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Kildare's National Women's Enterprise Day

Kildare County Council's Local Enterprise Office, in association with County Kildare Chamber and Network Ireland Kildare Branch, is proud to launch Kildare's National Women's Enterprise Day, a pivotal event dedicated to empowering female entrepreneurs.



Scheduled for 17th October 2024, this year's theme, "Girls Just Wanna Have Funds!" focuses on equipping women with the knowledge and resources they need to successfully secure funding or investment to start or scale their businesses.

Kildare County Council is inviting female entrepreneurs across Kildare to celebrate National Women's Enterprise Day in The Moat Theatre from 5:30pm. This talk-show style event will feature industry experts, investors, and successful female entrepreneurs sharing insights and strategies for securing business finance.

The Positive Economist, Susan Hayes will MC and lead challenging conversations with female entrepreneurs who have successfully secured significant investment into their companies. Their stories will tell of the highs and the challenges associated with onboarding investment.

Some of the speakers joining the stage include:

- Chupi Sweetman, owner of Chupi. This Irish heirloom jewellery brand raised €3.75 million in new equity and debt investment in 2023 to fuel its ambitious growth plans for Ireland and the UK
- Kilcullen's Heidi Davis of Identify Her awarded HPSU investment in 2023 by Enterprise Ireland
- Denise McQuaid, Investment Director of Awaken Angels, whose mission is to significantly increase the number of active Irish and Irish connected women angel investors, investing in women founded businesses on the island of Ireland

Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise, Tourism and Economic Development said: "Despite their growing presence in the business world, female entrepreneurs continue to face significant barriers, particularly in accessing business finance. Research shows that female-owned businesses receive less funding compared to their male counterparts, yet they often deliver higher returns on investment. By addressing this disparity, we can unlock immense economic potential

and foster a more inclusive economy."

Sonya Kavanagh, Chief Executive, Kildare County Council explained: "National Women's Enterprise Day is part of the annual events programme that Local Enterprise Office Kildare deliver specifically to support female entrepreneurs. This support programme is called She Succeeds. She Succeeds is about harnessing diverse perspectives that drive innovation and growth. By providing women with the tools and opportunities to succeed, we can create a more dynamic and resilient business landscape."

Led and funded by Local Enterprise Office Kildare, Kildare County Council are delighted that this event will be supported in collaboration with County Kildare Chamber and Network Ireland Kildare Branch.

Sinéad Ronan – CEO, County Kildare Chamber said "County Kildare Chamber is happy to support events like this, as they encourage our membership to work together and promote greater female participation in the workplace. By fostering an environment of equality and economic growth within the county, we aim to empower local female entrepreneurs to achieve their full potential and drive prosperity in our community."

On behalf of Network Ireland Kildare Branch President Anita Meenehan said: "This collaboration further strengthens the relationship between our two organisations. Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Kildare has been a great supporter and sponsor of Network Ireland Kildare Branch, so we appreciate the value our members get from attending LEO events and the supports they provide, the connections members make and the support they receive. We can see it through the growth and development within their businesses."

Whether you're a seasoned entrepreneur, a budding business owner, or someone interested in supporting this vital cause, we encourage you to join us for an uplifting evening of inspiration, learning and networking, and with some surprises thrown in!

For more information and to register for the event, please visit www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Training-Events/Online-Bookings



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our September / October edition of Little Village. We have an interesting article on cyberbullying explaining how social media is being used to threaten individuals in an aggressive and harmful manner. There is also an article on how to navigate the health system in Ireland, both public and private.

Finally, where will we be on Friday 13th April 2029 when the Apophis Asteroid shoots past the Earth. Perhaps it's best not to dwell too much on that.

Until next time.

The Little Village Team

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WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?



Cyberbullying is the use of digital technologies, such as social media, messaging platforms, emails, and websites, to harass, threaten, or target someone in a harmful or aggressive manner.

It can take many forms, including spreading false rumours, sending hurtful messages, sharing private information without consent, impersonating someone to embarrass them, and creating or sharing mean or humiliating content about the person.

Key characteristics of cyberbullying include:

1. **Anonymity:** The bully may hide their identity, making it difficult to hold them accountable.
2. **Persistence:** Online content can be shared and viewed repeatedly, extending the duration of the bullying.
3. **Publicity:** Harmful messages or images can be seen by a wide audience, amplifying the impact.
4. **Inescapability:** The target can be reached at any time, making it hard to find a safe space away from the harassment.

Cyberbullying can lead to serious emotional and psychological consequences for the victim, including anxiety, depression, and in severe cases, self-harm.

Cyberbullying is on the rise in Ireland, particularly among young people. Several factors contribute to this increase, including the growing use of smartphones, social media platforms, and other digital technologies. Here are some key points highlighting the situation:

1. **Increased Screen Time:** More children and teenagers are spending significant time online, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased digital engagement due to remote learning and social isolation.
2. **Social Media Influence:** Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp are commonly used by young people in Ireland, making them vulnerable to online harassment, trolling, and other forms of cyberbullying.
3. **Lack of Awareness and Digital Literacy:** Many young people and even some adults may not fully understand the impact of their online behaviour or the tools available to protect themselves, such as privacy settings and reporting mechanisms.
4. **High-Profile Cases and Surveys:** Studies and reports by organizations like CyberSafeKids and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) have highlighted the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying. For example, surveys have shown that a significant number of children in Ireland have experienced some form of cyberbullying.
5. **Government and School Responses:** In response to the rise, there have been increased efforts by schools, the government, and

non-profits to educate students and parents about the dangers of cyberbullying, digital safety, and mental health support.

6. **Legislative Actions:** The implementation of laws like the Harassment, Harmful Communications, and Related Offences Act 2020 (commonly known as Coco's Law) reflects the seriousness of cyberbullying in Ireland. This law makes online harassment and sharing of intimate images without consent criminal offenses.

While there is growing awareness and action being taken, cyberbullying remains a significant and evolving issue in Ireland, requiring ongoing efforts in education, legislation, and support for those affected.

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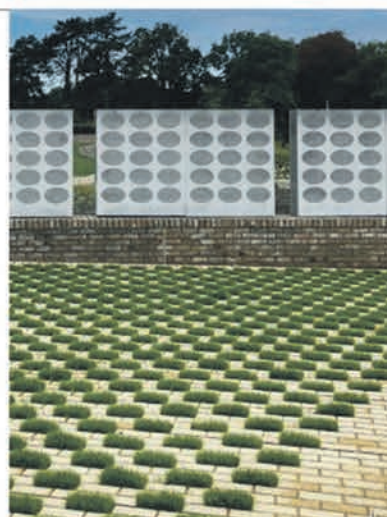
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NEW POLL SHOWS HUGE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PROGRESSIVE POLICIES FOR PEOPLE WHO MAKE IRELAND THEIR HOME



Today (Thursday, 29th August), the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) released new data from an independent poll carried out with Ireland Thinks during the month of July.

The poll showed a 64% majority agreed that Ireland should welcome people who move here to make a better life for themselves or their families. (Compared to 18% who disagree)

The poll shows that a large majority of people understand that people move for love, for work, and for safety. The majority are welcoming and recognise that people who make Ireland their home should be treated fairly.

The results were very strong towards people moving to Ireland to work. 82% of people agreed that Irish companies should continue to be able to recruit people from outside the EU to work in sectors where we can't fill skills or labour shortages (Compared to 11% who disagree).

This is evident as the poll reveals significant public support for more progressive policies for those migrating to Ireland when it comes to issues such as family reunion rights, registration fees, employment permits and regularisation of those who become undocumented.

- 65% of people agree that people from outside the EU, recruited to work in Ireland through the work permit system should be allowed to bring their immediate family, spouse and or children when they come to work here (Compared to 24% who disagree)

- 65% of people agree that 'People from outside the EU, recruited to work in Ireland through the work permit system should have freedom to change to any job after 2 years (Compared to 24% who disagree)

- 88% of people believe a fee of less than €100 is

fair and reasonable for a migrant to have to pay for a residence permit card, instead of the €300 euro they are currently forced to pay every year.

- 69% of people believe that Ireland should give undocumented people the opportunity to come forward and legalise their status provided they can show they have been living and working here long term. (Compared to just 25% who believe we should force them to leave the country)

Neil Bruton, Campaigns Manager with MRCI, said, "When people come to Ireland to work, they face many challenges. Challenges like being separated from their families for years on end, facing poor working conditions and high rates of exploitation. On top of that they face high immigration fees that leave them struggling to make ends meet."

He continued "This poll shows that people in Ireland understand better than most the challenges people face when they move. People clearly support progressive policy changes that address the persistent challenges people face when moving to Ireland to make a better life."

Commenting on the public's support for better family reunion policies, Shiji Joseph, originally from India, who works as a healthcare assistant in a Nursing Home in Dublin said "It is heartwarming to see that most people understand how hard it is to live without your family and support change. It's deeply painful for me not being able to have my children and husband with me here."

Bruton concluded "Politicians need to listen to the view of the public as reflected in this poll and move to bring in progressive migration policies."

Ireland's Hidden Autumn Gems Off-the-Beaten-Path Destinations to Explore This Autumn

As the vibrant green landscapes of Ireland transform into a breathtaking palette of golds, reds, and oranges, autumn is the perfect time to explore the country's hidden gems. While popular spots like the Cliffs of Moher and the Ring of Kerry attract crowds year-round, there are plenty of lesser-known destinations that shine brightest in the Autumn. From serene hiking trails to scenic drives and quaint towns, here are some off-the-beaten-path locations where you can fully immerse yourself in Ireland's autumn magic.



Glen of Aherlow, County Tipperary

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1. Glen of Aherlow, County Tipperary

Nestled between the Galtee Mountains and Slievenamuck Hills, the Glen of Aherlow offers a tranquil escape with panoramic views and lush forests that burst into colour during the autumn months. This area is perfect for hiking enthusiasts and nature lovers looking for a quieter experience compared to more crowded spots.

- **Hiking Trails:** Try the Christ the King Loop, a moderate 10-kilometer trail that provides stunning vistas of the surrounding landscape, especially during the fall when the foliage is at its peak.
- **Where to Relax:** After a day of exploring, unwind at the rustic Coach Road Inn, a cozy pub offering hearty Irish fare and a warm atmosphere.
- **Events:** Check out local harvest festivals or the occasional pop-up markets showcasing crafts and produce from the area.

2. Lough Boora Discovery Park, County Offaly

Lough Boora is an enchanting blend of nature and art, featuring sculptures set amidst lakes, wetlands, and wildflower meadows. This reclaimed bogland is stunning in autumn, with its golden reeds and serene waters creating a perfect setting for a peaceful stroll or a leisurely bike ride.

- **Hiking Trails:** The park's Sculpture Park Walk is an easy route that combines outdoor art installations with the vivid colours of autumn.
- **Scenic Drive:** Take a leisurely drive through the bogland areas surrounding the park, where the landscapes change dramatically with the season.
- **Where to Relax:** Stop by the Boora Café, a charming spot offering seasonal dishes and homemade treats to warm you up after your exploration.

3. Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula, County Louth

Carlingford is a medieval town brimming with history, stunning coastal views, and the scenic backdrop of the Cooley Mountains. The area is relatively quiet in autumn, making it ideal for a relaxed visit filled with rich history and vibrant fall scenery.

- **Hiking Trails:** The Slieve Foye Loop offers a mix of forest, mountain, and sea views. The trail is dotted with ancient ruins and boasts a beautiful display of autumn foliage.
- **Scenic Drive:** The coastal drive around the Cooley Peninsula is breathtaking in the fall, with stunning vistas of the Mourne Mountains and Carlingford Lough.
- **Where to Relax:** Visit PJ O'Hare's, one of Carlingford's oldest pubs, known for its friendly atmosphere, traditional music sessions, and seafood chowder.
- **Events:** Look out for the Carlingford Oyster Festival and other seasonal events celebrating the region's rich seafood heritage.

4. Birr, County Offaly

Birr is a charming heritage town known for its Georgian architecture and tranquil riverwalks. The town's highlight, Birr Castle Demesne, is a must-visit in the fall, with its extensive gardens and arboretum showcasing an impressive display of autumn foliage.

- **Hiking Trails:** Wander through the castle grounds, where you can explore winding pathways, admire rare tree species, and catch a glimpse of Ireland's largest treehouse.
- **Scenic Drive:** Explore the Slieve Bloom Mountains nearby, which offer quiet roads with magnificent views of colourful forests and rolling hills.
- **Where to Relax:** The Thatch, an authentic Irish pub

with a thatched roof, is a local favourite known for its cozy fireplace and excellent whiskey selection.

5. Gleniff Horseshoe Drive, County Sligo

For a truly unique autumn drive, head to the Gleniff Horseshoe, a stunning loop road surrounded by towering cliffs and lush valleys. This scenic drive offers a dramatic setting that's enhanced by the rich hues of autumn, creating a mystical atmosphere that's hard to find elsewhere.

- **Hiking Trails:** While the drive itself is the main attraction, the short walk to the old schoolhouse ruins offers an intimate look at the landscape's rugged beauty.
- **Where to Relax:** Stop by Harrison's Bar & Restaurant in nearby Ballintra, known for its hearty stews and traditional ambiance.
- **Events:** Keep an eye out for local markets and music nights in the surrounding villages, which provide a taste of the vibrant community spirit of the area.

Tips for Enjoying Ireland's Autumn Landscapes

- **Best Time to Visit:** The peak of autumn colours typically occurs from late September to early November. Plan your visit during midweek to avoid the weekend crowds and enjoy a more peaceful experience.
- **What to Bring:** Dress in layers to adapt to Ireland's unpredictable weather. Don't forget sturdy hiking boots, a rain jacket, and a camera to capture the stunning scenery.
- **Respect Nature:** Stick to marked trails, leave no trace, and support local businesses by dining and shopping locally during your travels.

Ireland's autumn is a season of stunning beauty, and these off-the-beaten-path destinations offer a chance to experience it in all its glory. Whether you're hiking through vibrant woodlands, driving along dramatic coastlines, or relaxing in a cozy pub, these hidden gems are sure to make your autumn adventure unforgettable.



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Kildare Business gets chance to shine at 2024 Ploughing Championships

One of Kildare's best small businesses will get a chance to exhibit to almost 300,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska, Co. Laois next month as part of the Local Enterprise Village.

EquineProductsIrelandLtd.isamicroenterprise supported by Kildare Local Enterprise Office, and owned by equine nutrition expert James Kelly of Narraghmore, specialising in equine nutritional supplements.

The Local Enterprise Village, an initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices, will house over 30 small businesses and will be located at the heart of this year's National Ploughing Championships from the 17th to 19th September.

With some of the biggest companies in Ireland taking up residence at the Ploughing every year, the Local Enterprise Village continues to be a popular destination on the site for those looking to pick up something unique to bring home from some of the best small businesses in Ireland.

On hearing that their application to take part in this event was successful, James Kelly, Owner & Director, Equine Products Ireland Ltd said; "Equine Products Ireland are thrilled to have been selected to represent Kildare in the Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships. We welcome the opportunity to showcase our products to the diverse crowd who will be in attendance. We are very thankful for all the help from our local enterprise office and this help allows us and so many other companies like us to grow and thrive."

A selection of businesses from across the country helped launch the Local Enterprise Village for 2024 at Airfield Estate in Dublin. These included Leah Cleary of Fore Distillery (supported by LEO Westmeath), Dublin fashion designer Jennifer Rothwell (supported by LEO Dublin City), Anouk O'Connell of natural wool company Olanmor (supported by LEO Wicklow), Aymar Gourdet of Le Skinny Chef (supported by LEO Laois), Joanne Doyle of Enchanted Castle Melts (supported by LEO Carlow), Aoife Potie of Nuasan (supported by LEO Galway) and Mildred Tang of canvas tote company Chic Tote (supported by LEO Dun Laoghaire Rathdown).

Head of Enterprise, Kildare County Council, Jacqui McNabb commented: "This is an opportunity like no other for a small business in Ireland. The chance to bring their ideas and products to almost 300,000 potential customers is a showcase like no other, and we had huge



interest from potential exhibitors for this event. The Local Enterprise Village has become one of those areas everyone wants to drop into to find their local business and see what they can pick up."

"James has over 30 years of experience in the equine breeding industry which led him to develop nutritional products recognised as the "best in class" for equine health and performance. He has been proactive in engaging with the supports the local enterprise has to offer to grow his business and strengthen his brand."

"There is a huge variety of businesses highlighting the depth of sectors that the Local Enterprise Offices support from manufacturing to food and beverage, to software solutions. Whatever you are interested in there is something for everyone at the Local Enterprise Village."

Some of the clients involved this year cover areas such a kids clothing & games, ag-tech products, luxury bathing and skincare products, artisan food and drink producers, sustainable clothing and beauty products

and range of innovative products from Ireland's best small businesses.

Kildare NPA Director, John Dunne said "It is wonderful to see so many diverse & impressive businesses partaking in this year's 'Local Enterprise Village' at the National Ploughing Championships taking place in Ratheniska, Co Laois on September 17th, 18th & 19th. This is an ideal and unique opportunity for these companies to showcase their products & wares to over 250,000 visitors that Ploughing attracts."

The Local Enterprise Village is just one of a number of initiatives that the Local Enterprise Offices run, to foster entrepreneurship across the country. Others include Local Enterprise Week, the National Enterprise Awards, the Student Enterprise Programme, National Women's Enterprise Day and Local Enterprise Showcase. The Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities are funded by the Government of Ireland through Enterprise Ireland.

Established in 2014, the Local Enterprise Offices are the essential resource for any entrepreneur looking to start a business or any small business that is looking for support or advice to help them grow. Since their inception ten years ago, the Local Enterprise Offices have helped create over 70,000 jobs across the country. The LEOs work with thousands of client companies across Ireland in a diverse range of sectors offering mentoring, training, expert advice and financial supports to small businesses. For more information see www.LocalEnterprise.ie



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THE APOPHIS ASTEROID

By Philip Walshe



Friday 13th April - That's the date. The year? 2029.

On that date a rock will shoot past the Earth, about 30,500 kilometres (19,000 miles) overhead. Some navigation satellites are higher than that. The Moon is about 384,000 (239,000 miles) away.

So, Do I need to pack my bags and head for the hills?

No, Scientists say they are virtually certain, (and they are rarely that certain about anything!), that it will not hit us.

What is it?

It is an asteroid, named Apophis, (after a classical Egyptian god). It's hard to be certain about some other details, but scientists can make educated guesses. It is probably made from rock and metal. It probably came from the Asteroid belt, which lies between Mars and Jupiter. (It is there partly because of the enormous pull of Jupiter's gravity, which prevented a planet from forming).

Is it the only rock to fly by?

No, many, many rocks, dust and debris pass by, and some enter our atmosphere, every day. It is hard to be sure, but some believe many tons of the stuff fall to Earth each year.

Are there other belts?

Yes. There is another belt, called the Kuiper belt, beyond Neptune. It was named after Gerard Kuiper in 1951, and is made of icy bodies, dwarf planets, (including Pluto), and comets.

What is the Oort Cloud?

This is a vast region of icy bodies that is thought to completely surround the solar system. In the 1950's, Jan Oort, a Dutch astronomer, suggested such a body exists, but it is so far away that scientists have still not confirmed it even exists.

It is thought Halley's comet comes from here. This was recorded by the Chinese in 240 BCE, (and possibly by the Greeks before that), and has featured in historical records many times since, (including 1066, when the Normans conquered Britain). The comet visits us every 75-76 years, but it won't be back again until 2061, so no need to rush out to buy a telescope just yet!

Friday 13th April 2029

Superstitious or not, scientists are eagerly awaiting the near-Earth flyby of the asteroid. It should provide lots of useful information. It will be moving at a lightning speed of many kilometres per second, (much faster than a speeding bullet!), so only telescopes, costing millions, will be able to record it.

Would you like to know more?

Astronomy is a fascinating subject and, if you want to know more, why not come along to a Wednesday evening class in the Castleknock Community Centre? Full details are available at www.castleknockcc.ie If you want to know more about the Apophis asteroid, check out the excellent NASA link [99942 Apophis \(2004 MN4\) \(nasa.gov\)](http://99942 Apophis (2004 MN4) (nasa.gov))



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Public invited to nominate volunteers for National Award



Nominations are now open for the 2024 Volunteer Ireland Awards.

The public is being invited to nominate volunteers in their community across 11 categories, with one volunteer being named Christine Buckley Volunteer of the Year at the ceremony in December. The Volunteer Ireland Awards take place annually and celebrate the immense contribution volunteers make to communities across Ireland. Nominations can be made at www.volunteer.ie/nominate.

Fingal VC Manager said: “Volunteers make an enormous contribution to our communities and in many cases, deliver critical services that may not otherwise be delivered. Their impact cannot be overstated and that’s why it’s so important to recognise their efforts at a national level. It’s not just to show that we value what volunteers do but also to showcase the incredible work that goes on across the country and inspire others to get involved.”

Aside from the 12 awards handed out on the night, every single volunteer that is nominated will receive a special thank you card from Volunteer Ireland. The awards are made possible thanks to the support of the Department of Rural and Community Development, and award partners Healthy Ireland.

Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Colm Burke, said: “I am proud that the Department of Health, through Healthy Ireland, is once again supporting the Volunteer Ireland Awards. This is a great opportunity to acknowledge the work of our volunteers who give their time willingly for the common good, helping to foster a sense of connection for people in their communities. I’d like to encourage you all to take the time to nominate a volunteer in your local area as a way of thanking them for all that they do.”

This year’s Volunteer Ireland Awards will take place in Dublin on 8th December.

About Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development organisation and a support body for all local Volunteer Centres in Ireland. Our vision is an Ireland where volunteering thrives. Our mission is to promote, support and advocate for excellent, accessible and inclusive volunteering. For further information, visit: <http://www.volunteer.ie/>.

About Fingal Volunteer Centre

Fingal Volunteer Centre is an independent organisation, which is part of a volunteer network that consists of 29 Volunteer Centres. Fingal Volunteer Centre is an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland. Our vision is a vibrant Fingal, where every person feels connected to their community through active participation in voluntary activities. And our mission is to promote the value of volunteering and increase the range and quality of volunteering in Fingal.

About the Volunteer Ireland Awards

Anyone can nominate a volunteer, and the 11 categories are:

- Arts, Culture & Festivals
- Campaigning & Activism
- Children & Youth
- Environmental & Animal Care
- Health & Wellbeing
- Safety & Emergency Services
- Social Inclusion & Community Support
- Sports & Recreation
- Small group (3-19 volunteers)
- Large group (20+ volunteers)
- Volunteer Manager

All individual awardees (except Volunteer Manager) are eligible for the overall Christine Buckley Volunteer of the Year Award. Nominations close at midnight on 11 October and can be made online at www.volunteer.ie/nominate.

RECIPE:

Heirloom Tomato and Burrata Salad



This Heirloom Tomato and Burrata Salad is a celebration of Ireland's finest summer produce. Juicy heirloom tomatoes from local growers and creamy burrata from Irish cheesemakers make this dish a perfect balance of fresh, vibrant flavours and rich textures. Finished with a drizzle of olive oil, a sprinkle of sea salt, and fragrant basil leaves, this salad is as simple as it is elegant.

Serves: 4

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- 4 large heirloom tomatoes (mixed colours), sliced into wedges or rounds
- 2 balls of burrata cheese (about 200g each), drained and at room temperature
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced (optional for added bite)
- A handful of fresh basil leaves
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, preferably cold-pressed
- 1 tablespoon balsamic glaze (optional for extra depth)
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Crusty bread, to serve (optional)

Instructions:

1. Prepare the Tomatoes: Arrange the heirloom tomato slices on a large serving platter or plate. Mix different colours and shapes to create a visually appealing presentation.
2. Add the Burrata: Gently tear the burrata balls into halves or quarters and place them among the tomatoes. The creamy

centre should spill out, creating a beautiful contrast against the vibrant tomatoes.

3. Add the Onion (Optional): Scatter thin slices of red onion over the salad if using. This adds a bit of sharpness to balance the creaminess of the burrata.

4. Drizzle with Olive Oil: Generously drizzle the salad with extra virgin olive oil, ensuring every tomato slice gets a bit of gloss.

5. Season the Salad: Sprinkle sea salt and freshly ground black pepper over the salad. Be generous with the salt as it helps enhance the natural sweetness of the tomatoes.

6. Finish with Basil and Optional Balsamic Glaze: Tear fresh basil leaves and scatter them over the salad. If using, drizzle a little balsamic glaze for a touch of sweetness and acidity.

7. Serve Immediately: This salad is best enjoyed fresh. Serve with crusty bread on the side to mop up the delicious juices.

Tips:

- Choosing Tomatoes: Look for heirloom tomatoes that are firm but slightly soft to the touch with a sweet, aromatic scent. The variety in colours and sizes adds visual appeal and a range of flavours.
- Burrata Tips: Burrata is best served at room temperature to fully appreciate its creamy texture. Drain it gently and handle it carefully to avoid losing its soft, delicate centre.
- Make It a Meal: Add a handful of arugula or rocket leaves for extra greens, or top with thinly sliced prosciutto for a more substantial dish.

This Heirloom Tomato and Burrata Salad is the perfect way to enjoy Ireland's summer produce at its peak. Simple yet sophisticated, it's a dish that brings out the best of local ingredients, making it a true celebration of Irish culinary heritage. Enjoy!



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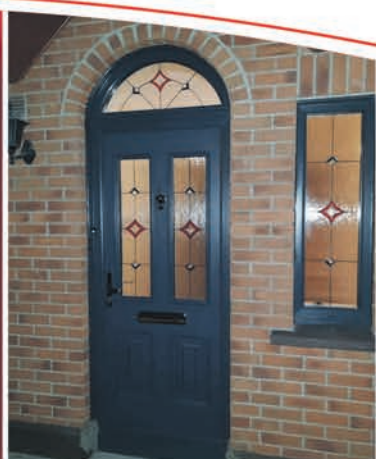
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DATA CENTRES – WHAT ARE THEY?

South Dublin County Council recently refused planning permission to Google Ireland for a new data centre at Grange Castle Business Park in south Dublin.



There are divided views on the number of data centres in Ireland but what is a data centre and why are they regarded as important to Ireland by many. A data centre is a facility that houses a large number of computer servers, networking equipment, and storage systems to manage, store, and process vast amounts of data. These centres are the backbone of the internet and modern digital operations, supporting everything from cloud computing to enterprise applications and online services.

Key Components of a Data Centre:

- Servers:** Powerful computers that handle processing and manage data.
- Storage Systems:** Devices like hard drives or solid-state drives where data is stored.
- Networking Equipment:** Routers, switches, and firewalls that connect the servers and manage data flow.
- Power Supply and Backup:** Redundant power systems, including generators and uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), to ensure continuous operation.
- Cooling Systems:** Air conditioning and other cooling technologies to prevent equipment from overheating.
- Security Measures:** Physical and cybersecurity measures to protect the data and the infrastructure, including biometric access, surveillance, and fire suppression systems.

What Data Centres Do:

- Data Storage:** They store data for businesses, governments, and online services. This data can range from customer records to streaming media.
- Data Processing:** Data centres process data for various applications, including web hosting, financial transactions, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics.
- Application Hosting:** Many businesses run their applications and services from data centres, including websites, databases, and enterprise applications.
- Cloud Services:** Major cloud providers like Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud operate vast data centres to provide scalable cloud computing resources.
- Backup and Recovery:** Data centres often provide backup and disaster recovery services to protect data against loss or damage.
- Connectivity:** They act as critical hubs for internet connectivity, allowing data to flow between different networks, users, and locations around the world.

Why Data Centres Are Important:

- Reliability:** Data centres ensure that critical services are available 24/7 with minimal downtime.
 - Scalability:** Businesses can scale up their IT resources quickly without needing to build their own infrastructure.
 - Security:** They offer high levels of physical and digital security to protect sensitive information.
 - Efficiency:** Modern data centres are designed for energy efficiency and optimized performance, reducing operational costs.
- Data centres are essential for the digital world, supporting everything from simple web browsing to complex business applications and the growing demand for data-driven insights. We have 82 data centres in Ireland, with a further 14 under construction and planning approved for 40 more, meaning a 65% growth in coming years.
- Data centres are integral to Ireland's status as a tech hub, attracting multinational companies like Google, Facebook, and Amazon to establish their European headquarters. This appeal is driven by Ireland's well-educated workforce and favourable low corporate tax rate.
- While data centres consume large amounts of energy, many are now implementing green initiatives to reduce their environmental footprint. This includes investing in renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and implementing sustainable practices like waste recycling.



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New Opel Astra Electric – Pure Progress

Having produced their first automobile in 1899, it is fair to say that Opel has been at the forefront of automobile development and manufacturing throughout the intervening 125 years.



In fact, in the early 1920s, Opel became the first German car manufacturer to build automobiles on a mass-production assembly line. The lower costs associated with mass-production led the way for motorised transportation to become not just for the wealthy, but also a reliable way for people of all classes to travel. Form follows function, and the stunning new Opel Astra Electric leads the way into a new era of driving. Combining a confident attitude with advanced driving technologies and a zero-emission, fully-electric powertrain, it is the essence of progressive German engineering.

Electrified Platform.

Under the skin, the new Astra uses the latest V3 version of the Stellantis EMP2 platform, and this not only underpins the Astra Electric, but also the petrol, diesel and plug-in hybrid variants too. Opel has fine-tuned elements of this platform to differentiate it from sister brand Peugeot, which also uses this tech for its 308 family hatchback and estate. The steering, suspension damper rates and bump stops, as well as the anti-roll bar set-up, have all been tweaked for the Astra, with a focus on stability at higher speeds. Drive modes consist of Normal, Sport and Eco, so drivers can choose the perfect mode to suit their driving style or road conditions.

Trim & Charging Options.

The new Astra Electric model line-up consists of three variants – SC, Elegance and GS – mirroring those available in the petrol and diesel versions of the new Astra. An impressive array of standard safety, security, comfort and convenience features adorn all trim variants in the new Astra, along with the very latest infotainment technology such as: Opel Connect, Bluetooth™ audio streaming, wireless Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™, and a DAB digital radio system. The electric motor produces 156PS (154bhp) and 270Nm of torque, and this results in a 0-100km/h sprint time of 9.2 seconds, with power sent to the cars' front wheels in a composed manner. The electric motor receives its power from a 54kWh battery pack that provides a range of up to 416kms on a WLTP combined driving cycle, and it can be charged from 20-80% in as little as 26 minutes at a public fast-charging station. With an AC on-board charger speed of 11kW, a 10-100% charge can be completed in 5h 45m at a regular public charger, or in around 8 hours via a 7kW domestic wallbox charger.

Car on Review.

My review car was a new Astra Electric Hatchback in range-topping

GS trim which looked very dynamic in its striking Crystal Silver metallic paintwork and standard Black Pack (black Opel logo + Vizor frame, high gloss black Astra rear badge, black roof, and black door mirrors), along with 18" Falcon alloy wheels. In addition to the comprehensive list of standard equipment in SC and Elegance trim grades, exclusive 'GS' equipment includes LED headlamps with Matrix AFL, alloy foot pedals, electronic dual-zone climate control, Park Assist front & rear with 360-degree panoramic camera, Pure Panel Pro 10" colour touchscreen with a 10" digital driver information cluster, and wireless smartphone charging.

On the move, the Astra Electric feels sporty, and it provides the perfect blend of agility and comfort. The Astra's new chassis is tautly controlled, and the cars' well-judged suspension set-up tackles road imperfections with ease. The Astra Electric's impressive driving dynamics are a central part of its appeal, and its ease of drivability, along with its superb road-holding proficiency, ensure that every journey is entertaining, while its nicely weighted steering, strong brake pedal feel and minimal body roll through corners are admirable characteristics too. The transmission selector lever is conveniently located on the centre console and it is intuitive in its operation, with drivers given the option of selecting enhanced regenerative braking by pressing the 'B' button beside the selector, if they so wish. The Astra Elegance and GS trim variants benefit from a sports 'AGR' drivers' seat for enhanced comfort on the move. Aktion Gesunder Rücken (AGR) is essentially a Campaign for Healthier Backs, and the certified Opel ergonomic seats are designed to provide long-distance travel comfort. Opel is the first volume manufacturer to receive the AGR stamp of approval for its seats. To achieve this, four basic ingredients were necessary: four-way lumbar support, cushion tilt, cushion length adjustment, and contour/ body support. Overall cabin space is good, and should fulfil the needs of a growing family. Cargo capacity in the new Astra Electric measures in at 352-litres, but the rear seat backs can be folded down to accommodate a larger load when the need arises.

Conclusion & Price.

With its sharp and distinctive exterior design, along with its upmarket cabin, advanced driver assistance technology, and dynamic driving experience, the all-new Opel Astra Electric is a car that speaks for itself – silently, of course. For a limited time only, buyers can avail of a €5,000 Opel Eco Bonus, resulting in a starting price of just €34,598 (inclusive of an SEAI Grant and VRT Relief for private customers). Additional limited-time offers include 3-years free servicing, and 0% HP or 2.9% PCP finance (Ts & Cs apply).

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NAVIGATING THE HEALTH SYSTEM IN IRELAND: A Guide to Public vs. Private Healthcare



The healthcare landscape in Ireland is often a topic of debate, with ongoing discussions around quality, accessibility, and affordability.

For residents, navigating the public and private healthcare systems can feel overwhelming, especially when trying to make the best choices for their health needs. This guide breaks down the key differences between public and private healthcare in Ireland, offering practical advice on accessing GPs, understanding waiting times, and maximizing your healthcare options.

Public vs. Private Healthcare: What's the Difference?

Ireland's healthcare system comprises both public and private sectors, each offering different levels of care, access, and costs. Here's a closer look at the main differences:

1. Public Healthcare: The Basics

The public healthcare system in Ireland is largely funded by the government through taxation and is available to all residents. Services are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and include access to GPs, hospitals, and community care services. However, there are often long waiting times for specialist appointments, surgeries, and non-urgent procedures due to high demand and limited resources.

Eligibility: All residents can access public healthcare services, but costs can vary depending on income, age, and medical conditions. Some services are free, while others require a fee or co-payment.

Waiting Times: Waiting times in the public system can be significant, especially for elective procedures and specialist consultations. The HSE provides waiting list information to help manage expectations.

Accessing GPs: Public patients often face longer wait times

to see a GP, particularly in busy urban areas. It's advisable to register with a GP as early as possible to ensure access when needed.

2. Private Healthcare: What's on Offer?

Private healthcare in Ireland offers quicker access to specialists, shorter waiting times, and more personalized care. Private patients can choose their consultants and hospitals, and they often receive treatment sooner than in the public system.

Health Insurance: Most people using private healthcare have health insurance, which covers part, or all of the costs of private consultations, tests, and hospital stays. Popular insurers include VHI, Laya Healthcare, Irish Life Health, and others.

Direct Payment Options: Some individuals choose to pay out-of-pocket for private care without insurance, though this can be expensive. This route is often used for one-off consultations or procedures to bypass waiting lists.

Specialist Access: Private healthcare provides faster access to specialists, which can be crucial for urgent health concerns or when seeking second opinions.

Navigating the Systems: Tips for Making the Most of Your Healthcare Options

1. Understanding Health Insurance: Is It Worth It?

Health insurance can significantly reduce wait times and improve access to healthcare services, especially for specialist consultations and elective surgeries. However, insurance plans vary widely in terms of coverage, costs, and benefits.

Choosing a Plan: Compare different providers and plans to



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Tax Relief: You may be eligible for tax relief on health insurance premiums, which can make private insurance more affordable.

Switching Providers: Don't be afraid to switch providers if you find a better deal or need more tailored coverage. There is no waiting period if you switch to a similar level of cover.

2. Know Your Patient Rights

Regardless of whether you use public or private healthcare, you have rights as a patient in Ireland. These include the right to safe and effective care, the right to be informed about your treatment, and the right to privacy and dignity.

Complaints and Appeals: If you are dissatisfied with your care, both public and private patients can lodge complaints with the HSE or their private healthcare provider. Knowing your rights can empower you to seek better care and outcomes.

3. Tips for Reducing Wait Times

Long waiting times are a major drawback of the public healthcare system. Here are some strategies to navigate the queues:

Be Flexible: Opt for cancellations or off-peak appointments when possible. This can sometimes reduce waiting times for GPs and specialists.

Seek Second Opinions: If wait times for specialists are too long, consider getting a second opinion from another consultant who may have shorter waiting times, even if it means traveling further.

Use Private Options Selectively: If waiting times are too long, consider using private consultations for quicker access and then transferring back to the public system for ongoing

treatment or surgery.

4. Finding the Right Specialists

Referrals: Your GP will be your first point of contact for specialist referrals. Communicate clearly about your needs and preferences and ask about waiting times for different consultants.

Research: Use resources like Healthgrades or Rate My Hospital to find specialists with good patient reviews and shorter wait times.

5. Accessing Mental Health Services

Mental health services in Ireland are available through both public and private sectors. Public services are generally provided through Community Mental Health Teams, but waiting times can be long. Private options, including counselling, therapy, and psychiatry, are often more accessible but can be costly without insurance.

Final Thoughts

Navigating Ireland's healthcare system can be complex but understanding the differences between public and private healthcare and knowing your options can help you make informed decisions about your care. Whether you opt for public services, private insurance, or a mix of both, being proactive, staying informed, and understanding your rights can lead to better health outcomes and a more positive experience within the Irish healthcare system.

For more information on public healthcare services, visit the HSE website, and for advice on private health insurance, check out the Health Insurance Authority for comparison tools and guides.

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- Re-Building
- Upvc Gutter
- Fascia
- Soffit
- Insulation & Repairs
- Choice of Colours
- Gutter Cleaning
- Leaf Guard Installed
- Leak Repairs
- Dry Verge System
- Storm Damage Repairs
- Gable Repairs
- Fascia
- Soffits
- Gutters and Downpipes



BEFORE



AFTER



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**We are fully licenced and insured, providing unsurpassed results to all clients.
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