notice first

While the changes are gradual, the most immediate signs for locals will include more frequent buses, visible construction activity, and modified routes and stops—especially along the Navan Road corridor.

5. Risks and roadblocks

Several risks could slow down or derail the plans.

First, legal issues loom large. Six of the Core Bus Corridors—including segments in Rathfarnham—are currently facing judicial reviews. Any legal victory by opponents could set legal precedents that affect developments on the Navan Road.

Second, inflation poses a financial threat. BusConnects tender prices jumped by 18% in 2024, and MetroLink is under pressure from rising global tunnelling costs.

Third, there's the risk of construction fatigue. In 2026 and 2027, three major infrastructure projects—BusConnects, Irish Water upgrades, and new active-travel lanes—will all overlap on Castleknock Main Street. This will challenge the patience of local residents and business owners.

Finally, politics could play a role. A change of government in 2026 might shift funding priorities just as major contracts are being signed.

6. The payoff

Despite the risks, the potential benefits are substantial.

BusConnects is expected to increase passenger capacity by 60% in the west-city corridor—equivalent to removing 25,000 cars from the N3 each day, based on National Transport Authority models.

The environmental impact is also promising. With 110 electric buses on order, the system is expected to cut city-wide CO₂ emissions by around 1,900 tonnes annually.

And accessibility will improve significantly: by the end of the programme, 64% more Dublin 15 residents will live within 400 metres of a bus that arrives every 10 minutes.

Bottom line for D15

MetroLink is still on track, albeit with delays and rising costs, while BusConnects is beginning to materialise on the ground, particularly along the Navan Road. Over the next five years, residents of Dublin 15 will face roadworks, detours, and possibly court battles—but if the timelines hold, the 2030s will bring faster commutes, cleaner air, and a viable alternative to car travel.

The key challenge will be keeping both the construction programme and the local community aligned long enough to reach that future.



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Child homelessness in Ireland



As of March 2025, approximately 4,675 children were living in emergency accommodation across Ireland. Just a month later, in April–May 2025, that number rose to 4,775—an increase of around 100 children in a single month. This continues an upward trend seen throughout the past year. For context, there were 4,561 homeless children in October 2024, and 4,316 in April 2024. These figures highlight a clear and troubling rise in child homelessness over time.

Is child homelessness increasing or decreasing?

Child homelessness has been steadily increasing throughout 2024 and into 2025. Year-on-year, overall homelessness has grown by about 17 to 21 percent, with the number of children affected often rising at an even faster rate. The jump of approximately 100 additional children in emergency accommodation between March and April 2025 alone underscores the severity of the issue. This current figure marks the highest level recorded in recent years, surpassing pre-pandemic peaks such as those seen in October 2019.

Why is this happening?

Ireland's ongoing housing crisis is the primary driver of rising child homelessness. A severe shortage of both rental and social housing has led to skyrocketing rents, pricing many families out of the market. With few alternatives available, families are remaining homeless for longer periods.

Private rental instability plays a major role, with over half of family homelessness cases linked to issues such as evictions, unaffordable rent, or the ending of tenancies. Economic pressures also contribute heavily: rising living costs, stagnant incomes, and inadequate social supports are pushing families into financial precarity.

On a structural level, slow housing delivery, overreliance on emergency shelters, and policy shortfalls in tenant protection and eviction prevention continue to deepen the crisis. Child protection agencies, including Tusla and Focus Ireland, have reported surging demand, resulting in overcrowded and overstretched emergency accommodation hubs.

What's being done?

The government has launched several housing initiatives, including the "Housing for All" strategy, aimed at increasing the supply of social and affordable housing. However, many of these targets have not been met. The Winter Eviction Ban, introduced in late 2022, has helped limit some seasonal evictions but has not succeeded in reversing the broader trend.

Charities such as Focus Ireland and the Simon Communities are advocating for immediate and targeted actions. They urge the government to prioritise social housing allocation for homeless families and to introduce dedicated Child Support Workers for children living in emergency accommodation. The estimated cost for staffing 37 such workers is approximately €2 million. These groups also call for measures to stop families from cycling repeatedly through the homelessness system and to address "hidden homelessness" that goes unrecorded.

Child poverty advocacy efforts, highlighted in the Child Poverty Monitor, stress the need for expanded support in housing, income security, and

early childhood education. These efforts include increased investment in early-years programmes and family welfare services.

At a systemic level, there are growing calls for better data collection and stronger coordination between housing and child welfare bodies like Tusla. Long-term investment in preventative policies is seen as critical to halting the crisis before it deepens further.

Summary

In April 2025, a record 4,775 children were living in emergency accommodation in Ireland. This surge represents a continuing and significant upward trend, largely fuelled by a combination of rental market pressures, inadequate housing supply, policy gaps, and economic hardship. While government measures such as "Housing for All" and eviction protections signal some response, critics argue these initiatives fall short in urgency and effectiveness.

Charities continue to push for stronger commitments to social housing access, tailored child support services, and more comprehensive, joined-up policies. Ireland now faces a crucial test: whether it can balance urgent housing development with meaningful income supports and robust child welfare systems to halt and ultimately reverse the rise in child homelessness. For that to happen, swift, sustained, and coordinated action is essential.

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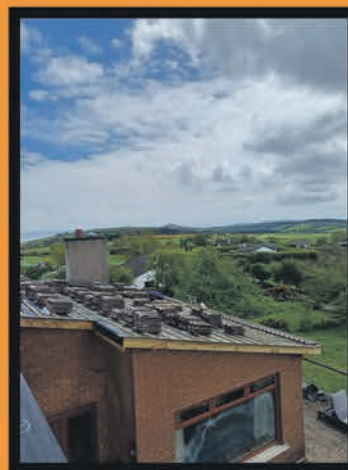
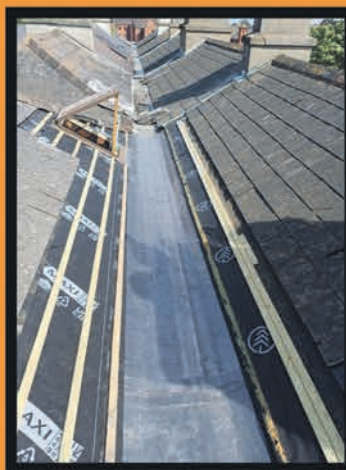
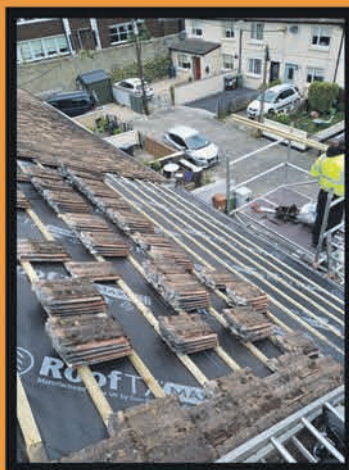
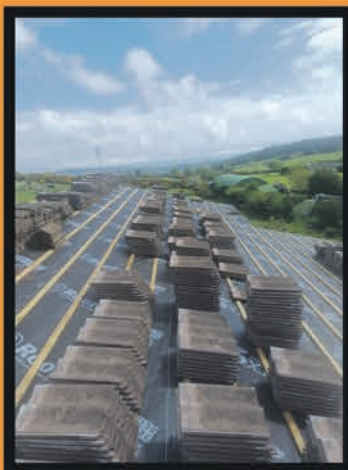
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New Bike Room Opens at St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown

Roderic O'Gorman TD opened the new facility recently

As a part of Bike Week 2025, the staff at St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown marked the opening of a new Bike Room. With a rising number of staff and volunteers in the Hospice in Blanchardstown cycling to work every day, the hospice has invested in this new facility in the underground carpark, offering staff a dry and secure location to store their bikes.

Deputy Roderic O'Gorman commended the organization for

their provision of this new facility - before now, bike parking was semi-sheltered and not very secure. A staff member explained to O'Gorman that her bike had once been stolen from outside the main door of the Hospice.

"This small investment by the Hospice creates a safer and dryer option for individuals who cycle to work. It will additionally make cycling a much more attractive option for those who want to take it up"

O'Gorman stated.



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Neighbourhood Watch

Ireland supports two main types of community safety schemes: Neighbourhood Watch in urban areas (including Dublin) and Community Alert in rural parts. Here’s how they work and their impact:

How Many Schemes Are There?

Across Ireland, there are more than 1,250 Community Alert schemes operating nationally. The Dublin metropolitan area, in particular, hosts a high concentration of urban Neighbourhood Watch groups. In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown alone, there are 157 such schemes, covering both residential streets and commercial zones. Historically, by the late 1990s, approximately 62% of Dublin households were covered by either Neighbourhood Watch or Community Alert initiatives, illustrating how widespread and deeply rooted these schemes have been in the capital.

How Do They Operate?

Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert schemes function in close partnership with An Garda Síochána. They are led by local volunteers who take on roles such as Area Coordinator, Street Coordinator, and general members. One of their key tools is the Text Alert system, which allows them to quickly notify residents and Gardaí about suspicious activity in their area. In addition to digital communication, these schemes rely on regular meetings, visible signage, and printed materials like leaflets to raise public awareness and foster a shared sense of vigilance within the community.

Do They Work?

These schemes offer clear community benefits. Participants often report stronger community bonds, a greater sense of safety, and improved public confidence in the Gardaí. Vulnerable groups in particular, such as older residents, tend to feel more secure thanks to the support and awareness these schemes promote. According to liaison Gardaí, between 80% and 90% of schemes have a positive impact on factors like reducing social isolation, improving home security, and encouraging neighbourhood vigilance.

When it comes to reducing actual crime, however, the evidence is mixed. Globally, roughly half of all evaluated schemes show some measurable reduction in crime, while the other half show unclear or no impact. In Ireland, systematic reviews have not identified a statistically significant drop in crime rates linked directly to these initiatives. However, researchers note that many of the benefits, such as increased community awareness or the deterrence of unreported crime, are difficult to capture in formal data. Garda feedback suggests that schemes tend to be most effective in stable and active communities where there is consistent and enthusiastic Garda involvement.

Are Neighbourhood Watch Schemes Working in Dublin?

In Dublin, the greatest strength of these schemes lies in their ability to build community connection. Residents often report feeling more informed about local issues, more confident in their relationship with Gardaí, and more alert to activity on their streets. However, concrete evidence of crime reduction remains inconclusive—particularly in densely populated urban areas where criminal patterns are more complex and less easily influenced by grassroots efforts.

Strong Garda support is a critical factor in whether a scheme thrives. When Gardaí are actively engaged and responsive, local reporting improves and community participation tends to rise. Conversely, limited Garda involvement often leads to reduced momentum and participation.



Overall Assessment

Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Dublin contribute meaningfully to community life. They help foster unity, improve vigilance, and encourage meaningful collaboration between residents and law enforcement. While their ability to reduce overall crime rates is not firmly established—largely due to data challenges—they nonetheless serve an important role in supporting community safety and social cohesion.

The long-term success of these schemes depends heavily on the energy and dedication of volunteers and Garda members alike. Maintaining interest, especially among younger generations, remains a significant challenge. Renewing dormant schemes and encouraging youth engagement could help extend their impact and ensure these community guardians continue to serve Dublin effectively in the years ahead.

Conclusion

Though they may not offer a silver bullet for crime reduction, Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Dublin play a vital role in strengthening local ties and enhancing public confidence in policing. Their value lies in fostering safer, more connected neighbourhoods—and their future will depend on renewed volunteerism, robust Garda partnerships, and a broader commitment to grassroots community safety.

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KELLYSTOWN CEMETERY



Many of you have been in touch with me over the years about Kellystown Cemetery. Works are now underway on phase two of a new cemetery at Kellystown, with Fingal County Council expecting the facility to be operational in early 2026. If you would like to find out more about the cemetery or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Anti-Litter Anti-Graffiti Grant

The Anti-Litter Anti-Graffiti Competition is now open and remains open until Friday, 11th of July at 4:30pm.

This fund is open to community groups, sports clubs, Men's/Women's Sheds. If you have an idea that will help your community tackle litter or inspire less graffiti in your area do get in touch and I can send you on more information and the application form.

Maximum is €1,500 per application.

Activities may include:

- Litter clean ups
- Painting walls/murals
- Introducing areas for biodiversity in places which are prone to litter/dumping
- Awareness campaigns for litter/cigarette butt disposal



CLONSILLA FRAMEWORK PLAN

Thank you to everyone who called into the drop in clinic which I held with my colleague Deputy Emer Currie and who got in touch about the Framework Plan during the consultation. In May, councillors received a report on the Clonsilla Framework Plan - a number of changes have been made based on the feedback received including changing the proposals for the project called Castlefield Park and Castlefield Court proposals, the accessibility options in Lambourn has been removed and the protection of hedgerows and trees has been included - if you want more information/details let me know.

Congratulations to local groups who have recently been allocated funding through various council funding streams.

€2,400 - Blanchardstown Northwest Community First Responders
€2,785 - Luttrellstown Residents' Association
€3,000 - D15 Toy Library Stay & Play
€930.39 - Riverwood Biodiversity Group
€316.50 - Hamilton Park Residents' Association
€3,000 - Castleknock Hurling and Football Club
€2,968 - Laurel Lodge Men's Group
€1,500 - Tridents Basketball Club
€3,000 - D15 Pickleball
€3,000 - Castleknock Active Retirement Association
€3,000 - Blanchardstown Active Retirement Association
€3,000 - Sli Dhála Comhaltas Branch Dublin 15
€1,589 - Powerstown Allotment Association
€3,000 - St Peregrine's SC Network



You may have seen works taking place locally such as planting, footpath and road repairs and bench installations. If you would like something to be considered for next year's **Programme of Works 2026**, please get in touch.



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Emer CURRIE TD

UPDATE FROM THE DÁIL FLOOR



Childcare Infrastructure must be prioritised in revised National Development Plan



Not a week goes by without a parent contacting me seeking access to childcare.

Last month, under the current National Development Plan (NDP) 1,500 new childcare places were announced nationally, including 18 much-needed places in Dublin West. While the Government is delivering on childcare promises, 18 places is just a drop in the ocean given the scale of unmet demand.

€45 million was allocated under the NDP for additional childcare capacity over the last three years, whereas the education capital budget for 2025 alone is €1.4 billion. This shows childcare funding remains vastly under-resourced despite progress.

The review of the National Development Plan provides a rare opportunity to shape long-term public investment. In the Dáil, I have separately called on the Taoiseach, the Minister for Public Expenditure and the Minister for Children to ensure childcare is prioritised as essential community infrastructure.

The Programme for Government commits to capital investment to build or purchase State-owned childcare facilities. To truly meet local needs, I believe we urgently need a new 'State Building Scheme' for childcare like the design and build model used for schools that can deliver at scale and provide value for money.

DELIVERY DRONES IN DUBLIN 15 Putting forward solutions

SCAN HERE



Concerns continue to intensify in relation to drone deliveries in Dublin 15, primarily in relation to noise, privacy and a lack of consultation about changes in the community.

In response, I have raised the issue in the Dáil and was the first public representative to request the Oireachtas Transport Committee to examine it in detail, which will take place in July.

Specifically, I have called for a community-centred regulatory framework, a public information campaign on the rights on residents, for the Minister for Transport to provide a date when a national policy framework on drones will be published, and the prioritisation and implementation of EU regulation called 'U-Space'.

U-space is an area of airspace where drones may only operate with the support of U-space services, including traffic management, flight authorisation and geo-awareness, taking into consideration noise, privacy, safety and security. I believe it has the potential to regulate flight paths and schedules, and control noise levels over residential areas.

Local authorities like Fingal County Council also need a seat at the table in shaping how this technology is used in our area. I will keep pursuing this issue to ensure residents of Dublin West have their voices are heard.

SCAN HERE



Driving Test waiting lists improve but reform required

Recent figures show that waiting lists for driving tests have dropped from an average of 27 weeks to 22 weeks, with staff working Saturdays and Bank Holidays to clear the backlog. 41 new testers have started work and 50 more will be in place by the end of the summer.

I have called for permanent investment in the waiting list system to stop the yo-yo effect where waiting lists go up and down. Since the end of 2022, the waiting list at Maple House Mulhuddart, increased by 54% showing demand is not only sustained, but growing.

Reform is also required in these key areas:

- There are 600 driving test no-shows recorded every month. Almost 2,400 driving test appointments across Ireland have gone unused in just the first four months of 2025 because candidates did not cancel or reschedule within 10 days of their test. This timeline for cancellation should be extended.
- According to my Parliamentary Questions, 12 centres including Maple House do not have testers.
- A loophole currently allows learner drivers who miss driving tests to renew their learner permits annually without ever taking the test. This is completely unacceptable for driver safety and the efficiency of the driving test system. It can be fixed with the introduction of regulations, and I've called on the RSA and Minister to address this urgently.

Emer is working in Dublin West with...



**Regina
Doherty MEP**



**Cllr Kieran
Dennison**



**Cllr Ted
Leddy**



**Cllr Siobhán
Shovlin**



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**Cllr Colm
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UPDATE FROM THE CONSTITUENCY



Danu Visit

I visited Danu Community Special School with Minister of State for Special Education Michael Moynihan. It was a valuable opportunity to discuss the challenges in special education with staff and parents.



St Dominic's College NASA Competition

I had the pleasure of meeting students and their teachers from St Dominics College who won first place in the worldwide NASA Space Settlement Competition. Over 26,000 students worldwide took part, and they are travelling to Florida to present their ideas at the International Space Development Conference.



New Tolka Valley Great Scaldwood Walk

At the launch of the new Tolka Valley Great Scaldwood Walk, which is now accessible from Mill Road in Blanchardstown Village. I want to extend a huge congratulations to Blanchardstown Tidy Towns and Fingal County Council on this key project.



New Sensory Garden at Pelletstown Educate Together N.S.

It was an honour to attend the official opening of a new Sensory Garden at Pelletstown Educate Together National School, supported by my colleagues Cllrs Colm O'Rourke and Gayle Ralph. Well done to everyone involved, especially the Pelletstown Parent Teacher Association and Plunkett's GAA Men's Shed, whose hard work brought this beautiful space to life.



Praxis Day Service Mulhuddart

I'm delighted to work with Praxis Care in Mulhuddart Village who support young adults with autism and intellectual disabilities. I really enjoyed visiting them in Mulhuddart and since then they have come to Leinster House to see me too.



CHRIS KINDER RETIREMENT - Castleknock College

A wonderful evening at Castleknock College celebrating the retirement of Chris Kinder. His passion for music and education has left a lasting mark on generations of students. He has built a wonderful team across the entire school and continues to modernise while staying true to the values that built it.



Clonee United End of Season Awards

Congratulations to all the boys and girls of Clonee United at their end of season award ceremony. It was fantastic to see so many players, parents, and volunteers come out to recognise their hard work and achievements. Thank you for inviting me to be part of the celebration.



Supporting local campaign for Avista St. Louise's

Well done to Larry Healy, the Hole in the Wall Pub's Martin Caffrey and Respect Ireland for organising a fantastic fashion show, and Cllr Siobhan Shovlin for her Coffee Morning, to fundraise for a new bus for Avista St. Louise's in Knockmaroon.



HUB24 Launch

I had the privilege of attending the launch of the new HUB24 in Castleknock Community Centre. The building will primarily be used for the Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Open Opportunities Support Service.



Councillor Gerard Sheehan

D15 West Community Update – June 2025

This month, I'm sharing updates on the issues that really matter — safety, transport, housing, green spaces, cost of living, and your voice in shaping our community.

Here's how we're making D15 better, together:

Community Safety: A Wake-Up Call

A disgusting recent arson attack rocked a local apartment block — and it's a miracle no lives were lost. I've demanded an urgent review of fire safety systems and highlighted long-standing issues, such as broken security shutters. No family should feel unsafe in their own home!

EV Charging for Every Estate

I've called on Fingal County Council to roll out EV charging in all housing areas — not just new developments. This is about fairness and future proofing.

Retrofitting Homes for Older Residents.

Free SEAI grants are available to upgrade homes for individuals aged 66 and above. Warmer homes, lower bills, healthier lives — let's get our older neighbours the support they need. Contact Councillor Sheehan for more information by scanning the QR code below:

Housing & Education

Affordable housing must go hand in hand with proper planning. The shock move to remove Ériu Community College from the Hansfield catchment is a step backwards which I, along with other families, obviously condemn and call for a suitable replacement. Families deserve schools where they live. I'm calling for this decision to be urgently reviewed.

Better Buses, Smarter Links

I'm calling for an increase in 39X's from Ongar to the city — and a dedicated all day direct Ongar–Airport route via Blanchardstown and back again. Transport should serve people, not leave them stranded. And the forthcoming Luas extension from Broombridge — why isn't it going to the airport? We're the only developed Western nation without a rail link to the main Airport.



Safer Streets Now:

I've pushed for much stronger Garda visibility in Ongar and action on scramblers and Fast Gas. Your safety isn't a luxury — it's a right.

New Hangout Spaces Coming

I'm excited to announce two new youth-friendly community spaces coming to Hazelbury and Hartstown — safe, positive spaces that will boost our sense of local connection.



Green, Clean and Growing

Over 540 trees planted. Ongar now taken in charge. Paths upgraded. Latchford's dog run is just the beginning — I'm pushing for benches, inclusive parks and greener estates across D15.

Tackling the Cost of Living Crisis

I'm fighting for targeted VAT cuts, fair fuel allowances, and local support for childcare and food programmes. At our recent Ard Fheis I've called for an increase in Children's Allowance to €250 per child, especially for larger struggling families, and up to the age of 22 while in full-time education. Families are under pressure — we must act together now, especially when the government has just introduced sly new carbon taxes on our central heating, just as the weather improved!

Should Ongar have its own Pool & Leisure Centre?

Is it time to explore the idea of a public swimming pool? Would you support this? Let me know. Your opinion matters.

Your Voice, Your Community. If you'd like to see more action — or raise something new — please get in touch. I'm here to represent you!

Standing Up for Our Community — And Our Country

- Ireland's neutrality must be protected — the Triple Lock matters especially in a world that is growing increasingly volatile and dangerous by the day.
- Climate action starts at home — retrofits, EVs, clean air.
- Local homes for local people!
- Every child with additional needs deserves a school place — no delays, no excuses.

This must include both high-functioning and low-functioning children.



Let's build a safer, greener, fairer
Dublin 15 — together.

Contact Councillor Gerard Sheehan today on
089 4375 144 or
gerard.sheehan@cllr.fingal.ie or by
scanning the QR code.



“A Miracle No Lives Were Lost”

Councillor Gerard Sheehan Condemns Arson Attack on Dublin Apartment Block

Dublin, June 6, 2025 – Councillor Gerard Sheehan has expressed deep shock and outrage following the recent arson attack on a Dublin apartment block, describing the incident as “nothing short of a miracle” that no residents were killed or injured.

“The deliberate setting of a fire in a residential building is an appalling act that endangers lives and undermines the safety of our communities,” Councillor Sheehan stated. “It’s a miracle that no one was killed or injured in this devastating incident.”

He went on to say:

“This is something I have been worried about for some time and am on the record as voicing those concerns. There have been concerns previously raised not just by me, but other councillors in relation to the shutters on the garage doors not working, allowing access to the underground parking area. Furthermore, serious questions need to be asked about sprinkler systems in the underground parking area.”

Councillor Sheehan is also calling for urgent confirmation that the fire alarm system in the building was fully operational at the time of the incident. “Residents need clarity and reassurance that safety systems designed to protect them are functional and reliable.”

He has called for a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding the attack and is urging authorities to implement stronger



security and fire safety measures.

“We must ensure that our residents feel safe in their homes. This includes reviewing fire safety protocols, improving building security, and fostering community vigilance,” he added.

Councillor Sheehan also extended his gratitude to the emergency services for their rapid and professional response, which helped prevent further devastation and potential loss of life.

Residents affected by the incident are encouraged to contact local support services for assistance.

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The Tenant in Situ Scheme

The TenantinSitu Scheme (formally the CostRental TenantinSitu or CRTiS) is an initiative introduced in 2023 in Ireland to help renters at risk of eviction when their landlord decides to sell.

Here's a clear overview:

What is the Tenant in Situ Scheme?

The Tenant in Situ scheme is designed to prevent homelessness among private renters whose landlords are selling their properties. To qualify, tenants must meet several criteria. They must have received a valid notice to quit due to the landlord's intention to sell, and their household must be at risk of homelessness. Additionally, eligible tenants should not already be receiving support under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), or other forms of social housing. Income limits also apply—households must have a net income below €66,000 if they are in Dublin, or €59,000 outside of Dublin.

The scheme operates through local authorities, which assess whether tenants meet the eligibility criteria. Once a household is deemed eligible, the case is referred to the Housing Agency. The Agency then approaches the landlord with a market-based valuation for the property. If the landlord agrees to sell at that price, the Agency purchases the property. The tenant remains in their home, initially continuing to pay rent at the previous rate. Over time, the tenancy transitions into a cost rental model, ensuring long-term affordability and stability.

Is it working? What's happening in practice?

Since its launch, the scheme has shown both promise and growing pains. Around 120 families have been directly protected from homelessness, and by April 2025, over 2,500 households had benefited through a combination of social housing and cost rental versions of the Tenant in Situ approach.

However, the scheme has faced significant challenges. Early in 2025, government funding delays meant that local authorities were unable to proceed with planned property acquisitions. This left many families in limbo, at continued risk of losing their homes. Logistical hurdles—including disputes over property titles, valuation issues, and audit requirements—have further slowed progress. In some cases, such as with Fingal County Council, authorities have had to withdraw from agreed purchases because of these complications.

The lack of clearly defined acquisition targets for 2025 has been another stumbling block. According to Sinn Féin and several housing advocacy groups, this absence of structure led to hundreds of stalled applications. Confusion has also emerged among tenants, with reports—such as those shared on Reddit—describing uncertainty over who is responsible for rent payments, repairs, and communication during the transition process. This ambiguity has left some tenants feeling unsupported and unsure of where they stand.

Political and NGO voices have grown increasingly vocal about the scheme's shortcomings. Sinn Féin's housing spokesperson Eoin Ó Broin and the charity Threshold have called for urgent improvements, including the immediate release of funds and the establishment of annual targets to guide acquisitions. The Irish Times has acknowledged the successful purchase of approximately 120 homes as a positive outcome but questioned the overall ambition of the scheme, given the slow pace and modest scale of implementation to date.

Is it working—or not?

The Tenant in Situ scheme is effective in principle and has delivered meaningful outcomes for dozens of families. It offers a humane, practical solution to a growing crisis and was introduced with strong intentions and

early success. But these gains are undermined by systemic issues. Delays in funding, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and inconsistent involvement from local authorities have all slowed progress. With hundreds of households at risk of eviction, the scheme's momentum appears to have stalled, prompting calls for more decisive action.

What needs to be done

To realise the full potential of the scheme, funding allocations must be made on time, with annual budgets and local authority targets communicated clearly and early in the year. The acquisition process needs to be streamlined—especially in relation to property valuations, title verifications, and audit procedures—to prevent avoidable delays. Tenants should also receive clear guidance about their responsibilities during the acquisition phase, particularly in regard to rent payments and property maintenance. Finally, while €325 million has been earmarked for the scheme, acquiring only around 120 properties over 20 months is a modest outcome, suggesting that more ambitious targets and faster implementation are urgently needed.



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RENT-PRESSURE ZONES IN DUBLIN 15

Eight Years On, What Have They Achieved?



Since Christmas 2016, every address in Dublin 15—including Castleknock, Blanchardstown-Mulhuddart, Ongar, and Tyrrelstown—has been located within a Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ). Under this regime, landlords have been limited in how much they can raise rent: initially by no more than 4% annually, and since 2021, by the rate of inflation as measured by the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), capped at 2% per year.

The effect on rents has been mixed. While the cap successfully slowed rent increases for existing tenants—many of whom now face annual rises of just 2 to 4 percent instead of the double-digit jumps seen between 2014 and 2016—it has done little to protect new renters. When a rental unit changes hands, the rent cap resets, allowing landlords to set a fresh price. As a result, new-tenancy rents in Dublin’s RPZs rose by 6.5% in 2023, far outpacing legal limits and driving further unaffordability.

The impact on rental supply has been dramatic. Between 2021 and 2023, data from the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) show a 42% net exit of small landlords from the Dublin market. Many of these landlords cited rent caps and compliance burdens as key reasons for selling up. In Dublin 15 specifically, the number of homes advertised on Daft.ie each month has plummeted—from around 180 in 2019 to fewer than 60 today. This has led to intense competition among renters, with queues for viewings and winning bids often exceeding the listed rent, despite regulatory limits.

Large-scale landlords are stepping into the gap. Property owners with more than 100 units now control 26% of tenancies in Dublin, marking a four-point increase in just one year. As small landlords exit, the market is becoming increasingly dominated by institutional players.

Enforcement efforts remain limited in scope. In 2024, the RTB opened 489 investigations into rent-cap breaches nationwide, with 61 of those in Dublin 15. However, only 14 of these led to formal sanctions. Typical penalties included a €3,000 fine and an order to refund overcharged rent. In response to mounting criticism, the government recently approved a broader rental sector overhaul, including plans for stiffer fines and on-the-spot inspections.

Affordability remains a serious concern. The median household income in Dublin 15 is approximately €65,000. The standardised rent for a new two-bedroom property is around €2,100 per month, resulting in a rent-to-income ratio of 38%—well above

the commonly accepted 30% affordability threshold. Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) limits fall short of current market rents by €650 to €750 per month, making it especially difficult for lower-income families to secure housing. Even with RPZ protections, many are pushed into emergency accommodation.

The RPZ system has brought both benefits and shortcomings. It helped temper the steep rent increases of the mid-2010s and



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gave sitting tenants more predictable costs. Inflation expectations were somewhat stabilised, and the RTB has noted that the caps are having a measurable impact on national averages. However, the system has also failed to prevent runaway rents on new tenancies, particularly in urban areas. It contributed to the accelerated departure of small landlords, shrinking the rental stock. Enforcement has been inconsistent, with loopholes and sluggish dispute resolution undermining tenant protections. Most significantly, RPZs have not addressed the core problem—a chronic shortage of housing—leading to distortions like under-the-table key money, bidding wars, and increasingly opaque rental agreements.

Looking ahead, the RPZ rules have been extended until December 2025. However, a full redesign is likely. A recent Housing Commission report labelled the current approach “unsustainable” and called for a shift toward a cost-rental housing model. As part of the next phase, the government plans to allow higher starting rents in newly built blocks, while also pledging a ban on no-fault evictions and stricter penalties for breaches. The RTB has committed to launching live, area-level rent dashboards by 2026, allowing tenants to check the legal rent ceiling before signing a lease.

For Dublin 15, the story of RPZs is one of partial success. The system helped moderate rent increases for existing tenants but failed to improve affordability overall. Starting rents continued to rise unchecked, supply tightened, and the market shifted increasingly toward institutional ownership. The next stage of reform must find a way to protect tenants while also encouraging the investment and supply needed to make meaningful progress. Only then will renters in Dublin 15 start to feel lasting relief.



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What are the rules and risks with Vaping

Ireland currently has no specific regulations targeting HHC (hexahydrocannabinol) vapes, though they are drawing increasing concern, while vaping in general is regulated and presents well-documented health risks.

HHC Vapes — The Legal Grey Area

HHC, or hexahydrocannabinol, is a semi-synthetic cannabinoid that currently exists in a legal grey zone in Ireland. It is not explicitly listed as a controlled substance under the Misuse of Drugs Acts, which means that products containing HHC—such as vapes—can be legally sold. In fact, they are often available even to individuals under the age of 18, as these products fall outside the legal definitions that govern tobacco and nicotine items.

This regulatory loophole has raised alarm among public health authorities and politicians alike. There is growing concern that the availability of HHC vapes is harming young people's health, with some lawmakers calling for immediate action. The Department of Health is now drafting legislation to classify HHC as a Schedule 1 drug. If passed, this would make both possession and sale of HHC products illegal. Meanwhile, investigations into HHC products are ongoing, and both Irish and EU health agencies are actively monitoring the spread and risks associated with their use.

Nicotine Vapes — Current Regulations

In contrast, Ireland has already established a firm regulatory framework for nicotine-based vaping products. The Public Health (Tobacco and Nicotine Inhaling Products) Act 2023 prohibits the sale of nicotine vapes to anyone under 18 and introduces strict rules on packaging, advertising, and product content.

As part of Budget 2025, a new tax of €0.50 per millilitre of vape liquid was introduced to discourage use. A ban on disposable vapes is also on the horizon, motivated by concerns over youth uptake and environmental harm. Additional measures under consideration include plain packaging, the elimination of flavoured products, and financial penalties for non-compliant retailers. Enforcement of these expanded regulations is expected to begin later in 2025.

Health Risks of Vaping

The health risks associated with vaping—both nicotine and cannabinoid-based—are a growing concern, particularly for adolescents and non-smokers. Nicotine addiction can take hold rapidly in young people, disrupting brain development, impulse control, concentration, sleep, and mood. Research indicates that teenagers who vape are three to five times more likely to transition to smoking traditional cigarettes later on.

Vaping chemicals are linked to a range of respiratory issues, including asthma flare-ups, lung inflammation, and in some cases, serious lung injuries such as EVALI. Users often experience short-term symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, headaches, dizziness, nausea, anxiety, and increased heart rate. While long-term effects are still under study, early evidence suggests risks including DNA damage, compromised cardiovascular and pulmonary health, and possible links to cancer.

For all users—not just youth—the risks extend beyond nicotine addiction. The vapor from e-cigarettes contains toxic aldehydes, heavy metals, and ultrafine particles that can damage blood vessels, increase the risk of heart disease, and trigger oxidative stress. There is also a physical danger from malfunctioning devices, with batteries known to overheat, explode, or cause burns. Moreover, nicotine consumption via vaping may impair cognitive development and increase susceptibility to other forms of addiction.

Environmental concerns are another critical issue. Disposable vapes, in particular, are contributing to a growing ecological crisis. They generate large volumes of waste, present hazards related to battery disposal, risk toxic runoff, and carry a significant carbon footprint.

Is Regulation Working?

Ireland's regulatory efforts around nicotine vaping are making measurable progress. Age limits, taxation, flavour restrictions, and bans on disposable devices are being introduced to curb use—especially among younger populations. However, gaps remain. Enforcement is inconsistent, and access to cessation supports and public education campaigns still falls short of what's needed to address the scale of the problem.

In the case of HHC vapes, regulation is significantly behind. The products are currently exploiting a legal loophole, and young people are taking advantage of the lack of oversight. Although the government is preparing to act by banning HHC through Schedule 1 classification, that process is still underway and delayed.

Summary

Ireland is tightening its grip on nicotine vaping through new laws, taxes, and restrictions aimed at protecting public health and the environment. Yet HHC vapes continue to be sold openly in a regulatory vacuum, raising urgent health and safety concerns. While legislative efforts to ban HHC are in motion, the lack of immediate controls leaves a dangerous gap. The overall message remains clear: vaping—whether nicotine-based or cannabinoid-derived—poses serious risks, especially for young people. Stronger oversight, clearer laws, and better support systems are essential to reduce harm and close the gaps in current policy.

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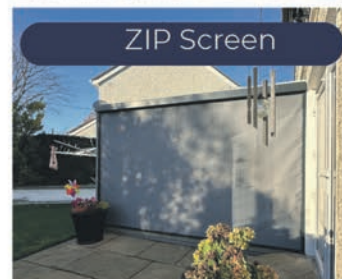


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TU Dublin Launches Landmark Building on Blanchardstown Campus

TU Dublin has celebrated the official opening of Áras Geal, a new state-of-the-art teaching facility

The launch event brought together students, staff, graduates, key stakeholders, government officials, public representatives and members of the local community in Blanchardstown to mark the occasion.

The project was developed with the support and guidance of the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and will serve as a cornerstone for TU Dublin's future in Blanchardstown.

TU Dublin graduates are the most employable of any university in Dublin, with employer engagement a defining hallmark of the University's distinctive learning experience. Áras Geal represents a major investment in practice-led and employer-engaged education and research in the North-West Dublin region.

The 4,067m² facility is a multipurpose, future-focused space designed to support students across all disciplines, featuring lecture theatres, flexible learning environments and multimedia laboratories. It will significantly expand the University's capacity, enabling TU Dublin to accommodate an additional 600 students at the Blanchardstown campus, bringing the total student population there to almost 3,600. The project is part of Project Ireland 2040, which recognises that investment in education is key to building a strong, balanced and future-proofed economy across all regions.

Speaking at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, James Lawless, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, said:

"Áras Geal is a powerful example of what can be achieved through vision, partnership and collaboration. This impressive

new building is the first of 11 projects being developed under Public Private Partnership, which is part of a broader vision to strengthen infrastructure in Ireland's Technological University sector."

President of TU Dublin, Dr Deirdre Lillis, also shared her vision for the future of the Blanchardstown campus:

"TU Dublin's core mission is to deliver accessible pathways to high-quality employment for students of all ages and backgrounds. We are committed to providing world-class, practice-led and employer-engaged education and research in the heart of one of Ireland's fastest-growing regions. Áras Geal literally translates as 'Bright House' or 'House of Light', symbolising the energy, ambition and openness that will define our University's future. This reflects the very best of what TU Dublin stands for – excellence, accessibility, employability and engagement. From the graduates who helped design it to the students who will thrive within it, this teaching facility will serve as a beacon on our Blanchardstown campus and a milestone in our ongoing journey as Ireland's university for enterprise, talent and innovation."

The launch of Áras Geal marks a transformative moment for the Blanchardstown campus, which serves a diverse student population from Dublin and surrounding counties, including Meath, Kildare, Louth and Cavan. With growing demand for higher education in one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, this new facility will ensure that TU Dublin continues to lead in delivering accessible, practice-led and employer-engaged learning.

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Data Centres in Ireland and their impact

Ireland’s data centre boom has brought major economic gains, but it has also introduced significant climate and infrastructure challenges. Electricity demand from the sector now dominates national consumption and threatens to derail legally binding climate commitments. It also raises difficult questions about resource allocation in the face of urgent housing needs.



The path forward will require a careful balance—sustaining economic growth while ensuring that renewable energy and grid capacity keep pace. Whether that means tightening regulations, pausing new developments, or reshaping energy policy, the decisions made in the coming years will determine whether Ireland can continue to lead in tech without compromising its climate and social goals.

How many data centres are there—and what’s coming?

As of early 2025, Ireland is home to approximately 121 data centres operated by 24 different providers, with Dublin remaining the country’s central hub. Despite the already significant footprint, the pipeline for expansion remains strong. Reports indicate that 14 data centres are currently under construction, and another 40 are at various stages of approval or planning. However, a moratorium on new grid connections in Dublin, which runs from 2021 to 2028, is reshaping how and where companies locate their facilities. As a result, tech firms are increasingly exploring alternative sites in counties like Offaly, Cork, Kildare, and other regions outside the capital.

Electricity consumption: how much are they using?

Data centres are now a major force in Ireland’s energy landscape. In 2024 alone, they consumed around 6,969 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity—a 10 percent increase from the 6,335 GWh recorded in 2023. Their electricity consumption represented 22 percent of the country’s total metered usage that year, up from 21 percent the previous year. To put the growth in perspective, data centres accounted for just 5 percent of electricity consumption in 2015. Projections suggest this figure could rise to as much as 31 percent by 2027 and may hit 30 percent by 2030 or 2032, driven in part by the explosion of demand from artificial intelligence applications.

Climate impact

The environmental implications of this growth are significant. Since 2015, annual increases in electricity consumption by data centres have averaged between 22 and 23 percent, in stark contrast to the roughly 0.4 percent growth seen in other sectors. This makes data centres the primary driver of Ireland’s rising electricity demand. They already account for between 2.5 and 4 percent of national greenhouse gas emissions, mainly due to their reliance on electricity and the use of onsite gas-powered generators.

A critical concern is that all of the wind-power capacity added between 2017 and 2023 was effectively absorbed by data centres, meaning there was no overall reduction in fossil fuel usage. As more data centres connect directly to the natural gas grid or install their own generators, their emissions intensity is increasing. This shift risks undermining national climate goals, particularly as the rollout of renewable energy infrastructure struggles to keep pace with the sector’s expansion. Experts, including members of the Climate Change Advisory Council and academics like Professor Hannah Daly from University College Cork, warn that without stronger regulation and oversight, the country could fail to meet its 2030 climate targets and carbon budgets.

Policy and mitigation efforts

The Irish government is attempting to address these challenges. The 2024 Climate Action Plan aims to ensure that 80 percent of electricity comes from renewable sources by 2030 and calls for an acceleration in wind and solar power deployment. Projections suggest that expected renewable capacity—estimated at around 22 gigawatts—could eventually cover data centre demand, provided it is realised on time.

At the EU level, the 2025 Energy Efficiency Directive will impose new obligations on data centres, including mandatory waste-heat recovery and annual energy performance reporting. In Ireland, regulators now require new data centres seeking grid connections to have on-site energy generation or storage. While this rule aims to reduce strain on the national grid, it could also entrench reliance on fossil fuels. Alternatives, such as private-wire networks and dedicated energy parks, are currently under review.





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“The recent Castleknock Village Festival was a great success. I would like to thank all those who helped make it so, particularly our sponsors Fingal Co Council and the Castleknock Hotel. Going forward we will be looking at other ways in which Fingal Events can promote and expand this festival and other events in Dublin 15. Cllr Ted Leddy”





Our Beyond the Pale Series goes to Donegal Town

Donegal Town - the lively harbour hub that anchors Ireland's north-west.

Set where the River Eske flows into Donegal Bay, Donegal Town is a compact gem that's easy to explore on foot yet offers a rich mix of heritage, local flavour, and outdoor adventure. Framed by the Bluestack Mountains and fronting the iconic Wild Atlantic Way, it serves equally well as a relaxing weekend break or as a base for delving into the untamed peninsulas of County Donegal.

At the heart of the town stands Donegal Castle, a striking 15th-century stronghold once held by the O'Donnell chieftains and later remodelled under the English Crown. Visitors can join guided tours that wind through the castle's grand hall with its impressive timber roof, explore the restored Jacobean wing, and learn about Gaelic clan history through detailed exhibitions. Just across the river are the haunting ruins of the Franciscan Friary, founded in 1474 and believed to have inspired the Annals of the Four Masters.

For those who want to see Donegal Bay without dipping a toe in the water, the Donegal Bay Waterbus offers an hour-long cruise that glides past seal-dotted sandbanks and the fairy-tale Beacon lighthouse. Sailings are tide-dependent and run most days throughout the 2025 season, complete with live commentary and a traditional céilí on the return leg.

A short 1.5-kilometre stroll south leads to the Donegal Craft Village, a vibrant courtyard where artisans such as glass-blowers, weavers, and chocolatiers demonstrate their crafts in studios open to the public. In town, the volunteer-run Donegal Railway Heritage Centre offers a nostalgic look at the narrow-gauge railway era through vintage carriages and interactive exhibits. To dig deeper into the town's layered past, visitors can follow the self-guided Historic Town Trail, which links 21 heritage plaques across sites including Georgian shopfronts, famine relief structures, and the old Diamond market square.

Nearby beaches offer world-class coastal experiences within easy reach. Both Rossnowlagh and Murvagh have earned Blue Flag status for 2025, ensuring clean waters, lifeguard patrols in summer, and thriving surf schools. Murvagh adds a family-friendly forest loop to its sandy appeal, while Rossnowlagh's three-kilometre stretch is famous for its gentle, rolling waves that are perfect for beginners.

Donegal Town also holds its own in Ireland's culinary scene. It won the Foodie Town Award in 2019 and continues to impress with its local fare and festivals. This year, the Donegal Festival of Food will take place in nearby Oakfield Park on the 24th and 25th of May, featuring appearances by chefs Marco Pierre White and Rachel Allen. For something more casual, The Olde Castle Bar is a favourite for seafood chowder, and The Reel Inn offers both hearty pub food and live traditional music well into the night.

Accommodation options cater to every taste and budget. Harvey's Point offers serene lakeside suites and acclaimed tasting menus, while Lough Eske Castle pairs five-star luxury with turreted charm and a spa housed in the former stables. Cosy B&Bs like the Gateway Lodge and Mill Park Hotel, nestled beside the river, tend to book out early during festival season, so plan ahead.

Having a car provides the most freedom for exploring beaches and cliffs, though local taxis and seasonal shuttle buses also reach popular spots like Rossnowlagh, Slieve League, and Killybegs. Ample parking is available near the Quay, and a recently introduced one-way traffic system through The Diamond keeps the town centre calm and pedestrian-friendly.

For those seeking to travel sustainably, Donegal Town is increasingly geared toward greener tourism. Reusable bottle refill stations are dotted around the pier and craft village, while many cafés now offer KeepCup-compatible lids. Guided hikes are encouraged to protect fragile trails in the Bluestacks, and visitors are reminded to observe Blue Flag guidelines—such as keeping dogs off bathing zones during the summer.

Now is the perfect time to visit. With newly signposted heritage sites, an expanding roster of food festivals, and some of Ireland's best beaches just minutes away, Donegal Town is stepping out from the shadow of being simply a gateway to the county's wilder reaches. It's small enough to feel intimate, yet full of enough charm and activity to fill a long weekend—and it makes a superb launchpad for discovering the untamed beauty of the northwest. So pack layers, bring your appetite, and embrace the spirit of adventure: Donegal Town is ready to welcome you.



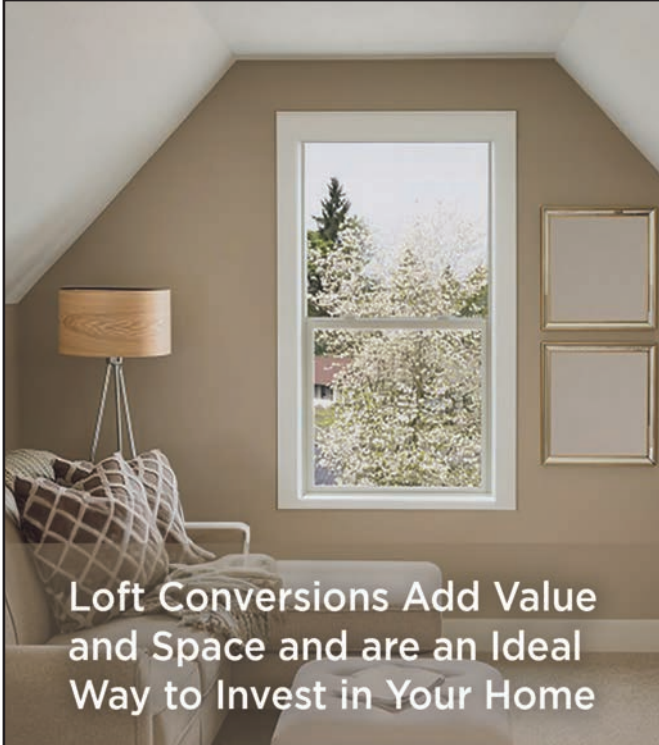
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Irish Government welcomes EU Council agreement

but critics warn rights are being eroded



This week, EU transport ministers reached a political agreement on a comprehensive update of air passenger rights—the first major reform since the original EU 261 regulation in 2004, after 12 years of negotiations.

Ireland's Minister of State Seán Canney, attending the Council meeting, described the deal as “a major milestone in putting passengers first, with fairer, simpler and more transparent rules” and said he “looks forward to the agreement now moving forward to the next stage of the legislative process”.

However, Irish Labour MEP Aodhán Ó Ríordáin strongly criticised Ireland's support for the deal, accusing the government of siding with airlines rather than passengers. He described the Council's position as “an appalling decision” that would see EU consumers lose “basic rights we have held dear for years,” especially given Ireland's reliance on air travel as an island nation.

What's changing?

The political agreement introduces updates across 30+ passenger rights, including:

Compensation thresholds

- Short- and medium-haul flights: Delay threshold raised from 3 to 4 hours before compensation eligibility (€300).
- Long-haul flights (>3500 km): Threshold increased from 3 to 6 hours; compensation reduced from €600 to €500.

More rider protections

- Rerouting obligations: Airlines must reroute passengers promptly—even via other carriers or transport modes. If not within 3 hours, passengers can rebook and claim up to 400% of the original fare.
- Assistance provisions: Clearer duty on airlines for food, refreshment, accommodation, and mandatory disembarkation after prolonged tarmac delays.
- Tamping down “no-show” tactics: Passengers can no longer be denied return flights if they miss the outbound leg accidentally protecting customers from punitive airline policies.

- Streamlined claims: Prefilled compensation forms will be auto sent; passengers have 6 months to file, and airlines must reply or pay within 14 days.
- Tightening ‘extraordinary circumstances’: Airlines bear the burden of proving they took all reasonable measures to avoid disruptions—making it harder to dodge compensation entirely.

Implications for Irish air passengers

Alleged dilution of rights

Irish MEP Ó Ríordáin warns that increased delay thresholds could cause fewer and later claims, stripping away protections Irish consumers currently enjoy under EU law.

Potential for real-world gains

However, travel commentator Eoghan Corry notes the measure offers a compromise: while some rights are lost, others are gained—and average fare prices may fall modestly (perhaps around €8 per ticket).

Next steps

The Council's position now moves to the European Parliament for review. The Parliament may accept, amend, or reject the deal. Only after that, and with final approval from the Commission, will the updated regulation become binding—likely in 2026, according to expert estimates.

Final Take

Proponents argue that the updated legislation modernises and simplifies passenger rights, empowering airlines to reduce cancellations while still providing fair recourse for major delays.

Critics (including Irish MEPs and consumer groups) counter that this shift shifts the burden to consumers: the new thresholds could see many delays go uncompensated, and Ireland's vote may reflect undue influence from airlines.

For Irish passengers, the overhaul signals both improved support systems in some areas and reduced compensation in others—reinforcing the importance of following developments in Brussels as the European Parliament reviews the text.



Cherryhound Business Park: The 90-Acre Promise on Hold

Cherryhound Business Park is a 37-hectare (92.2-acre) greenfield landbank located at the Cherryhound/M2 interchange, just three kilometres northwest of Dublin Airport and a mere two minutes from the M50.

The entire site is zoned “GE – General Employment” under Fingal’s 2023–2029 Development Plan. According to the 2013 Cherryhound Local Area Plan, the area is envisioned as a hub for logistics, light manufacturing, and modern office developments extending towards Tyrrelstown.

The project launched with high expectations, but progress has stalled. Fingal County Council officer Natalie Dineen has emphasised that project screening prioritises sustainability, job quality, and long-term commercial rates income rather than simply seeking the highest financial offer. However, eight months after the official sales push began, only one serious bidder remains in advanced talks. Critics are beginning to worry that the early momentum is fading.

Cherryhound’s potential significance to Dublin 15 is substantial. Early feasibility studies estimated the site could support between 2,500 and 4,000 full-time jobs once fully developed. This would represent a major injection of employment and deliver millions of euros annually in commercial rates revenue, strengthening Fingal’s fiscal position. Strategically, the site would fill a key gap in the so-called “logistics crescent,” linking Northwest Logistics Park, Damastown, and Dublin Airport. Planners refer to this corridor as the “Dublin Enterprise Zone arc,” running along the N2/N3 connection.

Beyond jobs, the local economic impact is expected to be considerable. Construction alone is projected to inject around €150 million into the economy over the next decade, with tradespeople and suppliers in areas like Blanchardstown and Ballycool standing to benefit. This estimate is based on standard build-cost benchmarks for developing 90 acres of LEED-Gold warehousing.

However, several factors are slowing the project’s progress. Local residents in nearby areas such as Hollystown and The Ward support the employment potential but express concern over increased heavy vehicle traffic on rural roads and the loss of green space. A Strategic Environmental Assessment conducted as part of the Local Area Plan concluded there would be no significant impact on protected Natura sites—provided that planned landscape buffers and drainage ponds are implemented. Still, the traffic section of the plan outlines needed junction upgrades on the Kilshane and North Roads but does not earmark funding for them. In response, local councillors have called for any initial site occupant to contribute to these works through a Section 48 levy.

The overall timeline for Cherryhound is tight, and delays in securing a first tenant could cascade into broader setbacks. Missing early targets risks derailing the project, as each milestone depends on the one before it.

Cherryhound remains Fingal’s largest shovel-ready employment site—a rare opportunity to generate thousands of modern, sustainable jobs in Dublin 15 and meet pent-up industrial demand. But with only one bidder close to signing and visible progress stalling, concerns are growing among councillors that the project may drift. The coming six months will be crucial. If Fingal County Council can finalise infrastructure costings, establish robust sustainability requirements, and land that first deal, the park could finally transition from plans on paper to construction on the ground. If not, the site may remain undeveloped, while competing parks such as Nexus Logistics and Greenogue—both of which are already advancing—continue to attract the investment and employment Cherryhound was meant to deliver.



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Women in Dublin West can now get free HRT

Emer Currie

Majority of pharmacies nationwide participating in scheme with numbers increasing daily
Women in Dublin West will be able to receive free HRT medication from June 1st, a Fine Gael TD has said, as the vast majority of pharmacies have signed up to the scheme.

Deputy Emer Currie said they were grateful to Fine Gael Minister for Health Jennifer Carroll MacNeill for engaging with all stakeholders so successfully to deliver this medication free of charge for the many women around the country who need it.

Deputy Currie said: “The majority of pharmacies across the country are participating in this scheme, and this figure is increasingly daily, meaning that all women will be able to access this free medication in a pharmacy convenient for them.

In Dublin, 466 pharmacies will offer the free medication to women, a

92% uptake, which is extremely positive.

“It’s important to note that the new arrangement includes a pharmacy dispensing fee, so medication will be completely free”

Women who have been private patients and who wish to avail of this will need to possess a Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) card. Medical card holders can continue to access HRT medication as normal – they do not need a DPS card. Women can identify their nearest pharmacy to them that is providing the service by using the HSE pharmacy finder [HERE](#)

“The symptoms women encounter during perimenopause and menopause are varied and women’s lives can be hugely impacted. HRT is such an important medicinal regime for women and can positively improve their lives and make daily living much easier.

“This scheme is transformational for women. I commend the pharmacies in Dublin West who have joined the scheme to continue to provide vital healthcare for their communities,” concluded Deputy Currie.

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