

# Emergency

**I** Services Ireland

## NATIONALISATION OF FIRE SERVICE BECOMES A BURNING ISSUE

**REMOTE DIGITAL RESPONDERS IN  
DISASTER ZONES**

**LIMERICK MAN'S HIMALAYAN  
CHARITY CLIMB BID**

**IRISH SOLDIERS ON SNOW PATROL  
TRAINING IN SWITZERLAND**

24



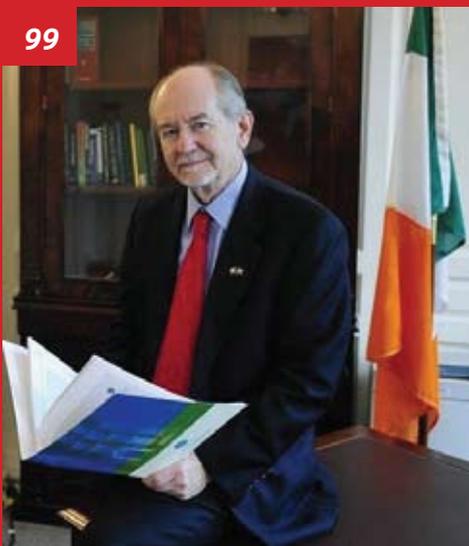
42



74



99



## 5 NEWS UPDATE

### 21 GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Deputy Garda Commissioner Noirin O'Sullivan will join other emergency service leaders to address a global leadership conference in Belfast (31 July-1 August), which is being held as part of the run-up to the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

### 23 ORDER OF MALTA

Fundraising drives and other preparations are well underway for the 30th Annual Order of Malta International Camp in August. Ireland's Order of Malta aims to recruit over 250 Irish volunteers for the week-long event in Kildare.

### 24 FIRE SERVICE

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is now looking at a part-time fire and rescue service instead of earlier proposals for privatisation, but just how successful has privatisation worked in other countries?

### 31 WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

Collaboration between the authorities is the best way to stamp out wildfire incidents in Ireland in future, in light of the resource constraints at local authority level, according to a fire management specialist at the Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

### 39 CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

An area of land more than half the size of County Louth was destroyed by fire in Ireland during the first four months of 2013, and the Chief Fire Officers' Association has suggested that the majority of the fires were started maliciously or deliberately.

### 42 CHARITY CLIMB

Limerick mountaineer Mark Quinn is to scale new heights in aid of two charities, and if successful the 29-year-old will become the first Irish man to climb two of the world's highest mountains in the Himalayas.

### 49 DISASTER RESPONSE

The explosive growth in the use of digital technology as well as the concept of ubiquitous connectivity is having a huge impact on the area of disaster response.

## 54 SPECIAL REPORT

Sentencing for sexual crimes, under scrutiny following recent high-profile cases in which sentences, are perceived as too lenient.

### 59 LIFESAVING FOUNDATION

The presentation of the Ireland Medal for 2012 to John Connolly is a fitting tribute to the founder of the Irish Lifesaving Foundation, which celebrated its 10th anniversary at its recent conference on the promotion of research into the global drowning epidemic.

### 67 SCOTTISH FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

Current and future challenges for fire investigation in Scotland were outlined by Prof Niamh Nic Daeid from the University of Strathclyde, at a recent conference organised by the FIAI.

### 74 MOUNTAIN SURVIVAL

For the past 15 years the Swiss army has been training foreign troops in mountain skills as part of Switzerland's contribution to NATO's Partnership for Peace project. Two members of the Irish Defence Forces have completed the four-week winter mountaineering course.

### 79 MOUNTAIN RESCUE

With dogs continuing to play an invaluable role in search and rescue operations, this year's Mountain Rescue Ireland conference was hosted by the Search and Rescue Dogs Association in Clare.

### 83 LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Inter-agency working and different leadership styles were two main themes running through the recent course for voluntary emergency services, organised by Mountain Rescue Ireland, writes course team leader Pat Holland.

### 91 SECURITY INDUSTRY

The Irish Security Industry Association's first female president, Sheenagh McCullagh, plans to raise its profile and open a debate on outsourcing government security to private firms.



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## EDITOR

Grace Heneghan

## PUBLISHER

Patrick Aylward

## GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Catherine Doyle

## ADMINISTRATION

Anne-Marie Moran

## CIRCULATION

Lynda Garry

Emergency Services Ireland

14 Upper Fitzwilliam Street

Dublin 2

T: 01-6785165

F: 01-67851910

E: [emergencyservices@oceanpublishing.ie](mailto:emergencyservices@oceanpublishing.ie)

W: [www.oceanpublishing.ie](http://www.oceanpublishing.ie)

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111



## 99 GARDA INSPECTORATE

The new Garda Inspectorate team is investigating the effectiveness and efficiency of Garda crime investigation processes, covering a wide spectrum of policing activity.

## 107 OVERSEAS AID

Gorta is to provide self-sustaining social enterprise to Kenya - the 'Factory in a Box', system - developed by Zimbabwean and Irish resident Wayne Deegan.

## 111 WORLD POLICE & FIRE GAMES

Belfast and Northern Ireland is on schedule to deliver one of the best World Police and Fire Games ever from 1-10 August, according to Mike Graham, President of the WPFG Federation.

## 115 ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

A new seven-year road safety strategy, rolled out to make Ireland one of the safest countries in the EU, will also aim to focus on measures to curb the number and severity of serious road collision injuries.

## 121 EU ROAD SAFETY

Now ranked amongst the top five safest EU countries for fatal collisions, Ireland has been urged by EU Transport Commissioner Vice President Siim Kallas to lead the way in driving down serious injuries.

## 125 AMBULANCE WEST CORK

Plans to modernise the ambulance service operations in West Cork have been outlined

115



by representatives from the HSE National Ambulance Service and senior HSE management to GPs, public representatives and community groups in the region.

## 139 COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing is now a vital link between Gardaí and members of local communities, with initiatives such as the Junior Liaison Programme and the Neighbourhood Watch proving very popular.

## 142 ARMED FORCES DAY

Royal Air Force pilots and aircraft will take part in the centenary celebrations of Armed Forces Day on 22 June, marking 100 years since the first military aircraft arrived in Ireland to support an army exercise near Limerick.

## 145 EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW 2013

Now in its eight year, the UK's premier event for bluelight services, voluntary workers and service providers moves to The NEC, Birmingham on 25 to 26 September.

## 147 COLLEGE OF POLICING

The UK's College of Policing will host a 'What Works Centre' to identify the best approaches to crime reduction and potential savings to the police service, their crime reduction partners and the public.

## 149 UK NEWS

## 161 INTERNATIONAL NEWS



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## HUGE DEMAND FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

**A** huge demand for suicide prevention training has led a national suicide prevention and bereavement charity to organise more programmes in Dublin to enable people to learn how to help save lives.

“Question, persuade and refer are three simple steps that anyone can quickly learn to help save a life from suicide,” noted Paul Kelly, founder and chief executive of Console.

“Just as people trained in CPR help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognise the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade and refer someone to help.”

Kelly pointed out that people considering suicide may feel that nobody can help them or understand their pain. “When unable to see any other way of dealing with pain, suicide may seem to be a way out.”

As a QPR-trained gatekeeper, those who complete training will learn to recognise the warning signs of

suicide, know how to offer hope and then how to offer help and save a life

“Gatekeepers include healthcare professionals, parents, friends, neighbours, teachers, doctors, nurses, priests, work colleagues, Gardaí, caseworkers, and others who are strategically positioned to recognise and refer someone at risk of suicide,” Console’s CEO added.

All participants will receive the QPR Gatekeeper Certificate awarded by The QPR Institute. Console also offers counselling services and 24-hour helpline support to people in crisis and those bereaved by suicide. The charity has full-time centres in Galway, Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Wexford, Mayo and Kildare.

Counselling is available for any individual, couples, families or children who have been affected by suicide. Console can be reached at any time on freephone 1800 201 890 and many resources and useful information can be found at [www.console.ie](http://www.console.ie)



People trained in QPR learn how to recognise the warning signs of a suicide crisis, says Paul Kelly, founder and CEO of Console,

## CALLS FOR JUSTICE MINISTER TO ACT NOW BY REGULATING EVENT SECURITY

**M**embers of the Irish Security Industry Association’s Event Security Division are calling on Minister Shatter to uphold the promise he made last year to implement regulation and licensing for both contractors and employees working in the area of event security.

Although, many areas of private security currently require both contractor and employees to hold a license, in the area of event security there is nothing in place to prevent companies from employing staff who have no formal training and have not been properly vetted as being suitable to fulfil a security role.

“Over the next number of months we estimate that public footfall at concerts, festivals and sporting fixtures could be close to 3.5 million, if not more. Those millions of individuals will have an expectation that they will be able to rely on the organisers of the event to ensure that they are kept safe and secure,” noted Michael McQuillan, chairman of the ISIA’s Event Security Division.

There is no licensing system currently in Ireland, which means nobody can be certain of the level of training completed by individuals working in this area. “Unlike other areas of private security, where individuals are Garda vetted and

deemed suitable to work in security, there are no guarantees that the background of an individual working in event security will have been checked. The policies and procedures may vary greatly from event to event, as there is no minimum standard,” he added.



Public footfall at concerts, festivals and sporting fixtures could be close to 3.5 million, if not more, over the coming months.

## GIVING IT SOME WELLY FOR RNLI'S 'MAYDAY' APPEAL



Dun Laoghaire RNLI volunteer lifeboat crewmembers Craig Kane, Damien Payne, Paul Cummins, Rob Landers and Craig MacIntosh were joined by five-year old Ellie Stephenson from Firhouse to launch RNLI's 'MAYDAY' fundraising appeal, to raise funds for the lifeboat service in Ireland.

## PRISON OFFICERS NOT TRAINED AS CHILDCARE WORKERS

**I**rish prison officers are not trained in the sensitive and complex area of childcare, delegates heard at this year's Prison Officers' Association conference in Athlone.

A recent report from the visiting committee to St Patricks Institution, which compliments prison officers for their attitude and work performance, seems to contradict previous reports, according to John Clinton, POA General Secretary.

"St Patricks is not fit for the purpose of catering for 16-17 year olds, some of whom can be very challenging. These young offenders must be incarcerated when found guilty of serious crimes and we have no difficulty with that," he told POA delegates.

"Further consideration is needed on the support and intervention needed by these young people when incarcerated. Many of them will have committed serious crimes, but they are also most likely to have other issues, such as neglect, addiction, education deficiencies and homelessness."

"Prison officers work diligently in St Patrick's to provide the best possible service and support. However, there is no specific training to equip officers for

this work. This is unfair on them and the young people."

He highlighted a need by government to follow through on its own commitment to move these young offenders into a separate care and correction system, "which has the facilities and expertise meet the complex challenges presented in this specific and necessary intervention".



John Clinton, POA General Secretary, says there's no specific training to equip prison officers for this work.

## NEW SYSTEM TO HELP IDENTIFY THOSE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

**A** new computer-based system, which can help to identify those at risk of suicide, has been developed by a research group at NUI Maynooth's Department of Psychology.

The test can correctly identify those who are experiencing suicidal thoughts with 75 per cent accuracy. According to the team, the tool could be used in hospital and A&E settings to help evaluate whether an individual is at risk and better allocate scarce treatment resources.

The Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (IRAP) requires participants to confirm or refute statements under time pressure. Reaction times are tracked and passed through a computer algorithm which is used to reveal unconscious attitudes or biases that are used to predict actual behaviour.

Trials of the system have been conducted over the past year with 24 service users from St. Patrick's University Hospital in Dublin, Ireland's largest independent not-for-profit mental health hospital. To date, research into suicide has largely focused on long-term suicide risk factors to indicate whether someone is at an increased risk over many years – analysing factors such as hopelessness, serious health complaints, and previous suicidal behaviour.

Describing the new system, Prof Dermot Barnes-Holmes, Dept of Psychology, said that some of the most difficult behaviours to predict are those that occur very rarely but have large and devastating consequences, such as suicide.

"Ireland is no stranger to the issue of suicide and we have higher rates than the European average, especially among young men," he added.

## TOURIST CRIMES STEP UP A GEAR ACROSS IRELAND

**T**heft from cars is one of the most common crimes against tourists in Ireland, according to the latest statistics from the Irish Tourist Assistance Service, which showed a 10 per cent increase in the number of tourists who needed assistance in the last year.

According to Dick Bourke, ITAS chairman, Ireland is the only country in Europe that has a dedicated service to assist tourists in these situations. "With prompt intervention and support, 89 per cent of victimised tourists continued with their holiday plans in 2012, which is a good indication of the level of assistance that is provided by ITAS."

ITAS offers immediate support and assistance to tourists who are victimised while visiting Ireland. The team consists of staff and volunteers who speak a variety of languages. ITAS acts as a base where problems facing the tourist in the aftermath of a crime can be addressed promptly with the view to getting holiday plans back on track.

Last year 433 incidents of tourist crime and traumatic incidents involving 739 tourists were handled by ITAS, representing the third highest number of referrals recorded since the service was set up in 1994.

Dublin Garda Stations continue to refer the majority of the cases (84%) to ITAS followed by Garda stations in Wicklow,

Galway, Kerry and Louth. There were 12 cases of violent crimes against tourists referred in 2012. These included aggravated thefts, assaults and robberies.

Crimes mostly occurred when tourists were sightseeing, shopping and generally relaxing in restaurants and cafés. The majority of crimes referred to the service occurred between the hours of 2-6pm in Dublin City Centre. The victims tended to be female and aged between 17-25yrs.



Pictured at the AGM (l-r): Lisa Kennedy, CEO of ITAS, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr Naoise Ó Muirí; and Dick Bourke, chairman of ITAS.

## WINCHMEN HAVE FEW PAIN RELIEF OPTIONS

**C**oast Guard winchmen have a limited range of pain relief options available to them when rescuing stranded people who are in extreme pain, in atrocious weather conditions at sea or on mountains.

The findings of a new study also suggest they should be trained in how to give morphine. The study by doctors at Cork University Hospital's Emergency Department said the majority of the 32 winchmen have paramedic training.

"They frequently encounter badly injured patients in severe pain. The difficult conditions both at sea and on isolated terrain make the administration of analgesia difficult," the study in the 'Irish Medical Journal' revealed.

The authors, who interviewed the winchmen, highlighted four examples of patients' screams, which could be heard over the helicopter rotor blades, despite helmets with ear protection being worn by the rescuers.

Nearly nine in 10 of the winchmen have experienced cases where they were unable to reduce the pain score below 6/10. They have also experienced difficulties assessing patient's vital signs owing to aircraft noise and engine vibration.



The non-drug methods used to relieve pain most frequently were splinting, reassurance and positioning. One in four came to the rescue of patients, trapped on rocks, or on narrow cliff ledges, who needed spinal immobilisation.

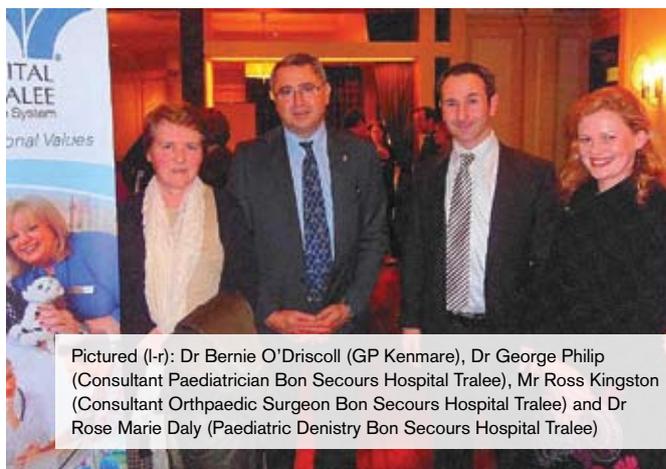
"Winchmen will treat on average three children annually. 65 per cent had faced challenging scenarios with children. Recurrent themes were personal emotional difficulties, managing children, their medical conditions, experiences of children dying and the injuries sustained."

## SOUTH KERRY MEDICS PARTICIPATE IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

**G**Ps from South Kerry attended an educational meeting with consultants from the Bon Secours Hospital Tralee, representing the latest interactive presentation by consultants as part of the Bon Secours Hospital's ongoing commitment to continuing education.

Eilís Brennan, GP Liaison at the Bon Secours Hospital Tralee, said: "Patients are the main beneficiaries of these meetings because they can rest assured that their family doctors who attend the events are constantly updating their skills and medical knowledge."

The event was attended by doctors from Killarney, Kenmare, Sneem, Killorglin and Caherciveen. The meetings provide GPs and consultants with an opportunity to meet and discuss any issues that may arise in a relaxed but informative setting.



Pictured (l-r): Dr Bernie O'Driscoll (GP Kenmare), Dr George Philip (Consultant Paediatrician Bon Secours Hospital Tralee), Mr Ross Kingston (Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon Bon Secours Hospital Tralee) and Dr Rose Marie Daly (Paediatric Denistry Bon Secours Hospital Tralee)

## EMERGENCY CALL FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS IRELAND

**E**mergency Services Ireland' is asking emergency services personnel and their organisations and agencies to be part of the emergency call for Cystic Fibrosis Ireland, as the charity celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

This is a special year for Cystic Fibrosis Ireland (CFI) because it is 50 years since this charity was established in 1963.

Last year CFI invested over €2 million to improve services in three CF hospitals around the country, while this year it hopes to support five such centres. To do this CFI needs your support.

Cystic fibrosis is a very challenging inherited disease that primarily affects the lungs and the digestive system. The median age of death is just 25 years in Ireland, which also has the highest rate of CF in the world.

If you work within the emergency services sector, including An Garda Síochána, the Fire and Ambulance Service, we are asking you to organise at least one fundraising event before 1

December 2013.

You will then automatically qualify for one of four special awards, to be presented in mid-December 2013 by Cystic Fibrosis Ireland:

- The station that fundraised the most amount for CFI by 1/12/2013.
- The station that organised the most fun or imaginative fundraiser.
- The station that received the best media coverage for its event.
- The service that fundraised the most amount for CFI by 1/12/2013.

All those who agree to undertake a fundraiser for CFI will receive a special book 'For the Roses' which tells the inspiring story of some of those who have been involved in the work of Cystic Fibrosis Ireland for over 50 years. To obtain a special fundraising pack email [rbegley@cfireland.ie](mailto:rbegley@cfireland.ie) or phone 01-4962433.

## DUBLIN MIDLANDS HOSPITAL GROUP WELCOMES NEW STRUCTURES

**T**he six constituent hospitals referred to as the Dublin Midlands Hospital Group in the 'Report on the Establishment of Hospital Groups' has welcomed the government's new proposed hospital group structures.

In a joint statement, the new grouping said the report's publication combined with the second report 'Securing the Future of Smaller Hospitals: A Framework for Development' represents the first important steps in the transition process which will eventually lead to the establishment of a national system of Hospital Trusts in Ireland.

The Dublin Midlands Group (current title) will comprise:

- St James's Hospital, Dublin

- Tallaght Hospital
- Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore
- Naas General Hospital
- Coombe Women and Infants Hospital, Dublin
- Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise

The primary academic partner for the Dublin Midlands Group is TCD. The group noted that the report had recognised the considerable preparatory work undertaken to date. They also highlighted the strong degree of service integration that already exists and that there has been a tradition of joint medical appointments shared between the various constituent hospitals prior to the formation of this group.

## NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT FOR LETTERKENNY

**A**fter years of campaigning, the new state-of-the-art emergency department at Letterkenny General has opened its doors, and forms part of a €24 million development at the north-west hospital.

Letterkenny has the sixth highest level of emergency admissions in the country, so it's an extremely busy department, according to hospital manager Seán Murphy. "This new facility is very spacious, purpose-designed and the clinical staff have a huge input into the development of the service and the design. It also includes an acute medical assessment unit which helps us to deliver the acute medical programme and the emergency medical programme," he added.

Each ward is 24-bedded, with 16 of those beds being single en suite rooms. There are a total of 48 single en-suite rooms in the new facility, and four of the single rooms on each level are tailor-made to be used as isolation rooms, and are designed to the latest international standards.

The emergency department also has a separate children's area, in addition to an area for acute psychiatric admissions. The area provides a safer working environment for staff and a more comfortable welcoming environment for patients and their families.

Hospital manager Seán Murphy noted, "The new Emergency Department, Acute Medical Assessment Unit, and Medical Wards constitute the single biggest development in



The new emergency department in a new medical block costing €4 million was opened by Minister for Health Dr James Reilly in March.

the hospital for 31 years and provide a major enhancement to our delivery of patient care. The last decade has seen a number of very significant service developments in Letterkenny."

He added that this environment for providing patient care is also a tribute to the expertise and efforts of the capital project team led by Michael Martin and the commissioning project team led by Dr Anne Flood and clinicians such as Gerry Lane and Dr Ken Mulpeter.

The new Acute Medical Assessment Unit allows many patients to be seen in an area separate from the centre of trauma and emergency care.

## MORE PEOPLE NEED TO 'ACT FAST' WHEN STROKE STRIKES

**S**troke outcomes in Ireland could be significantly improved if more people were willing to heed the Irish Heart Foundation's 'Act FAST' call to action.

A survey, which was carried out for the charity's National FAST Awareness Week (10-16 June), showed that although public awareness of stroke warning signs has increased by 190 per cent since the IHF launched its 'Act FAST' campaign in 2010, just half of the population would call an ambulance immediately in the event of an attack.

The survey revealed that just 52 per cent of respondents would phone 999 as their first reaction to a stroke. This shows a worrying change in public reaction compared to the Foundation's FAST campaign launch in 2010 when stroke-related hospital admissions soared by 87 per cent because people knew to go to hospital as soon as they recognised a stroke symptom.

The low rate of people who say they would call an ambulance immediately is in sharp contrast to overall awareness of FAST warning signs – including facial droop, arm weakness and slurred speech which has increased from 30 per cent to 87 per cent of the adult population.

The Irish Heart Foundation's Head of Advocacy, Chris Macey said: "Since 2010 the numbers receiving life-changing clot busting treatment have dramatically increased by more

than 400 per cent nationally as a result of our FAST campaign and the rapid development of 24/7 thrombolysis services nationally by the HSE's National Stroke Programme. This has helped cut death and disability rates from stroke significantly against demographic and international trends."

However, he added that the survey proves that a lot more lives could be saved in Ireland and a lot more stroke sufferers could be spared from severe disability requiring long-term institutional care if more people acted on the warning signs by calling 999.

"These statistics are alarming because there's little point in people knowing when they're having a stroke if they don't know that the only reaction is to call an ambulance immediately. The average stroke destroys two million brain cells every minute, which means the quicker you get emergency treatment the more of your brain can be saved. Therefore we are appealing to people that when stroke strikes Act FAST and call 999 without any delay."



When stroke strikes Act FAST and call 999 without any delay, says IHF's Head of Advocacy, Chris Macey.

**FIRST CITY CENTRE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS SERVED UP**

**N**ews that five individuals were recently served with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders by the District Court has been welcomed by Dublin City Business Improvement District (BID).

The orders mean that the individuals in question are now effectively banned from the northside of the city’s commercial core for a period of 12 months. If they enter the area the Gardaí can arrest them and immediately bring them before the Court.

Richard Guiney, CEO of Dublin City BID, and two city centre businesses gave evidence in the cases heard before the court. Town centre management companies in the UK use ASBOs as a key tool in dealing with anti-social behaviour in their city centres. They have been tremendously successful in cities such as Liverpool in changing the perception of the city. In the 1990s perceptions of safety in Liverpool was low, however today 99 per cent of people feel safe by day and 78 per cent feel safe by night.

“By caparison, the Dublin statistics are 74 per cent feel safe by day and 35 per cent by night which tells us that the perception of the city is that it is not safe when this is simply not the case. The official crime statistics demonstrate that Dublin is in fact a safe city centre,” Guiney noted.

“These judgements mark a very important step in the fight

to take back the city centre for the vast majority of people who just want to enjoy it. We estimate that 0.07 per cent of people in the city are engaged in anti-social behaviour and it is sad to think of the disproportionate impact that they have on perceptions of our city.

“ASBOs work, the individuals concerned do not want to be barred from the city centre. UK research shows that the serving of ASBOs or even the warnings of ASBOs can encourage individuals to re-evaluate their lives and seek rehabilitation without recourse to prison sentences.”

Dublin City BID will work with the Gardaí in monitoring the south side of the city centre to ensure the five individuals concerned do not transfer their activities there.

Dublin City BID is a not-for-profit organisation, representing 2,500 businesses in the city centre, and works with its partners to enhance the appeal of the city centre as a place for shopping, recreation and business development.



Richard Guiney, CEO of Dublin City BID, gave evidence in the cases heard before the court.

**EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

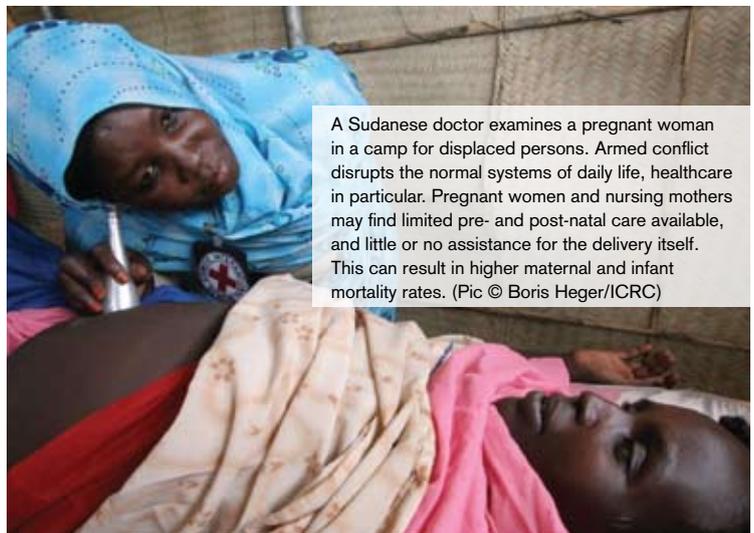
**T**he Irish Red Cross ‘Women and War’ photography exhibition aims to highlight the multitude of ways in which women have experienced armed conflict over the last two decades.

This collection brings together 40 photographic images from countries around the world affected by conflict and bears witness to the suffering, needs, resilience and essential dignity of women facing war.

The exhibition comprises a vivid expression of the Irish Red Cross’ continued commitment to raising awareness of the situation of women affected by armed conflict, and to better assessing and addressing their needs.

Secretary General of the Irish Red Cross, Donal Forde, said, “The importance of doing everything possible to protect women in situations of armed conflict cannot be overstated. The Irish Red Cross, as part of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, is deeply committed to bringing the urgency and gravity of these matters into the public domain with events such as this exhibition.”

This exhibition is taking place in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The images span the last two decades and examples of countries represented in the exhibition include Pakistan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Georgia, Haiti, Russia, Columbia, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo.



A Sudanese doctor examines a pregnant woman in a camp for displaced persons. Armed conflict disrupts the normal systems of daily life, healthcare in particular. Pregnant women and nursing mothers may find limited pre- and post-natal care available, and little or no assistance for the delivery itself. This can result in higher maternal and infant mortality rates. (Pic © Boris Heger/ICRC)



The exhibition is currently open at Dublin’s Powerscourt Centre until 30 June.

## FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINTS ARE A SERIOUS CONCERN FOR PRISON OFFICERS

**T**he President of the Irish Prison Officers' Association has requested the Minister for Justice and Defence, Alan Shatter, to examine the possibility of a legislative amendment, which would ensure that the full rigors of the law can be applied when vexatious and frivolous complaints are proven to have been made against prison officers.

"Out of the 30 serious investigations undertaken recently, on foot of complaints, 50 per cent of them have found no case to answer.

One complaint was proven to be vexatious in nature, while the others are still under due process.

"The more effective you are at implementing prison rules, the more likely you are to be charged with some offence of

some kind," POA president Stephen Delaney told delegates at this year's POA conference.

"Accusations of a serious nature have a profound effect on the officer concerned, so much so that the National Executive Council had to issue guidelines to representatives and staff on how best to co-operate with such investigations for the purpose of protecting member's interests".

Delaney said, "In November 2012 the Irish Prison Service introduced new complaints procedures for prisoners, which can range from an accusation of assault down to a complaint that the complainant didn't receive his/her shop order. However, these procedures do not fully address the issue of the vexatious complaint and the likelihood that such a process can be abused."

## COCA-COLA FUND OFFERS €125,000 FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

**T**he 2013 Coca-Cola Thank You Fund, now in its third year, is once again making €125,000 available to eligible non-profit organisations, charities and community groups who are seeking support to develop new and innovative projects or initiatives that encourage communities to lead more balanced, healthy and active lives.

'The Fund' is supported by The Federation of Irish Sport, The Wheel and The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA). This year 'The Fund' is specifically looking for interesting new projects which promote innovative approaches to nutrition and activity which could have the potential to be scaled and rolled out across numerous communities.

The overall winner will receive €25,000 and a further ten organisations will receive €10,000 each. The projects selected

will represent best practice and will serve as a model for other communities wishing to implement similar programmes. Applicant organisations will be required to provide details on the reach and impact of their proposed project, as well as the innovative aspect which will capture the imagination and interest of the local community and encourage them to become involved.

Entries are open until 19 July and applications can be submitted via the Coca-Cola website [www.coca-cola.ie/thankyou](http://www.coca-cola.ie/thankyou). After the closing date, a judging panel, which will include representatives from The Federation of Irish Sport, The Wheel, NICVA and Coca-Cola, will convene to agree on a shortlist of 45 organisations which will be published on the Coca-Cola website on 1 September. The winners will be announced in November 2013.

## NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE JOINS THIRD AGE

**A**ine Brady, former Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Older People (2009-2011) has taken up her position as CEO of national voluntary organisation Third Age.

Promoting the contribution of older people in local communities, Third Age has over 1,200 volunteers, mainly older people, working voluntarily as tutors, advocates, listeners and more throughout Ireland.

Áine Brady succeeds Mary Nally who founded Third Age 25 years ago. Nally has seen the organisation grow from an active retirement association in Summerhill, Co. Meath, to a national organisation with local, regional, national and international programmes, which positively impact on many thousands of people of all ages countrywide each year.

Brady believes that her knowledge and experience in the sector will be a great help and support in her new role: "I bring with me a real understanding of the needs of older people, both active engaged older people, and more vulnerable older people. Third Age spans this continuum, and locally and

nationally works for and with a range of older people throughout the sector.

"We have succeeded in adding years to the life, but there is still work to be done to add life to the years. The National Positive Ageing Strategy was recently published and we now look forward to a Plan for its implementation. There are many challenges ahead, and I look forward to promoting the health and wellbeing of older people through speaking out on their behalf and through our many innovative programmes," she said.



New CEO Áine Brady succeeds Mary Nally who founded Third Age 25 years ago.

## LONG SERVICE MEDALS FOR ORDER OF MALTA MEMBERS



Two members of the Newbridge Unit of the Order of Malta – Eoin McGrath and Stephen Kelly – recently collected medals for 10 and 20 years service respectively.

## A QUIET WORD FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

**F**irst to market with a noise-cancelling microphone that can be used by firemen and police in emergency situations, Cork company ODG Technologies is about to ship its first US orders.

“In emergency situations such as fires, bomb blasts, and riots, communications can be very difficult due to the high noise levels caused by crowds, sirens, alarms and explosions,” says CEO and co-founder Mark Griffin (pictured below). He believes there is a global market for this technology.



## REGIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE EXERCISE

**T**he 15th Annual Civil Defence Regional Exercise between Kildare and Waterford City Civil Defence included events in first aid, communications, auxiliary fire service, search and rescue.

The exercise was rolled out under the direction of Waterford City’s Civil Defence Officer Paul Nolan and Kildare Civil Defence Officer Patricia McNeela

Volunteers training in first aid learned the different approaches and techniques in carrying out CPR on an adult and a baby. Members were also trained on how to use a defibrillator and dealing with concerned family members or members of the public in terms of their intervention in such situations.

The search and rescue was carried out in an old school building on the outskirts of Waterford City, which is used by the Civil Defence on a regular basis for training exercises. Search and rescue teams were tasked with a scenario where eight to ten people have been reported injured and unaccounted for inside the building.

With limited information available to the teams, each team had 45 minutes to locate casualties, treat them and rescue and recover them from the building. Injuries sustained by some of the ‘casualties’ included leg, arm and head injuries while ‘elderly casualties’ sustained additional injuries.

A thorny, muddy and hilly wooded area was the scene for an outdoor search and communications exercise. Information was placed in various parts of the wood. Teams used

navigation techniques to locate this information and relay the information back to exercise control.

One of the most difficult scenarios was undertaken by the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) who had to enter a smoke-filled building to search the building, locate and recover ‘casualties’ from the building.

Civil Defence Officer Patricia McNeela said this particular exercise proved to be the more difficult of all the scenarios. “As this was an occupied building, the main obstacles in this exercise were the stairs and limited vision due to heavy smoke.

“Safety is the most important thing for all AFS members and there is a special procedure which they must adhere to during this type of search.”



Civil Defence volunteers taking part in the regional exercise. (Pic: Declan Keogh, Kildare Road Safety Officer)

# EMERGENCY SERVICE LEADERS TO DISCUSS BEST PRACTICE

DEPUTY GARDA COMMISSIONER NOIRÍN O'SULLIVAN WILL JOIN OTHER EMERGENCY SERVICE LEADERS TO ADDRESS A TWO-DAY GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE IN BELFAST, WHICH IS BEING HELD AS PART OF THE RUN-UP TO THE 2013 WORLD POLICE AND FIRE GAMES.

**T**raining and leadership development will form the basis of a joint presentation by Deputy Garda Commissioner, Noirín O'Sullivan and PSNI's Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie, at the upcoming global leadership conference from 31 July to 1 August, at the Titanic Centre.

The 'Partnerships in Safety – Building Safe and Just Societies' Conference, which is being held in association with Radox Testing Services, will provide strategic leaders in business, local government, health, education, members of the voluntary sector along with law enforcement, fire and rescue an opportunity to come together and discuss best practice.

The conference and associated workshops will examine how integrated working, learning and training practices, from across the services and the globe, can bring shared benefits, experiences and opportunities.

It will also demonstrate how, through problem solving in partnership, the unique characteristics of each service can be retained. It will examine how political, economic, social and cultural forces might convene to heighten current pressures and create further issues in the future.

## UNIQUE MEETING POINT

In addition to the presentation by Deputy Garda Commissioner Noirín O'Sullivan, the two-day conference will also feature a range speakers such as Henrick Hansen, Chief Fire Officer from Falck, Denmark; Dean Esserman, Chief of Police, New Haven and Clinical Visiting Lecture in



Launching the 'Partnership in Safety' conference as part of the 2013 World Police and Fire Games (l-r): PSNI's Chief Supt Kevin Dunwoody; Gary McCutcheon, Operations Manager, Radox Testing Services; Judith Gillespie, Deputy Chief Constable and Chair of 2013 World Police and Fire Games Board; Dale Ashford, NIFRS Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and Max Murray, Deputy Director, Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Law, Yale Law School; Professor Richard English, Director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, University of St Andrews; and Professor Peter Shirlow from Queen's University.

"The event is about community well-being and growth and will offer a unique meeting point for senior personnel from many services and agencies responsible for or involved in developing and safeguarding communities," noted PSNI's Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie.

"Northern Ireland is continually evolving and along with our colleagues throughout the criminal justice, community safety and business sectors we will continue develop links with our partner agencies and organisations to ensure we learn from each others' experience."

## SAFER WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Gary McCutcheon, Operations Manager with Radox Testing Services, said:

"Radox Testing Services recognises that investing time, skills and resource into communities not only benefits those communities but brings long-term sustainable returns for the company.

"The Drug and Alcohol Testing and Forensic Toxicology services we provide enable us to assist our local industries and organisations to provide their employees with a safer working environment.

"As a major employer in Northern Ireland Radox has developed close relationships with communities and business alike, and as such is proud to sponsor the pre-games global leadership conference."

As part of the conference a trade exhibition will feature a preview of a newly-developed drug testing analyser optimised for use by the emergency services.

For further information visit [www.event-ful.co.uk/wpfg](http://www.event-ful.co.uk/wpfg)

# ORDER OF MALTA OFFER DISABLED TO CAMP OUT IN KILDARE

WITH FUNDRAISING DRIVES AND OTHER PREPARATIONS NOW UNDERWAY TO HOST THE 30TH ANNUAL ORDER OF MALTA INTERNATIONAL CAMP IN AUGUST, IRELAND'S ORDER OF MALTA IS ALSO LOOKING TO RECRUIT OVER 250 IRISH VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WEEK-LONG EVENT IN KILDARE.

Ireland is set to host the 30th Annual Order of Malta International Camp from 10 to 17 August when over 400 disabled guests and their carers from 20 countries will participate in the week-long series of events at Clongowes College in Kildare.

It is anticipated that up to 400 people with disabilities and their carers from 20 countries will take part in the week-long series of events. The camp will provide a unique and extraordinary opportunity for guests aged 18-35 to overcome personal challenges in a spirit of inclusion, friendship, spirituality and fun.

Guest activities will include dances, visits to Irish cultural and tourist attractions, sporting events, arts and crafts and on-site socials.

## YES YOU CAN!

Speaking at the closing ceremony at the 2012 camp in Hungary, Brendan Lawlor, International Camp 2013 Director, said: "The Irish people have always had the ability to overcome challenges through working together, showing resilience, building friendships and fostering good relations. This spirit of the Irish will embody the spirit of the International Camp 2013.

"Our motto is 'Is Feidir Leat', 'Yes You Can'. The aim is to provide our young adult visitors with experiences that they would never normally have the opportunity to participate in. It helps promote their independence as well as giving their

families back home a much needed break."

Fundraising has already started in earnest to raise the estimated €250,000 that it will cost to run the camp. Units around the country have been busy putting together pub quizzes and fun runs. The group is also hoping to secure a corporate sponsor to support the camp.

## BACKGROUND TO CAMPS

In 1984, the Grand Hospitaller of the Order of Malta initiated an annual summer camp to offer young people who have physical or learning disabilities an opportunity to meet other disabled people of the same age, as well as to provide some respite for their carers.

The first camp in Salzburg, Austria hosted 50 people from five countries. Ireland has hosted this camp twice before in 1989 and 2000 and the participation each year has jumped to over 500.

Since its inception, over 4,600 young disabled people from across Europe have participated in an Order of Malta International Camp.



Some members of the Newbridge Unit of the Order of Malta were on duty during the 5km Fun Run, held at Clongowes Wood College on 24 March, to raise funds for the International Camp; Front row (l-r): Anne-Marie Doyle, Caroline Cox and Chris Hill; Back row (l-r): Linda Jones, Niall McDonnell, Jason Treacy, Will Hetherington, Sarah Mulpeter (Officer in Charge) and Yoli Rowan.



For more information visit [www.internationalcamp2013.ie](http://www.internationalcamp2013.ie) or email [communications@internationalcamp2013.ie](mailto:communications@internationalcamp2013.ie)

# PRIVATISATION REMAINS A HOT TOPIC

WITH DUN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL NOW LOOKING AT A PART-TIME FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INSTEAD OF ITS EARLIER PROPOSAL FOR PRIVATISATION, THE IRISH FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES ASSOCIATION BELIEVES THAT NATIONALISATION IS THE BEST WAY FORWARD. BUT JUST HOW SUCCESSFUL HAS PRIVATISATION WORKED IN OTHER COUNTRIES? REPORT BY LINDA DALY.

**D**un Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) had set out to achieve cost savings, with the privatisation of the service mooted as one of the possibilities. In the end, the local authority decided that fire and rescue service for the region would continue to be operated by the Dublin Fire Brigade alone.

DLRCC manager Owen Keegan said: "This might involve standing down full-time appliances during the night when there is low demand and using retained [part-time] services to supplement the remaining permanent appliances."

The cost of providing fire and rescue services in the Dublin area is expected to reach €3.4 million this year along. This figure includes ambulance services provided by the fire brigade in certain areas of the city and county.

Dublin Fire Brigade has a workforce of just over 930 – based in 12 full-time and two part-time fire stations in Dublin. So, just how realistic is the privatisation of the fire services?

**IRISH RESISTANCE**

Ros MacCobb, national vice chairman with the Irish Fire and Emergency Services Association (IFESA) says his organisation is against privatisation. While Ireland's brigades are faced with budget deficits in local authorities, privatisation of the service would shift responsibility and erode the services, he adds.

"Few people would dispute the fact that fire protection and emergency services cost money. Most tax payers are willing to subsidise the fire and rescue service to keep the citizens of the country safe. Many Irish people believe the state should deliver those services.

"Many people go their entire life without needing such a service, but when they do need it they don't have time to shop around and consider the private options," says MacCobb.

He fears that privatisation would lead to a lack of accountability in provision of fire services.

"Privatisation increases inequality as the profit

goes to a small number of people. Fire and rescue services represent an important social function. Profit incentive is unnecessary for fire fighters to do a good job," says MacCobb.

He adds that privatisation could affect staff morale. "Before I worked in the fire service I was with Aer Lingus, which went through privatisation, and there were huge fears over what privatisation would bring. Working conditions were affected, and more often than not privatisation is to the detriment of employees."

Revenues can be generated from fire authorities without privatisation. Ireland's fire authorities generate revenue from a number of areas, including charges from neighbouring authorities and payments from the public for call outs. Fire safety certificates also generate revenue.

**SERVICE NATIONALISATION**

IFESA would like to see Ireland's fire and rescue services nationalised. MacCobb points to Scotland, where nationalisation of the fire services is underway. Scotland has one firefighter for every population. In Ireland this figure currently stands at one for every 1,500, says MacCobb.

"By bringing their brigade and fleet services all under the one fire service, they will save UK£1 billion over 15 years. Why don't we look at the same model?" MacCobb says there are some good elements to the Department of the Environment's publication Keeping

Communities Safe, published earlier this year.

It deals with the reform of service delivery structures in Ireland, and sets out an approach and standards for all local authorities. It plans to bring the current 30 fire services around the country to 21 as it develops and extends a shared services approach.

"Hopefully it will bring a more co-ordinated approach to how the fire services are run," he adds.

**PROFITS FROM PRIVATISATION**

One country that has successfully privatised its fire and rescue is Denmark, where 60 per cent of its fire services and 85 per cent of its ambulance services are provided by a private, for-profit company.

Falck has been providing emergency services to Denmark since the early 1900s. The company expanded quickly throughout the 1970s, providing fire and ambulance services, as well as roadside assistance to stranded motorists on a subscription basis. Today, Falck's four main business areas are assistance, emergency, healthcare and training.

Its subscription services extend to patient transportation, ocean and land salvage, auto assistance, animal rescue and trauma counselling. It also provides a telemedicine service for those with chronic disease.

What stands out about Falck is that it has won the trust of the Danish people but



By bringing brigade and fleet services all under the one fire service, Scotland will save UK£1 billion over 15 years.

it must be pointed out that the company provides a nationalised service in Denmark and is somewhat of a monopoly.

Falck has looked beyond Denmark, and is currently undergoing a global expansion campaign as it fulfils its vision to become an international organisation. Figures released by the company in April showed it had total year-on-year revenue growth of 12.9 per cent in 2012 to DKK 11.5 billion.

**ACTIVE IN 35 COUNTRIES**

Revenue outside of Denmark grew by 25.4 per cent, and stood at DKK 5.9 billion for the year. Falck is now active in 35 countries across five continents.

It has been providing fire services outside of Denmark since 2008, offering industrial fire services, fire training and consulting for industrial and public clients. In Europe, the firm acquired the majority of shares in Spain's largest industrial firefighting firm Lainsa SCI a few years ago, renaming it to Falck SCI.

In The Netherlands, Falck formed a partnership with AVD Group, which offers firefighting consulting. It also has a presence in Slovakia and Romania where it provides industrial fire fighting services.

In Sweden, Falck provides firefighting services at the airports of Arlanda and Saatenas, as well as the Swedish power plant Forsmark. It carries out minor fire service activities in Brazil and the UK, and is expanding its fire services in Southern Europe, South America and Mexico at present.

**OUTSOURCING EQUIPMENT**

There are many different ways to privatise emergency services. In London and Lincolnshire in the UK, some parts of the service – in the form of fire engines and safety and rescue – were outsourced to a private firm, AssetCo in 2001.

However, a story in 'The Observer' in May 2012 reported that debts at the company were threatening its ability to fight fires in high-rise buildings.

The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority had written a report warning that AssetCo's problems were affecting its aerial operations especially. High-reach appliances were not available due to "excessive downtimes for maintenance, repairs, fault diagnosis and technical investigations".

AssetCo came into serious difficulty, and by August 2012 sold its entire UK fleet for just UK£2 to an investment firm AB&A

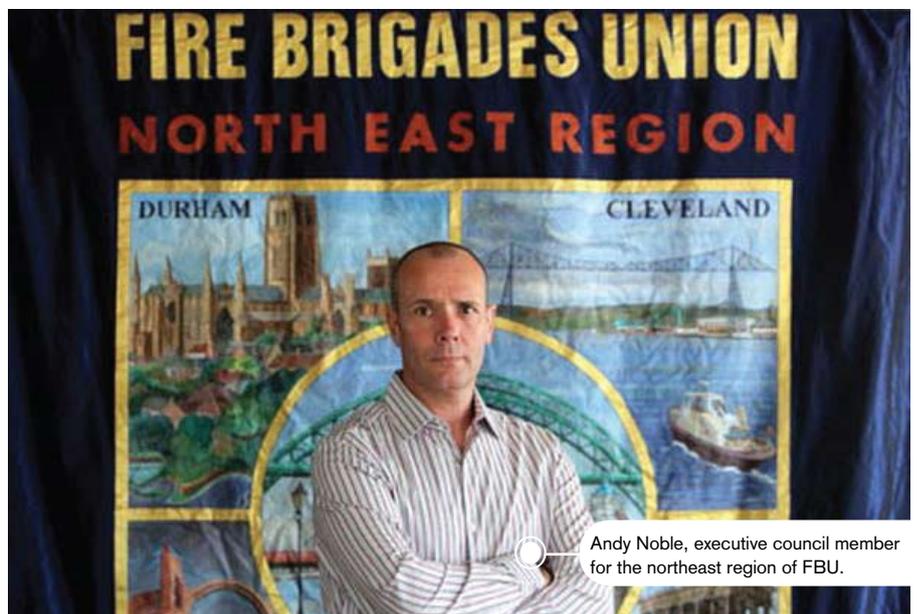


Investments. There are no zeros missing from that number. The deal was for £2!

However, in November 2012, London Fire Brigade withdrew the contract from the newly-named Premier Fire Serve Limited due to what it called a deterioration of its services. LFB has appointed

Babcock International Group to manage and maintain its fleet of fire engines and specialist equipment for 18 months until a new provider is appointed.

Babcock International already delivers a fleet management service to the emergency services sector in the



UK. Among them is the management of the Metropolitan Police's 4,000 strong operational fleet and the UK Government's National Resilience Fire and Rescue Capability.

Meanwhile, AssetCo has turned its attentions to the Middle East, and provides fire product and support services to the government in the United Arab Emirates.

### MOVES TO MUTUALISATION

There is a move to introduce mutualisation across the UK. The UK Government wants to allow mutuals – where profits are shared among workers – to take on fire services.

Jim Quinn, regional chair of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for Northern Ireland, says he believes the mutualisation is a precursor to privatisation. At present the fire service in the North is run by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

"When you go down the route of profit when providing a public service, it can be a very thorny path," says Quinn. He adds that there's a fear that firefighters will have to seek someone's insurance details before they put out fires.

"We're concerned about the impact it would have on the community and also the safety of our members. Often, when driving down an organisation to be solely based on profits, companies cut corners and costs," says Quinn.

Andy Noble, executive council member for the northeast region of FBU, works with Cleveland Fire Brigade in England, which is acting as a pilot location for a full-service mutualisation.

"It started off being touted as a John Lewis-style mutual, which is employee owned. It then changed to an employee-led mutual. They changed that to being a locally-led mutual, which involves a group of managers who would be the only drivers for the whole thing," says Noble.

### MUTUAL OBJECTIONS

"Our concerns are that an organisation that's responsible for local, regional and national resilience shouldn't be an organisation that's being touted for any outside interest. [Fire services should] not be for the creation of profits."

Noble says the mutualisation and privatisation will meet with objections from various quarters, including within the Tory party. The Labour party in the UK is opposed to any mutualisation that could lead to privatisation.

"The young set [within the Tories]

sees everything ripe for privatisation and I think they're using mutualisation as a Trojan horse. Once it starts then it could be endemic," says Noble. In March fire brigade leaders from the UK met with government ministers to tell them that emergency service responsibility should remain 'within the public service domain'.

Noble says any privatisation or mutualisation could affect the fire brigades' ability respond to national events such as riots or terrorist attacks.

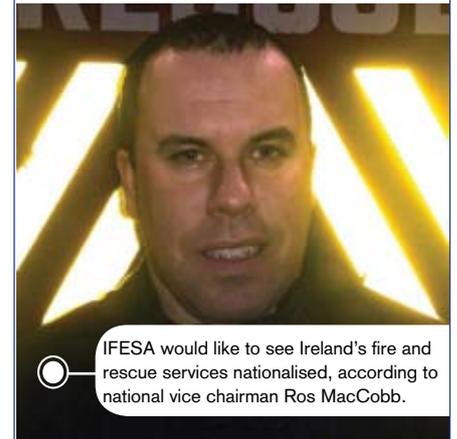
In March 'The Observer' quoted a spokesman for the Department for Communities and Local Government as saying: "The Fire and Rescue National Framework clearly defines national resilience and sets out the roles and responsibilities of fire and rescue authorities. The decision of individual fire authorities to adopt locally-led mutuals would do absolutely nothing to change this. The number one priority of every fire and rescue authority is, and will always be, to save lives. This government will continue to support them in their life-saving role."

### IRELAND NEEDS REFORM

It will be interesting to see how the UK mutualisation process unfolds. In order to privatise the fire services completely, legislation will have to be passed.

In Ireland, certain areas of our emergency services are already outsourced, most notably Ireland's emergency call answering service, which is run by BT Ireland.

With Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown making a u-turn on the privatisation, it would seem that privatisation in Ireland is a long way off, if at all.



IFESA would like to see Ireland's fire and rescue services nationalised, according to national vice chairman Ros MacCobb.

IFESA accepts that the fire and rescue services in Ireland need reform, and has been trying to engage with local authorities, chief fire officers and government. MacCobb says engagement has been difficult.

"Things can be done better. You can save millions of euro a year if you talk to the people who work on the front line.

We would purport that the nationalisation of the fire and ambulance service is the best way forward, so that it is taken out of the control of the local authorities," he says.



# COLLABORATION NEEDED TO STAMP OUT FOREST FIRES



THE COSTS OF THE RECENT SPATE OF WILDFIRE INCIDENTS IN WESTERN COUNTIES MUST AGAIN BE ABSORBED PARTICULARLY AT LOCAL AUTHORITY LEVEL. CIARÁN NUGENT, FIRE MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND THE MARINE, SUGGESTS THAT COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE AUTHORITIES IS THE BEST WAY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN LIGHT OF CURRENT RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS.

**P**roblems with wildfire are not unknown in Ireland, yet it is hard for many to believe that we have a wildfire problem at the scale seen in recent years. For most of the year it is difficult to hold an outdoors barbeque in this country due to wet weather, let alone set fire to our almost perpetually lush forest and upland resources.

Wildfires consume more than just forests and bogland. They waste potential, they waste lives, they waste the vital time required for saving lives. They damage our lands, our farm infrastructure and our grazing potential.

They threaten the safety of our most delicate ecosystems and habitats, and the flora and fauna that live in them. They destroy investments in forestry that are our

future raw materials, our pension funds, our college funds, our nest eggs in timber and our hope for a secure future.

They threaten the homes and safety of communities who live in fire-prone areas and rob our communities of vital emergency service response capabilities. At this point in Irish history, possibly more than at any other time in the past, we can no longer afford the costs to the taxpayer of suppressing these fires.

## WHAT IS A WILDFIRE?

A wildfire is any uncontrolled fire in combustible vegetation that occurs in the countryside or a wilderness area. Wildfire differs from controlled fire by its extensive size, the speed at which it can spread out from its original source, its potential

to change direction unexpectedly, and its ability to jump gaps such as roads, rivers and firebreaks.

The background causes and contributory factors to wildfire development are complex, and involve geographic, climatic, demographic and socio-economic elements.

## COSTS OF WILDFIRE

Wildfire suppression and damage to forests and other assets in 2011 may have involved direct costs in excess of €15 million, with much of this cost borne by state agencies and local authorities.

While the costs of the spate of wildfire incidents in western counties during spring 2013 has yet to be fully calculated, these costs must again be absorbed by already

strained budgets, particularly at local authority level, in the affected counties.

Fire obviously presents a major threat to forest resources, and recent years have seen heavy economic losses occurring as a consequence of major wildfire incidents, such as occurred in Co. Donegal in 2011.

Over 1,500 hectares of forest were destroyed in Ireland during 2011 representing nearly 25 per cent of the total area planted during the same year under Forest Service planting schemes. Fire suppression and replacement of burned state-owned forests is estimated to have cost over €8 million in 2011.

Outside of the forest estate, the issue of wildfire should be of increasing concern to local authorities in fire prone regions in terms of Civil Protection. Between 2000 and 2009, an average of 3,500 wildfire incidents were recorded annually by fire and rescue services in Ireland.

#### MULTIPLE CALL-OUTS

Call-outs during 2010 and 2011 were multiples of this level. Types of incidents ranged from small unattended outdoor fires to more serious extensive wildfires involving hundreds of hectares of upland vegetation.

Quite apart from generating the need to protect lives and property from the fires, wildfires can cause serious operational challenges by diverting emergency crews away from their main task of saving lives in our communities.

Emergency crews attending wildfire incidents, often in deeply rural locations, are less available to respond to more life-threatening incidents such as road traffic accidents or house fires.

Wildfire incidents in Ireland can kill, and as many as 10 people are known to have died in connection with wildfire incidents since 1996.

Ireland's fire season occurs much earlier than in most Continental European countries. In Ireland, most incidents occur between March and June as opposed to mid-to-late summer.



#### CAUSAL FACTORS

Ireland's fire season occurs much earlier than in most Continental European countries. In Ireland, most incidents occur between March and June as opposed to mid-to-late summer.

Despite high annual rainfall levels, spring weather patterns in Ireland regularly feature prolonged dry periods and dry easterly and northerly winds associated with mid-atlantic and continental high pressure systems.

Fires frequently occur even where quite low temperatures exist, and where humidity ratings exceed 50 per cent. Humidity ratings dropped below 30 per cent in some western locations on several occasions during 2012 and 2013, increasing fire risk dramatically.

Where humidity ratings are lower, fuels, in the form of senescent upland vegetation (Calluna, Ulex, Molinia) can be induced to a highly flammable condition very rapidly, even within a few hours following rain. Due to a variety of demographic, physical and environmental factors, recent years have seen a reduction in livestock grazing levels and farming intensity in upland areas, with a resulting increase in fuel loads in the form of vegetation.

#### VEGETATION IS FUEL

Put quite simply, vegetation is fuel, and there is more fuel accumulating, year on year in our uplands. There are less grazing

animals that might consume the fuel, the wrong types of animals for the types of vegetation concerned, and in several areas there are less farmers to keep such animals in the first instance.

This situation has not been helped by a traditionally haphazard approach to the use of prescribed fire in upland areas where farming is still practised.

It is likely that most wildfire incidents in Ireland have their origins in agricultural burning, traditionally associated with extensive grazing practices in upland areas along the western coast of Ireland, particularly in counties Galway, Mayo, Clare, Kerry, West Cork and Co. Donegal and in the east in Co. Wicklow.

Many other other counties with extensive upland or peatland areas areas such as Sligo, Leitrim, Laois, Offaly, Louth and Waterford are also affected.

#### NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

Wildfire is a complex issue, requiring a clear understanding of the individual causal factors, and more importantly, the interactions between these factors. Consequently, there are no simple solutions, no silver bullets.

Up until recently, even determining the actual scale of the problem itself was extremely difficult, due to a paucity of relevant data, particularly in relation to the spatial and temporal patterns of fire outbreaks.

Collaborative approaches between local authorities, Government departments, state agencies and other stakeholders have the capacity to yield dividends where fire prevention and awareness building are concerned. County-level wildfire inter-agency groups have been established in Cork and Kerry, aimed at directing awareness to where it is most needed on the ground.

A Forest Fire Liaison Group with a similar structure operates in Co. Laois, aimed at developing a high degree of co-operation and co-ordination of fire suppression and response activities between state agencies and private landowners in affected localities. It is likely that combinations of these two approaches at local level will yield the highest dividends in terms of fire prevention and mitigation.

**WILDFIRE INTER-AGENCY GROUPS**  
Wildfire Inter-Agency Groups (WIGS) have been piloted during 2012 and 2013 in counties Cork and Kerry.

The function of these groups is to co-ordinate wildfire prevention and awareness measures at local level between state agencies and to act as a combined hub or forum for co-operation and consultation between agencies and stakeholders in farming, forestry and rural communities.

WIGS allow for streamlined awareness raising using local media and permit more effective identification of problem locations or 'hotspots'. WIGS also permit more personal, constructive interactions between officers from state organisations with representatives of key stakeholder groups, side-stepping issues that arise from traditional, formal contacts.

Like many other local authority-level crisis management groups, the make-up of these groups will typically consist of a core group

comprised of local authority and FRS personnel.

Critically, this will include the chief fire officer, the county environment officer, the local authority public relations officer, a senior Garda divisional officer, forest service and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) officials and representatives from Coillte, Teagasc, and other relevant agencies such as Bord na Mona.

This core group meet to organise outline objectives and programmes and to coordinate the positions of state agencies, promote data collation and sharing etc. in advance of the inclusion of other stakeholders.

Other key stakeholders include representatives of local farming organisations such as the IFA and ICOSA, representatives of forest management companies, and community representatives, such as community councils, local development groups and parish councils.

**OUTLINE OBJECTIVES**

Starting with the outline objectives developed by the core group, these objectives are refined by the larger stakeholder group. Objectives may be defined in terms of a targeted reduction in the level of wildfire call-outs, or an

increased level in compliance with, for example, burning dates.

Awareness and promotional activities (leaflets, evening seminars, local media) are developed jointly with the group. Unsurprisingly, local media is a key element in delivering a locally-oriented fire awareness and prevention message.

Local authorities, fire and rescue services and Garda Divisions usually have a very well-developed relationship with local media, and as such are in a very good position to get across a joint message to the target audience on behalf of the group. For example, colourful photoshoots involving the fire service and appropriate stakeholders carrying a fire prevention message are more likely to feature in local print media than announcements or press releases by government departments, and are better received by local readerships.

The presence of local stakeholders in the groups means that problem areas can be defined readily, allowing the fire safety message to be delivered directly into these areas. In West Cork and Kerry, fire officers and forest service personnel could deliver presentations to well-attended public meetings organised by farming organisations as part of a wider farming agenda for these meetings.

Meetings organised specifically for fire were less well attended. Clearly there is

Collaborative approaches between local authorities, Government departments, state agencies and other stakeholders have the capacity to yield dividends where fire prevention and awareness building are concerned.



an advantage in piggybacking fire prevention awareness and outreach onto the programmes of other groups and organisations.

#### PROMISING RESULTS

While at the time of writing no comparative statistics are available nationally, the initial results in respect of 2013 from Cork and Kerry are very promising, relative to other counties.

In Kerry, overall fire service turn-outs in response to uncontrolled fires was less than half of the average levels for this period, at 87 call-outs in the period January to May.

It is interesting that 70 per cent of these call-outs occurred prior to 1 March deadline for legal burning (Wildlife Act, 2000). There was a major spike in 'controlled' fire activity in the last 10 days of February 2013.

Kerry IFA sent their members a text message reminding farmers of the legal requirements, on foot of a request from the fire service. Calls to the regional control centre for controlled burning notification were greatly increased, as farmers phoned in details of their controlled burns, prior to ignition.

#### FOREST LOSS REDUCTION

Forest losses were greatly reduced between January and May, with just 10 hectares lost each in both Cork and Kerry. Losses of several hundred hectares annually would not have been unknown in previous years.

One of the most critical outcomes of the pilot groups is an increased level of understanding between the agencies, departments and stakeholders concerned. Face-to-face communication and conversation has allowed a greater understanding of the root causes of wildfire to be identified, and areas where improvements can be made in terms of policy or other responses can be



Local authorities and other agencies can no longer absorb the costs associated with wildfire in Ireland.

highlighted.

For example, data by Kerry Regional Control Centre in relation to controlled burning notifications indicated that in 2013, many farmers were starting controlled burning late in the afternoon, when fuel conditions are most dangerous. Combined efforts in 2014 will look at encouraging farmers to burn in early morning, as part of the fire safety awareness measures.

#### LAOIS FIRE LIAISON GROUP

The Laois Fire Liaison Group operates on similar lines to the wildfire inter-agency groups.

However, its main objective is to improve communications and inter-operability between fire suppression organisations with the fire and rescue service, Coillte, Bord na Mona and private forest owners.

This is the first group of its kind in Ireland and dividends have been returned in terms of improved fire planning and co-ordination between landowners.

It is likely that high levels of coordination for fire management purposes may give way to improved coordination for forest management and business purposes, increasing the efficiency of forest operations and improving returns to growers.

Highly organised and trained fire fighting resources exist in both Coillte and Bord na Mona, both of whom manage large areas of fire prone land in Co. Laois. The Fire Liaison Group permits improved inter-operability between these fire suppression organisations and the fire and rescue service through adoption

of common operating practice, chain of command and equipment compatibility.

#### COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Local authorities and other agencies can no longer absorb the costs associated with wildfire in Ireland.

Local communities can no longer tolerate the risks that come with these fires in terms of threats to property and personal safety, particularly where the elderly are concerned.

Regardless of budget constraints, collaborative approaches as outlined here may offer the best route to a solution to fire problems in our rural environment.

It is hoped that the small number of pilot groups will, in time, expand and become a network of groups, operating under common principles, but each providing a uniquely tailored approach to managing fire in their respective localities.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Cork Fire and Rescue Services
- Eugene Curran, Forest Service, DAFM
- Kerry Fire and Rescue Services
- Kerry Wildfire Interagency Group
- Laois Fire and Rescue Services
- Laois Fire Liaison Group
- Promotion & Training Unit, Forest Service, DAFM
- West Cork Wildfire Inter-Agency Group

**About the author:** Ciarán Nugent is a Forestry Inspector and Fire Management Specialist with the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

# RECENT GORSE AND FOREST FIRES HAVE MAJOR IMPACT

AN AREA OF LAND MORE THAN HALF THE SIZE OF COUNTY LOUTH WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE IN IRELAND DURING THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF 2013, AND THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE FIRES WERE STARTED MALICIOUSLY OR DELIBERATELY.

**T**he impact of the recent spate of gorse and forest fires – where up to 42,000 hectares or 420 square kilometres of land were destroyed during January and April – was outlined at this year's Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) conference in Cork in May.

The CFOA has suggested that the majority of the fires were started maliciously or deliberately beyond 28 February, which marks the end of the period during which landowners can legally burn growing vegetation.

The Association also claimed that fire service resources throughout Ireland, particularly in the west of the country, were "stretched to the limit" in dealing with the fires while property, wildlife and entire landscapes were destroyed.

In one incident alone during the Easter Bank Holiday Weekend, 2,800 hectares of land was destroyed during a blaze at Ballcroy in County Mayo. Meanwhile, figures show that fire service units in Munster were called out to deal with 491 separate forest and gorse fires during the first four months of 2013.

## ILLEGAL AND RECKLESS

CFOA chairperson Seamus Murphy, Chief



Fire service resources, particularly in the west of the country, were "stretched to the limit" in dealing with the fires while property, wildlife and entire landscapes were destroyed.

Fire Officer with Mayo County Council, said that the starting of fires maliciously and deliberately by landowners to clear vegetation outside of the late February deadline is illegal and reckless.

"It not only puts life and property at risk and causes immense damage to wildlife and the environment, but it also diverts critical fire services resources away from responding to other emergency incidents," he added.

He continued: "While the weather at present is not conducive to large forest, bog and gorse fires, we would like to remind landowners that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act to burn growing vegetation between 1 March and 31 August in any year, on any land not then cultivated.

"The sad fact is that if this simple

rule was adhered to, many costly and dangerous wildfires would be avoided."

## MEETING CHALLENGES

This year's conference hosted speakers within the emergency services sector and the fire technology/industry from Ireland, UK, Sweden, USA and Canada. With their knowledge and experience in different aspects of the fire service they provided innovative thoughts and ideas about how the fire and rescue service can adapt to meet these challenges.

Learning from New York's emergency response to Superstorm Sandy and the evolving role of social media in major emergency management were some of the other key topics discussed at this year's CFOA conference at Cork's Silversprings Moran Hotel.

Keynote speaker Peter Holland, HM Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor, outlined recent changes within the fire services sector in the UK. Sean Hogan, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management, discussed 'Keeping Communities Safe' – the newly-published government policy document for an integrated approach to efficient fire safety in Ireland.

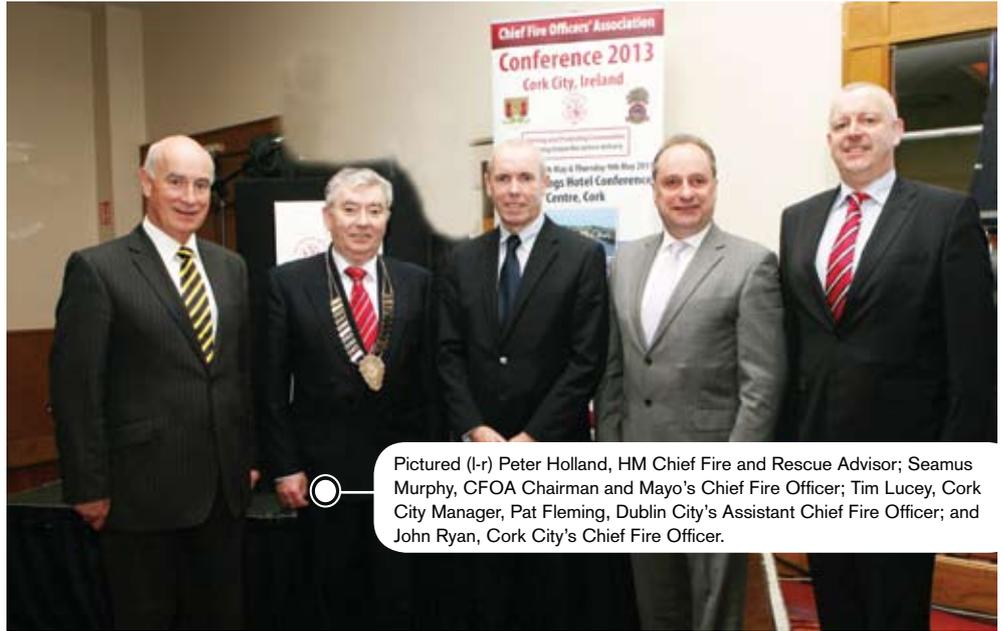
**HURRICANE SANDY**

Robert Maynes, Queens Borough Commander with the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) spoke about the response of his department to Hurricane Sandy that devastated parts of the east coast in 2012.

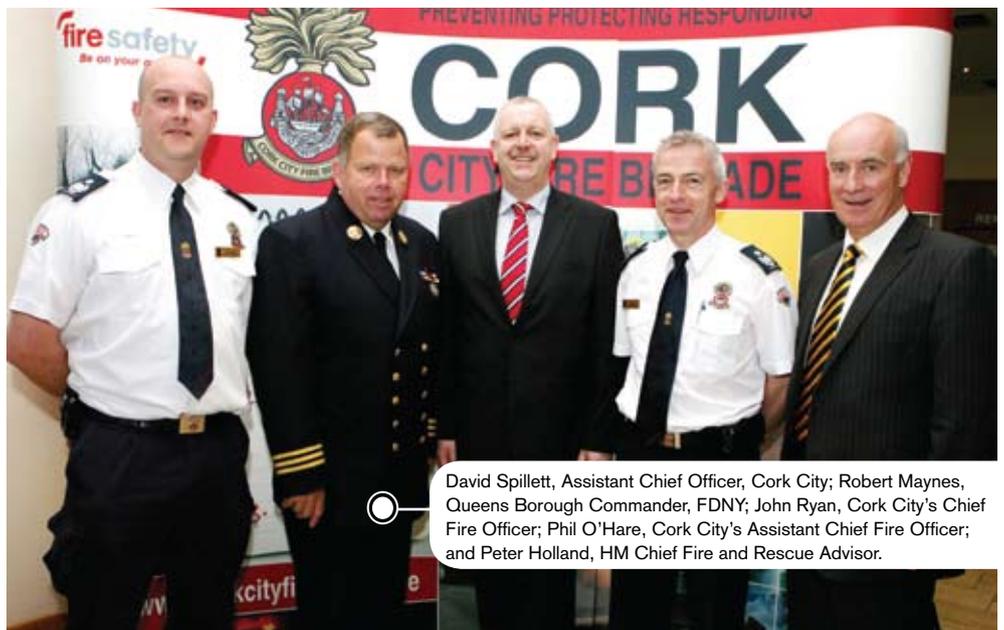
Monika Buscher of Lancaster University discussed the role played by social media in supporting emergency professionals and volunteers in mobilising information and resources for an improved disaster response.

Meanwhile, Dr Joe O'Mahoney, occupational psychologist with AHR Services, highlighted the importance of positive team morale and teamwork within the fire service, as well as the psychological wellbeing of firefighters in the aftermath of critical emergency incidents.

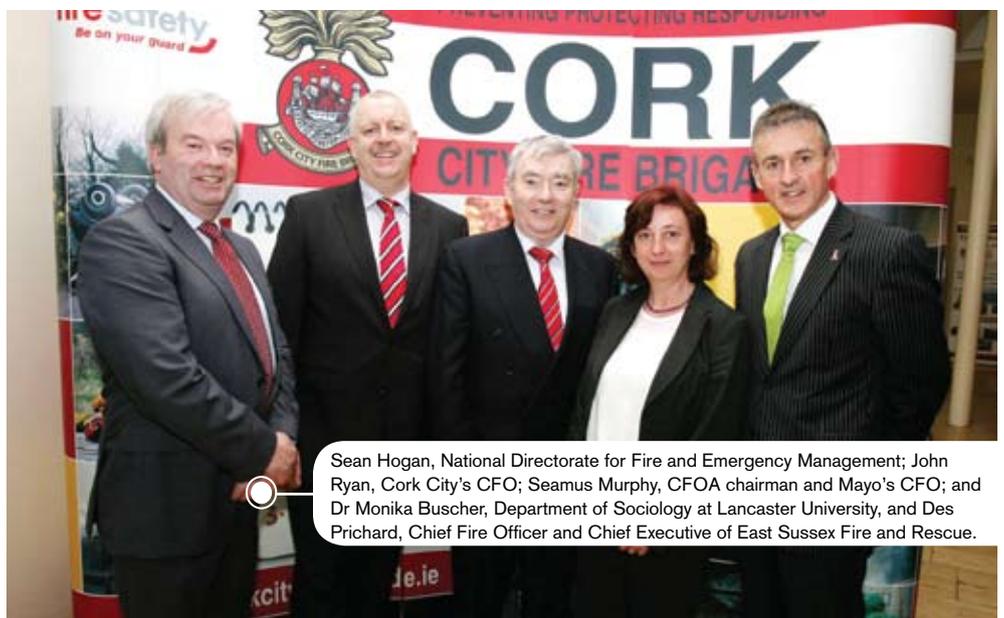
Other speakers who addressed the two-day conference included Des Prichard, CFO and CEO of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (UK); Paul Boissonneault, Fire Chief and CEMC in the County of Brant in South Western Ontario (Canada); Tore Eriksson, President of the International Association of Fire and Rescue; Vincent Carrigy, Fire Safety System Auditor (Ireland), and Pat Conneely, Health and Safety Authority.



Pictured (l-r) Peter Holland, HM Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor; Seamus Murphy, CFOA Chairman and Mayo's Chief Fire Officer; Tim Lucey, Cork City Manager, Pat Fleming, Dublin City's Assistant Chief Fire Officer; and John Ryan, Cork City's Chief Fire Officer.



David Spillett, Assistant Chief Officer, Cork City; Robert Maynes, Queens Borough Commander, FDNY; John Ryan, Cork City's Chief Fire Officer; Phil O'Hare, Cork City's Assistant Chief Fire Officer; and Peter Holland, HM Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor.



Sean Hogan, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management; John Ryan, Cork City's CFO; Seamus Murphy, CFOA chairman and Mayo's CFO; and Dr Monika Buscher, Department of Sociology at Lancaster University, and Des Prichard, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of East Sussex Fire and Rescue.



For further information visit [www.cfoa.net](http://www.cfoa.net)

Conferences pics: Tony O'Connell Photography

# TWIN PEAKS CHALLENGE FOR CHARITY

LIMERICK MOUNTAINEER MARK QUINN IS SCALING NEW HEIGHTS IN JUNE IN AID OF TWO CHARITIES. IF SUCCESSFUL THE 29-YEAR-OLD WILL BECOME THE FIRST IRISH MAN TO CLIMB TWO OF THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS IN THE HIMALAYAS. HE SPOKE TO ELAINE HEALY ABOUT HIS ENDEAVOURS.

Located in the Himalayas' Karakoram range, Gasherbrum I (K5) and Gasherbrum II (K4) are the 11th and 13th highest mountains in the world respectively, standing at 8,035 and 8,080 metres above sea level.

Limerick's Mark Quinn will attempt to summit both mountains in aid of two charities: Headstrong, an Irish non-profit agency that supports young people's mental health, and international medical aid organisation Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders).

"We chose these mountains specifically because they haven't been climbed by an Irish person before," said Quinn. "Looking at the 14 mountains in the world higher than 8,000 metres, I think seven have been climbed by Irish people, so I looked at the seven not yet climbed by Irish people."

## ITINERARY OF EVENTS

Leaving Shannon Airport on 20 June, he flies to Islamabad where he will join the predominantly Belgian expedition. He said that he won't properly get to meet the seven international team-mates he found on Facebook until he reaches Islamabad.

"We've been talking on Facebook, but from there, we'll be a team and our lives will be in each other's hands. We'll have to look out for each other and gel pretty quickly," said Quinn.

"Initially, we linked up through my Dutch guide Arnold Coster



His intensive preparation for the Gasherbrum trek included winter mountaineering training on Scotland's Ben Nevis in March.

on the Everest trip. I saw someone had posted a comment on his Facebook page one day about going to the Gasherbrums, so I just kind of jumped at that." In fact, all of the climbers on this expedition are Everest veterans.

Once Quinn and his team-mates have met in Islamabad, they will travel by jeep as far as the Karakorum Mountains. From there, they will cross the Bolto Glacier and move on to Gasherbrum base camp.

He estimated the timeframe for the expedition at in and around 50 days, but added that he and his team-mates would be "slaves to weather".

"It's up to us to be acclimatised and ready to go, which basically involves going to higher altitudes. You can kind of tell by your body how it's adapting, once you're listening to yourself. It depends on what altitude you are going to as well," he said.

"When we go to base camp, we will probably spend three or four days there before going any higher. When we go up 7,000 metres, we might go up there once for half an hour or an hour and then go down.

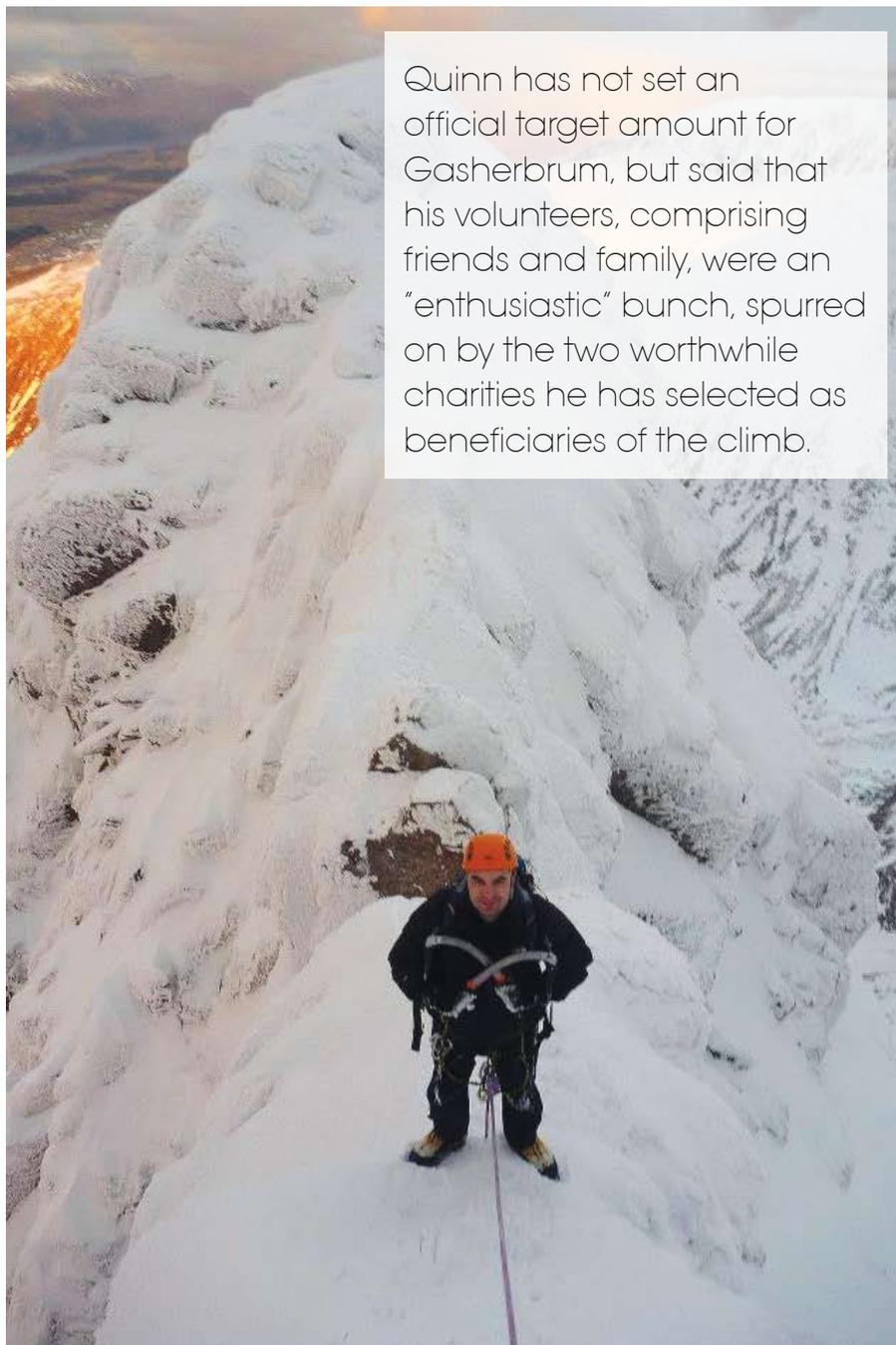
"The next time we go up, we might spend a night up there. Then, we'll build our way up to doing the same thing at the higher camps."

#### COMPLETELY NEW CHALLENGE

At the age of 27 Quinn became the youngest Irish person born in the south to conquer Mount Everest in 2011 and raised thousands of euro for the Shane Geoghegan Trust. "With the Everest Climb, we were lucky to be affiliated with the Shane Geoghegan Trust, which is a really great charity in Limerick. It was hard to find a charity that lived up to what they did so, with this climb, we decided to go with both a national and an international charity," he said.

However, he said the Gasherbrum expedition presented a "completely new challenge". "The closer I'm getting and the more I am investigating it, it looks like it's going to be a much bigger challenge. First of all, there are two mountains. They're both over 8,000 and feet and there will be more technical difficulties definitely," he said.

"Everest is not a massively difficult mountain to climb technically. There are a couple of obstacles, but it's more the altitude that you're fighting against



Quinn has not set an official target amount for Gasherbrum, but said that his volunteers, comprising friends and family, were an "enthusiastic" bunch, spurred on by the two worthwhile charities he has selected as beneficiaries of the climb.



A number of volunteers took part in this year's Great Limerick Run to fundraise for Mark Quinn.

there.”

Quinn ascended Everest from the north side, a feat requiring less technical mountaineering known-how than the southern side, which has the notoriously dangerous Khumbu Icefall 5,500 metres above base camp.

“I think it is one of the deadliest places on the south side of Everest. A couple of people die in the icefall every year, because it’s constantly falling and shifting,” said Quinn.

“We have a similar icefall on G2 as we come up from base camp. That will be the first challenge we have there. On G1 then, there is a gully and a few other things that can create technical difficulties,” he pointed out.

#### CHOICE OF CHARITIES

“You have sheer faces, you’ll have the axes out, you’re relying on your axe and your crampons.

You’re putting your life in their hands more than you would on Everest.”

Quinn has not set an official target amount for Gasherbrum, but said that his volunteers, comprising friends and family, were an “enthusiastic” bunch, spurred on by the two worthwhile charities he has selected as beneficiaries of the climb.

Quinn said he chose MSF as his international charity because of the organisation’s operational efficiency, ethics and transparency.

“They do everything they can to minimise their costs here at home,” he said. “They want as much of the public’s money as possible going to where it is needed, which is very admirable and should be an aspiration of any charity organisation in Ireland.”

Headstrong was Quinn’s preferred Irish charity because the support it offers young people facing mental health issue is a cause close to his heart. “

Headstrong works with kids who are becoming teenagers, or they’re staying teenagers for longer as they’re growing up. I can definitely identify with that in my own life growing up,” he said. In addition, he wants to show Irish youths what you can achieve when you put your mind to it, and when you take care of your mental health.

#### MENTAL STRENGTH

An aerial and satellite installer by trade, Quinn’s own experience in mountaineering is itself an impressive example of mental strength over matter.

#### HEADSTRONG SUPPORT FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

*Dr Tony Bates, founding director of Headstrong said: “We really appreciate Mark’s generosity in choosing Headstrong as one of the causes he is fundraising for on this exciting challenge. His generosity of spirit in contributing to help Headstrong is very moving in these straightened economic times.*

*“All young people have mountains to climb when we look at their mental health so there is a real connection to Mark’s climbing challenge and our vision where young people are connected to their community and have the resilience to face challenges to their mental health,” he added.*

*He told ‘Emergency Services Ireland’ that a central focus of Headstrong has been the development of its Jigsaw programme. “The brings together those working to improve the mental health of young people including healthcare providers, educators, youth workers and the wider community, in order to provide a range of accessible services and supports to young people in an environment which works for them.”*

*In the past 12 months Jigsaw has been successfully rolled out in County Galway, and Ballymun in Dublin. Further Jigsaw projects are being developed for Counties Kerry, Meath and Roscommon.*

*Mental health is the number one health issue for young people aged 12-25. Mental health services for young people in Ireland are often inaccessible and are generally unsuitable for adolescents or young adults.*

*In a recent Headstrong research study, nearly one in ten young people reported having serious problems but did not seek professional help. Since most mental health problems first emerge before the age of 25, Headstrong is working to adapt existing services to provide accessible services and supports to young people when and where they need it.*

*Key to this is including young people in the planning and development of these services. Dr Bates said: “The mental health of our young people is everybody’s business. We have a unique opportunity in Ireland to create effective supports for young people that work for them.*

*“The work of Headstrong and its Jigsaw programme is yielding good results with young people. We have demonstrated it can be done and ultimately we would like to see government, business and communities coming on board to support this reform agenda.”*

For more information visit [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie) or call 01-7242010.



Dr Tony Bates, founding director of Headstrong – the National Centre for Youth Mental Health.

### HIMALAYAN CHALLENGE FOR MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

*"We've had many people doing fundraisers to support our medical humanitarian work since we set up in Ireland seven years ago, but Mark's climb will definitely be one of the most challenging," Jane-Ann McKenna, Head of Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) Ireland, told 'Emergency Services Ireland'.*

*MSF is the world's leading independent medical humanitarian organisation, providing lifesaving care to people caught up conflicts, natural disasters or disease epidemics. MSF is a charity that Mark Quinn and his family have been involved with for a number of years.*

*MSF was founded in France in 1971 by a small group of doctors and journalists who believed that all people should have access to emergency medical care. It has grown to become an international organisation with offices in 19 countries, and programmes in 64 countries.*

*MSF Ireland, which was established in 2006, is one of the newest and smallest offices in the international movement. The Irish office directly supports MSF's work through raising necessary funds, sending Irish volunteers overseas, and raising awareness about relevant humanitarian and medical crises which are occurring throughout the world.*

*McKenna says that in 2012 funds raised in Ireland have directly supported their projects in South Sudan, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "This year, the current humanitarian crisis arising from the conflict in Syria is a real concern for the organisation, and we have recently launched a 'Syria Emergency Appeal' to raise much needed funds for our operations there," she noted.*

*MSF Ireland sends over 25 Irish volunteers overseas every year – from doctors to pharmacists to administrators. Currently, volunteers from Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Offaly, Clare and Leitrim are working in Syria, Ethiopia, Chad, South Sudan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

*"In that way it fits quite well with the work of MSF – our volunteers go to extreme lengths to provide medical care to people caught up in wars and epidemics. At the moment we have teams including many Irish volunteers in some of the world's most challenging places such as Haiti; Congo; Lebanon; and indeed Pakistan," added the head of MSF Ireland.*

*"We're delighted that Mark chose to take on this challenge in aid of MSF, and the money raised will go directly to helping our teams provide medical aid where it's most needed. We wish Mark the best of luck."*

For more information visit [www.msf.ie](http://www.msf.ie) or phone 01-6603337.

"I got into climbing because I wanted to climb Everest. I started reading books about it and that led to reading books about all the high mountains - the 'eight thousanders' - and learning about the adventures and feats that these guys achieved," he said.

"I was well into my 20s at the time. I had no interest in sports as a teenager whatsoever. It was all bands and parties. I was about 24 or 25 when I got into it. I wondered how someone gets into a position where they can climb Everest.

"I assumed initially that you'd have to be doing it since you were a teenager -- years and years and years of experience. I thought it was beyond me, so I looked into it and I expected to find myself halfway up a mountain in Argentina out of breath, going: 'well, that's my limit', but the way it worked out everything went perfectly right up to the top of Everest."

### INTENSIVE PREPARATION

Quinn's intensive preparation for the Gasherbrum trek included a tester tour of some of the most difficult routes on Scotland's Ben Nevis earlier this year.

In addition to ongoing gym work and running designed to build up strength and stamina, he also took part in the Connemara Ultra Marathon in April and the Great Limerick Run in May.

His sponsors for the Gasherbrum expedition are Tayto, River Deep Mountain High and Northface, Ovo Studios and The Altitude Gym in Limerick's Delta Sports Dome.

"Because of the sponsors, all of the funds raised will go to the charities on a 50/50 split.

"We haven't set an official amount. We did that with Everest and it stressed the volunteers who were out collecting and I just want to make it a bit easier for them," Quinn concluded.

For more information visit  
[www.mycharity.ie/events/k4and5](http://www.mycharity.ie/events/k4and5)  
[www.facebook.com/mqclimbing](https://www.facebook.com/mqclimbing)  
[www.twitter.com/MQclimbing](https://www.twitter.com/MQclimbing)



Jane-Ann McKenna, head of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Ireland, pictured with refugee 'Shaba' in the Jamam Refugee Camp in South Sudan last year.

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# HITTING THE ROAD WITH THE 'VIRTUAL CAR'

Enterprise Rent-A-Car calls it the 'Virtual Car', and is becoming a growing trend in Ireland as more and more people choose to rent the exact vehicle they need and when they need it.

You may drive a car for work, maybe you don't own a car, or on certain occasions your own car is not fit for purpose such as at weekends or longer periods. You may need a bigger car, for instance, to bring the family on Irish holidays, in safety and in comfort. While people are familiar with renting a car abroad, more are increasingly seeing the benefits and indeed lots of reasons to have a 'virtual car' at home.

Enterprise offers a weekend special, with rates as low as €15.99 per day with a free pick-up and drop-off service. With prices that low, more people are seeing the benefits of a 'Virtual Car' out of convenience and to save money.

Some people who drive for a living or are city commuters don't have the need for a car from Monday to Friday, but do have busy weekends and need a 'weekend car' or for the occasional holiday break in Ireland.

They pick up a car on their 'Weekend Special Deal' and return it on Monday morning on their way to work. For people living and working in the city, a 'virtual car' makes sense.

Lorcan Lawlor, a chartered surveyor, originally from Dublin, who lived in London for many years before moving back home a short while ago. "Now that I live in an apartment in Dublin and work in the city, I generally use my bicycle or motorbike to get to and from work. I don't have the need for a car from Monday to Friday.

"But I do have a house down the country and generally my weekends are busy. So, I need a car for the weekend and for the occasional holiday break in Ireland. Twice or three times a month I cycle to Enterprise Rent-A-Car on the Longmile Road on a Friday evening – pick up a car on their 'Weekend Special Deal' and head off down the country.

"I drop it back on Monday morning at 8am, pick up my bicycle and I am at my desk by 9am. It works perfectly for me!"

# REMOTE DIGITAL RESPONDERS IN DISASTER ZONES

THE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH IN THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IS HAVING A HUGE IMPACT ON THE AREA OF DISASTER RESPONSE, WRITES EVERT BOPP, FOUNDER OF DISASTER TECH LAB, WHOSE CHARITY IS CURRENTLY DEPLOYED IN OKLAHOMA TO ASSIST IN THE RELIEF EFFORTS FOLLOWING MULTIPLE TORNADO HITS THERE RECENTLY.

Increased connectivity as well as the growth in digital tools has created a new breed of disaster responder; one who responds from a desk in their office, at home or even on the couch. Remote 'digital responders' work mostly in the area of GIS/mapping, data gathering and visualisation.

All these activities can be done from anywhere in the world and only require a desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone and an Internet connection. An example of this is how, as part of the response to Superstorm Sandy in the US at the end of last year, a global volunteer organisation called 'CrisisCommons' organised crisis camps in multiple locations across the globe simultaneously.

These events were attended by techies, academics, people from the disaster response communities and more. Using Internet access and software tools, people at these camps worked on a multitude of projects – one of which was locating open hospitals and medical clinics across the affected areas.

## DATABASE MAPS DETAILS

Another was the gathering all details on where schools had relocated to. All this information was collated, curated and entered into a database that would display the information in an online, interactive map. The mapping software – Crowdmap – was Open Source and developed by an organisation called Ushahidi.

Once online the data could then be used by individual disaster responders and organisations on the ground. Other related activities are so-called 'hackathons' such as Hack4Good, GWOB and others.



Evert Bopp, director of Disaster Tech Lab, pictured at the communication mast during a recent visit to the UN Base in Haiti. (Pic: Disaster Tech Lab)

During these events technologists and coders get together in an informal manner and try to develop software solutions for use in general or specific disasters, all in a very short timeframe. These types of informal collaboration structures allow people to volunteer a day, an evening or even just a couple of hours to assist disaster response work in a meaningful way.

#### USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A further digital development that has had a huge impact in disaster response is the use of social media, both as a tool as well as a source of relevant data. Everyone working in disaster response knows that data is king.

Having access to up-to-date verified data allows you to respond to the right location, in the right amount of time and in the required capacity. Social media is rapidly becoming a major tool for accessing this data. With the huge number of people using Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and other social media channels it has almost become the norm for people to share message about disaster happening through social media.

Since the advent of 'hashtags' (keywords preceded with the '#' symbol) it has become very easy to track social media content by topic. Using these hashtags combined with the geo-location information tagged to social media messages, it becomes possible to gain a very thorough insight into the scale, size and type of a disaster without actually having to dispatch responders to locations.

Following the 2011 earthquake in Japan the number of tweets sent from the Tokyo area reached 1,200 per minute shortly after the quake. By the end of the day more than 246,075 Twitter posts using the term "earthquake" had been posted.

Software tools such as GeoFeedia allow you to search social media by keyword, hashtag, location or a combination of these.

In the response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake volunteer groups such as Humanity Road monitored and filtered social media for relevant data not only to build an eagle eye view of the disaster but also the find and respond to individual request for assistance.

In one occasion a tweet sent out by



Moore Medical Center in Oklahoma, pictured in the aftermath of the recent major tornado. (Pic: Disaster Tech Lab)



A mobile medical unit connected by DTL in Moore, Oklahoma. (Pic: Disaster Tech Lab)

someone in Port au Prince who had a broken leg was picked up by a Humanity Road volunteer in the US who relayed it to the US Coast Guard who had a vessel offshore in Haiti.

The Coast Guard responded by dispatching a helicopter and the casualty was located and evacuated to the ship for further treatment, all within a very short timeframe. If used correctly social media puts a huge amount of relevant data at the fingertips of the incident commander allowing him/her to react much quicker and in a more precise way.

For great insights in this area it is advised to read some of Prof Kate Starbird's work. She teaches at Stanford University and has done extensive studies in this area, and most of her research is available online for free.

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION TOOL

Another way in which social media is utilised is as a public information tool.

The public information officer (PIO) can use Twitter and Facebook to quickly disseminate incident relevant information to people in affected areas.

Again using hashtags the PIO can disseminate the information to a large or small targeted audience.

The use of social media in this way has gone through such a huge growth that it has been standard practice with disaster response organisation such as FEMA, CERT and VOAD in the USA for some time and is now filtering into the rest of the world. Patrice Cloutier in Canada has written articles on this that are worth reading.

The last area where we are seeing

a lot of digital technology being used is on the ground in disaster affected areas. In the past a two-way handheld radio and a notebook were standard tools, but nowadays almost every responder carries a smartphone. In addition, there has been a huge growth in the use of laptops and tablets in the last five years.

Realising the potential of these devices there has been a raft of software applications and mobile apps developed for use in a variety of disaster situations. Incident reporting, mapping and surveying are some of the areas for which a wide range of digital tools are available. A lot of these tools are being developed by non-profit organisations or by groups of coders on an 'ad-hoc' basis.

#### DISASTER AREA NETWORKS

Of course, all these devices require some sort of connectivity to function were organisations such as Disaster Tech Lab to come into play.

We're one of the few organisations globally to specialise in providing so-called 'hastily formed networks' in disaster areas.

These networks serve not only as means of communications for responding organisations but also provide much-needed communications tools to community groups and local resident.

Our core network is to build around a WiFi mesh using Aruba Networks routers. These routers auto-detect each other and create a self-healing mesh network. If one or more nodes develop a fault or go offline the network will reconfigure itself automatically. This kind of redundancy is essential in the type of environment where we operate.

For backhaul connectivity to the actual Internet we use VSAT terminals but recent deployments in the US have led to an increase of 4G/LTE as means of backhaul



Flooded homes in Tuckerton, New Jersey, after Superstorm Sandy made landfall on the southern New Jersey coastline. (Pic: AFP/US Coast Guard)

where available.

The reason why WiFi is used as a core technology is a simple one, WiFi has the largest number of client devices currently being used globally. Almost every single smartphone, laptop and tablet has WiFi and hence can use these networks. WiFi also is an unlicensed spectrum avoiding any spectrum licensing issues when deploying abroad.

#### GREATER CONNECTIVITY

An indication of the need for such connectivity was proven during our deployment following Superstorm Sandy at the end of 2012 when we not only provided connectivity to local resident and disaster response organisations but also to such organisations as the Red Cross, FEMA, the NYPD and the New York Fire Department.

None of these agencies had the capacity to provide it themselves but urgently needed connectivity to an IP-based network.

Having IP-based network connectivity meant that voice, data and video (and in some cases radio) could be routed over the same network.

At the moment we are deployed in the greater Oklahoma City area where we're assisting in the relief efforts there following multiple tornado hits. While the damage caused was relatively contained the areas which had been hit were completely devastated with all infrastructure

destroyed.

This time we have again provided internet access and built WiFi networks for other responding organisations. We have just finished building a 10-seater 'internet café' in a church which has been used as a large disaster response co-ordination centre.

#### SUPPORT SERVICES

This location had processed over 20 large trucks of supplies as well as over 5,000 volunteers and a lack of internet access not only hampered their work but was also severely missed by the thousands of volunteers as well as local residents.

One of the big issues again was that registration with FEMA to receive support was only possible through the FEMA website, something rather difficult for a family which hasn't even got a house to return to.

Our facilities allow people to register for support services but also it allows them to contact friends and family using social media channels, email or Skype.

In conclusion, it has become obvious that the role of digital technology will only increase, especially with technology giants such as Google, Cisco and Microsoft working on developing tools for use in disaster response environments or providing technology support services during major disasters.

- Further details: [www.disastertechlab.org](http://www.disastertechlab.org)



# RAPE CRISIS NETWORK CALLS FOR REFORM OF SENTENCING

SENTENCING FOR SEXUAL CRIMES HAS COME UNDER SCRUTINY FOLLOWING RECENT HIGH-PROFILE CASES IN WHICH SENTENCES WERE PERCEIVED AS TOO LENIENT. RAPE CRISIS NETWORK IRELAND WANTS TO ASSIST BY SHARING ITS INSIGHT INTO THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON VICTIMS, WRITES SHEILA RYAN.

**R**ape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI) recently called for renewed urgency in reforming sentencing and bail practices, including the introduction of sentencing guidelines and victim-impact training for judges.

RCNI wants to offer judges information and education on the impact of rape on victims. "I would love to find a way of doing it," said Caroline Counihan, legal director of RCNI.

"We think it would be good for them to have the perspective of specialist agencies

that help survivors of sexual violence and who would have some in-depth knowledge of the subject."

The principle of the separation of powers, however, is a barrier to providing training to judges.

"The legal culture here and the whole



Rape Crisis Network Ireland wants to offer judges information and education on the impact of rape on victims.

structure is very keen on the separation of powers," said Counihan. "The Government feel they could not ever compel the judges to attend training, it's a question much more of persuading them."

There has been a shift in attitudes in recent years towards greater awareness of the needs and rights of victims of crime. The Victims of Crime Office was established in 2008 and the Department of Justice and Equality launched a revised Victims Charter in 2010.

Counihan also cited the 2012 European Directive on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, which refers to judicial training.

The RCNI Directive states: "*Without prejudice to judicial independence and differences in the organisation of the judiciary across the EU, member states shall request that those responsible for the training of judges and prosecutors involved in criminal proceedings make available both general and specialist training to*

*increase the awareness of judges and prosecutors of the needs of victims.*"

She hopes the Directive may open the door to RCNI's input into judges' consideration of rape victims.

#### MANDATORY SENTENCING

In January of this year protests were sparked when Patrick O'Brien walked free from court after being convicted of raping his daughter over a ten-year period.

Mr Justice Paul Carney granted O'Brien bail to appeal his 12-year prison sentence, but later revoked this bail and expressed his "profound regret" to the victim, Fiona Doyle.

The case opened a debate on mandatory sentencing. However, RCNI is not asking for mandatory sentences for sexual crimes.

"I don't think it would work in this country to have mandatory sentencing in sexual crimes because that goes against all our sentencing principles of discretion and power being in the hands of the judges,"

said Counihan. "I don't think that would wash in this country."

RCNI does advocate the introduction of detailed guidelines to give a measure of consistency to sentencing for sexual crimes.

"The English experience has shown us that it's possible to construct guidelines that don't prevent a judge from doing justice in any particular case," said Counihan. "The guidelines should specify that the judge give reasons for his or her decisions, but if the guidelines are properly constructed the reasoning will be obvious."

#### FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

The possibility that a convicted sex offender can have a sentence reduced by paying compensation to the victim has muddied the waters regarding sentencing.

In December 2012 Anthony Lyons was released after serving less than five months of a six-year sentence for sexual assault. Lyons had been ordered by Mr Justice Desmond Hogan to pay €75,000 in compensation to his victim.

"That concerns us because one of the important principles of justice is that it must be seen to be done," said Counihan. "That's entirely wrong, that notion that it might be possible to buy your way out of jail. I gather that would not be the intention of the judge, nevertheless that's the appearance of it and that is very significant."

RCNI has made recommendations that that law should be changed and that at a minimum the complainant should be consulted as to whether she was willing for a compensation order to be made.

In a recent lecture to the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development Ltd (ACJRD), Mr Justice Peter Charleton raised this issue, saying it has caused considerable disquiet.

"If money can be raised by the accused the legislation says that it can be a mitigating factor but if it cannot be raised because the accused and his family are poor, where reasonably does justice stand?"

"Money has had a definite tendency to yield inconsistent results in sexual assault sentencing," he said.

#### LENIENT SENTENCES ARE RARE

Notwithstanding the recent high-profile cases, sentencing for sexual crimes in Ireland is not generally thought to be lenient.

Charleton's ACJRD lecture noted that, "lenient punishments for rape are very rare indeed... There is a norm of a sentence of around five to six years imprisonment for those who plead guilty at an early opportunity."

Counihan broadly agrees, and said RCNI research showed that the average sentence for rape was nine years, but added that consistency in sentencing could be improved. This is especially at Circuit Court level where sexual crime is just one of an enormous range of cases that come before judges.

"Everything lands in the Circuit Court. That is a significant challenge for them, so for us it's about supporting survivors, of course.

It's also about supporting the judges, making their lives easier so that when they do have to deal with sexual violence issues they have a greater understanding of the background," she said.

**OVERHAUL OF SENTENCING**

With the new EU Directive to be enacted in law within three years, the commitment of



"I don't think it would work in this country to have mandatory sentencing in sexual crimes because that goes against all our sentencing principles of discretion and power being in the hands of the judges. – Caroline Counihan, RCNI legal director

the Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter, various State agencies, NGOs around the country and a grassroots organisation of people who have survived sexual violence, Counihan believes the time is ripe for an overhaul of rape sentencing.

"All those things together will change the world in a good way for survivors of rape," she said. "I think here there is huge potential for positive change and I'm looking forward very much to being part of it happening."

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# IRELAND MEDAL FOR LIFESAVING FOUNDATION FOUNDER

THE PRESENTATION OF THE IRELAND MEDAL FOR 2012 TO JOHN CONNOLLY IS A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE FOUNDER OF THE IRISH LIFESAVING FOUNDATION, WHICH CELEBRATED ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY AT ITS RECENT CONFERENCE ON THE PROMOTION OF RESEARCH INTO THE GLOBAL DROWNING EPIDEMIC.

Marking its 10th anniversary this year, the Irish Lifesaving Foundation's conference addressed issues on the prevention of drowning that included issues on beach safety, submerging cars, holiday drowning, suicide drowning and survival swimming. The four-day event (24-27 April) in Gormanstown, Co. Meath featured a wealth of international experts on water safety and risk management.

On its landmark anniversary, its founder and honorary chief executive John Connolly was presented with the distinguished 'Ireland Medal' for 2012 by Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan at the conference in the City North Hotel.

## PRIMARY LESSONS

John Connolly, a retired primary school head teacher, joined the Royal Life Saving Society in 1973 having previously been a member of Irish Water Safety and was appointed the area organiser for Waterford in 1975 in an area where the RLSS had been dormant.

He founded Waterford Lifeguard Club to provide RLSS lifesaving and lifeguard training. The club



John Connolly was presented with the 2012 Ireland Medal parchment by Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan.



Some of the delegates and speakers pictured with 2012 Ireland Medal recipient John Connolly and Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan.

ceased operating in 2005 by which time over 10,000 adults and children had been taught to swim and over 1,000 senior lifesaving awards received.

Using his position as the local teachers' union representative he established Waterford Schools Swimming Association (WSSA) in 1977 to organise and promote swimming instruction in schools.

He served as chairperson for 15 years during which time the number of schools providing swimming as part of their curriculum rose from 1 to 31. The association was terminated in 1991 when swimming became part of the revised primary school curriculum in Ireland.

He established a voluntary week-end beach lifeguard service at Dunmore East, Co. Waterford in 1979. Waterford County Council provided a full-time lifeguard service in 1988 to obtain a Blue Flag at which time the voluntary service ended.

Connolly founded Bonmahon Lifeguard Club in 1984 to provide a voluntary weekend lifeguard service on a surf beach in Co. Waterford. The service became full-time in 1990 when an in-shore lifeboat service was added. Over 200 people have been rescued from drowning by club lifeguards. He retired from the club in 1992.

#### NATIONAL ROLES

Elected to the RLSS IRELAND Branch Management Committee in 1976, he served in various roles including branch president for two terms and Branch Secretary for five terms. He retired from the committee in 2005 on his appointment as his school's head teacher.

In 1980 he established the Irish Lifeguard School (RLSS) to provide RLSS lifeguard training for lifesavers, serving as director for 15 years, and qualifying over 400 lifeguards. The school ended in 1998 when changes in the RLSS lifeguard qualification programme made the project unviable.

Having previously been a member of the National Training Team of Scouting Ireland in the 1970s he was asked to return as National Water Safety Advisor in 1984 following a tragic drowning incident involving a number of scouts. In this role he introduced a number of safety protocols retiring in 1995 on becoming RLSS IRELAND Branch Secretary.

#### INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

In 1999 he established the RLSS Ireland Overseas Aid Sub-Committee as a millennium project to provide financial and technical aid to lifesavers in developing countries. Irish lifesavers travelled to Kenya and Lesotho training lifesavers.

He travelled to Lesotho twice during which successfully helped to set up a national lifesaving organisation, The Royal Lesotho Lifesaving Association. The Overseas Aid Sub-committee was converted into the Irish Lifesaving Foundation and incorporated as a charity in 2003.

Through his role as honorary chief executive of the Lifesaving Foundation John Connolly plays a direct role in promoting and supporting lifesaving organisations in a number of developing countries.

He attended his first international lifesaving conference in 1990 and has regularly contributed to conferences since then presenting papers at various World Drowning Prevention Conferences.

#### PREVIOUS 'IRELAND MEDAL' RECIPIENTS

*The Ireland Medal was introduced in 2003 as a joint project between the Irish Lifesaving Foundation and the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) in Ireland to mark the centenary of the RLSS branch and the birth of The Foundation.*

*The gilded sterling silver medal is awarded annually to an Irish person or organisation or to a person of Irish descent in recognition of an exceptional contribution to saving lives from drowning.*



**2011:**

The 2011 Ireland Medal was awarded to Professor Linda Quan, MD (USA) for her work in the field of drowning prevention and resuscitation.



**2010:**

The 2010 Ireland Medal was awarded to Mrs. Patricia Wilcox (South Africa) for her long and dedicated service to the teaching of lifesaving in Africa.



**2009:**

The 2009 Ireland Medal was awarded to Dublin Fire Brigade for the many water rescues performed by its river rescue service.



**2008:**

The 2008 Ireland Medal was awarded to Chief Justice Terence Higgins (Australia) for his promotion of lifesaving in Australia and in the developing world.



**2007:**

The 2007 Ireland Medal was awarded to Foyle Search and Rescue (Northern Ireland) for their success in reducing the annual number of drownings in the River Foyle from thirty to three.



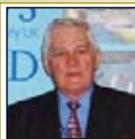
**2006:**

The 2006 Ireland Medal was awarded to Garda Commissioner Eamonn Doherty for his work with the Royal Life Saving Society, Ireland and the reorganisation of air sea rescue.



**2005:**

The 2005 Ireland Medal was awarded to Professor John Pearn, MD (Australia) for his work in the field of child drowning and water safety.



**2004:**

The 2004 Ireland Medal was awarded to Cork man, Surgeon Admiral Frank Golden for his work on hypothermia and sea survival.



**2003:**

The inaugural, 2003 Ireland Medal was awarded to An Garda Síochána in recognition of swimming rescues performed by serving Irish police officers.

## LIFESAVING FOUNDATION

In 2009 he organised the first Lifesaving Foundation Drowning Prevention Conference which has continued to grow since then. He has authored a number of drowning prevention documents on behalf of the Foundation.

### FOUNDATION BACKGROUND

The Irish Lifesaving Foundation, an independent organisation with no connection to any lifesaving agency in Ireland, began as a sub-committee of the Royal Life Saving Society in Ireland (RLSS Ireland) before it was incorporated as an Irish charity in 2003.

Based in Waterford, the charity has an international membership that supports the development of lifesaving in over six countries in Africa and Asia and promotes research into drowning.

It aims to reduce the number of drowning deaths worldwide by conducting drowning-related research, organising an annual research conference, publishing safety information and financially supporting water safety-related projects.

It includes a number of international university professors and world-leading medical doctors, along with members of small community organisations with few formal qualifications but a lot of practical experience.

The Foundation was born when the RLSS Branch in Ireland received a request to provide financial and technical support to a small lifesaving organisation based in Mombasa, Kenya in 1999. It was early 2002 by the time two pool lifeguard trainers travelled to Kenya to train a group of pool and beach lifeguards for employment in local hotels.

An internationally recognised lifeguard qualification would not only enable the individuals concerned to gain employment but would also boost the local tourism industry. The project was so successful that further requests followed.

The RLSS Ireland Branch was not in a position to financially support a long-term project but a small group of members decided to set up a new independent organisation. It was incorporated as The Irish Lifesaving Foundation and registered as an independent charity in 2003.

### WORLDWIDE PROJECTS

Since then, the Foundation has run projects in Lesotho, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Gambia, South Africa, Kenya and India. It has also supplied clothing and equipment to lifesavers in Antigua,



Pictured at the presentation of the retrospective Ireland Medal Parchment to Foyle Search & Rescue (l-r): Brendan Donohoe, Lifesaving Foundation chairperson, Stephen Twells and John Tolland from Foyle Search & Rescue, with Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan.



Brendan Donohoe, Lifesaving Foundation chairperson, addressing delegates at the conference in City North Hotel, Gormanstown, Co. Meath at the end of April.



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The development of an overarching Code of Practice for fire investigation is needed in Scotland and the wider UK.

# FIRE INVESTIGATION STANDARD NEEDED FOR SCOTLAND

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WORKING GROUP TO DRAFT AN OVERARCHING FIRE INVESTIGATION STANDARD FOR SCOTLAND IS ONE OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN A REPORT FOR THE CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO FIRE INVESTIGATION.

A report entitled 'Building Safer Communities: Developing co-ordinated approaches to investigating and preventing fires' outlines the current and future challenges facing fire investigation in Scotland.

The report was published following a three-month programme undertaken within the Scottish Universities Insight Institute; the programme ran from December 2011 to February 2012.

Prof Niamh Nic Daeid, Centre of Forensic Science at the University of Strathclyde, outlined the main findings of her team's report at a conference hosted by the Fire Investigators Association of

Ireland (FIAI) at the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Training Centre in Belfast on 24 April.

In her presentation to the FIAI delegates, Prof Nic Daeid said the team (which included Prof Sue Black, Professor of Anatomy and Forensic Anthropology, Dundee University, and Gary Holcroft, Head of Physical Sciences at the Scottish Police Services Authority Forensic Services), suggested that the development of an overarching Code of Practice for fire investigation is needed in Scotland and the wider UK.

In his preface in the programme's report, Andrew Rennison, Forensic

Science Regulator, said that the development of forensic science quality standards (based on advice from experts in the field) was "crucial to my vision for a UK-wide quality culture for all aspects of forensic science".

Endorsing the recommendations contained in the report, he added: "Scotland is in a unique position to advance in this area with the support of the police, fire and rescue services and the Scottish Police Services Authority."

## MULTI-DISCIPLINARY GROUP

The programme brought together academics, fire scientists and fire

engineers, fire investigators, forensic scientists, police, Scottish crime investigation support officers, fire service, private sector practitioners, forensic specialists, trainers and policy makers.

Very useful comparisons were made with other jurisdictions and countries which have considered similar issues to those facing Scotland. The future direction of fire investigation in Scotland requires to be decided across a multi-disciplinary group being mindful of the various differences between these agencies, in particular, the public and private sectors.

According to the report's findings, there is a real danger of inadequate investigations being undertaken unless there is an improvement in the training of the practitioners conducting the first level of investigations. This introduces a risk into the investigative process if such cases enter the criminal justice system.

The report noted that for the delivery of robust fire investigations for the criminal justice system both organisational and individual competences were essential. Two frameworks are required – one for establishing organisational competence, and one for individual competence, with each organisation being responsible for the competence of its employees. The production and publication of an overarching fire investigation Code of Practice or standard would be advantageous in this regard.

#### FIVE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A working group be established to draft an overarching fire investigation Code of Practice for Scotland; taking into account all of the relevant agencies and being mindful of the interrelationship between the criminal and civil authorities.
2. A similar working group be established to develop a series of investigative route maps which will recommend areas where specific interaction and information sharing should occur across the relevant agencies. This development should lay the foundations for inter-agency working protocols and agreement, including responsibilities for scene management at different incident types.

*This would include:*

A Scottish multi-agency agreement and shared working protocols for investigations with clear defined route maps for specialist involvement.

- Defining the appropriate information-sharing and scene-management

#### KEY THEMES ADDRESSED BY THREE WORKSHOPS

*The programme consisted of workshops which addressed three critical and interlinked themes and one follow-up meeting to focus on the next steps for the project.*

*Across the three workshops, 28 presentations were delivered by academics, police, fire and rescue service personnel, fire scientists, engineers and forensic science specialist practitioners. The workshops addressed a number of research questions under the following themes.*

##### **Workshop 1 – Fire scene investigation and the development of a multi-disciplinary approach**

- *Response - Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 investigations.*
- *Communication and interface – primacy, scene management.*
- *Role of the specialist tools – margins of variability, back engineered computer modelling.*
- *Existing agreements and usefulness of route maps.*

##### **Workshop 2 – Critical issues in the investigation of fatal fires**

- *Fatal fire investigation.*
- *Training – different for each of the agencies involved.*
- *Response – almost always level 3 complex multi-agency investigations*
- *Communication and interface – scene management, role definitions, variability of quality of scene investigations.*
- *Role of the specialist - using the right experts at the scene.*
- *Existing agreements and usefulness of route maps.*

##### **Workshop 3 – Building better investigative teams: training, knowledge transfer and assessment of competence in fire investigation**

- *Strategies for the future.*
- *Court requirements – reliability, admissibility.*
- *Competence.*
- *Unified Code of Practice.*
- *Multi-agency working and road maps to the future.*

protocols across the public and private sectors.

- Exploring the development of a Scottish National Response Team supported by regional teams.
3. Defining working protocols for fire investigation within the criminal justice (as distinct from the civil court) arena and, in particular, the requirements for the demonstration of competence of practitioners (including specialists) working within the criminal justice system.
  4. The establishment of a defined training programme based around fire investigators who undertake investigations to include sufficient information to allow them to continue in this role, as well as maintaining

their conduit as a means of providing feedback into the Scottish Government and fire science/fire engineering communities.

5. The Code of Practice and conduct for forensic science providers and practitioners in the criminal justice system, developed by Andrew Rennison, the UK Forensic Science Regulator, should be considered for adoption in Scotland.

#### SAFER BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The investigation of origin, cause and development of fires is a critical issue for the design and development of a safer built environment, understanding human behaviour in fire events and the successful

resolution of both civil and criminal proceedings.

Approximately 565,000 fires incidents were recorded in the UK between April 2009 and March 2010. This resulted in 375 fatalities, 9,695 non-fatal casualties and an estimated cost to society of 2.5 billion pounds. Depending on location, many of these incidents may be started deliberately, however subsequent incident investigations result in less than 10 per cent convictions.

Previous reports relating to fire investigation in the UK established the need for a multi-agency approach to the problem. The development of the Arson Control Forum (in 2001) and subsequent arson task forces across England and Wales has had some impact on the issue in that jurisdiction.

#### MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH

No such forum exists in Scotland despite the recommendations of the Association of British Insurers and more recently Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Services and the Scottish Government, all of which advocate a multi-agency approach to engage with the problem.

Currently, while there is generally goodwill within groupings involved in the fire investigation communities, there has been little successful effort in Scotland to develop a collective strategic approach to incident investigation across the stakeholder communities.

Collaborative fire scene investigations are capable of providing reliable information and facilitating the understanding of the effect of fire related incidents on the built environment as well as human behaviour in fire and, as a consequence, inform the development of safer communities producing significant benefits and impact.

Statistics relating to fire cause, gathered by the fire service, are already used to inform government and develop strategic interventions in relation to fire safety. The cross fertilisation of industrial and academic research between the various stakeholder communities facilitated by interaction and the agreement of common goals can also bring with it enormous benefit, particularly in the cross over areas of fire science, fire engineering and computer modelling.

#### SPECIFIC LEGAL POWERS

In Scotland, the introduction of the Fire

#### FACTFILE – PROF NIAMH NIC DAEID

*Prof Niamh Nic Daeid is a research professor of Forensic Science at the Centre for Forensic Science at the University of Strathclyde. She is chairperson of the European Network of Forensic Science Institute's fire and explosion investigation working group, technical co-ordinator for Interpol for Forensic Chemistry for the Interpol Forensic Managers Symposium and a consultant to the UNODC.*

*She is also the immediate past editor-in-chief and chair of the Editorial Board of Science and Justice. She was a member of council of the Forensic Science Society, the UK professional body for Forensic Science for nine consecutive years.*

*Prof Nic Daeid has published over 90 peer reviewed research papers in forensic science and currently leads one of the most productive forensic science research teams in the UK. She has also been involved in many criminal and civil investigations and has presented her evidence as an expert witness in the courts.*

*She is a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, a Fellow of the Forensic Science Society, a Fellow of the Institute of Chemistry of Ireland and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.*



Scotland Act (2005) provided the Scottish fire and rescue service personnel with specific powers to search and recover items from fire scenes.

These wide-ranging legal powers provide direct responsibilities for the gathering of materials from fire scenes and individuals. Such materials could have potential evidential value particularly in civil proceedings but also potentially in criminal cases.

The current civil situation raises the question of establishing the extent to which scientific and forensic evidence, obtained through the investigative process, is used in trial and how the fire service investigations interact with the civil fire investigation.

In particular, the issue of training in

documentation of evidence recovery, an appropriate means of recovering items from fire scenes as well as storage all require clarity of approach. In suspected criminal cases, authority over an incident is retained by the police and ultimately the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service.

#### NO NATIONAL STRATEGY

The interaction between the procurator fiscal, police, forensic science and fire service at a multi-agency level can be 'ad hoc' with local arrangements in place, but with no published Scottish national strategy.

There have been calls for the development of a more strategic approach to the interaction between agencies involved, by the 2004 ABI report,

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Services and the Scottish Government.

The 2009 ABI report also specifically suggests the interaction of the fire science and fire engineering communities to round out the debate and better understand the fire performance of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) building types and how to reduce the risks associated with them.

In Scotland, there is a current opportunity to consider the development of a combined strategic response to fire scene investigation, at least within the criminal justice sector, given the reform of the fire and rescue services and police forces in Scotland into two single organisations.

Scotland also has a significant advantage in forensic science with a single service provider. In addition to this, Scotland leads the UK in the provision of academic research in forensic science including a focus in fire investigation and fire science/engineering.

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The programme aimed to evaluate the current interaction between the various agencies involved in fire investigation within both the civil and criminal arena.

With the aid of international experts, the programme therefore set out to establish firstly, the current state of awareness, training, experience and

interaction between the crown office, fire service, forensic science, police, crime investigation support officers, civil and academic sectors.

Secondly, the programme explored the specific requirements and benefits related to the use of other specialists in the investigation of fatal fires.

Finally, having established that backdrop, the programme sought to review the current status of training and standards in light of developments, especially in England and Wales, the USA, Australia and Europe and where appropriate, make recommendations for the development of fire investigation in Scotland.

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# SOLDIERS IN SKIS ON SNOW PATROL IN SWITZERLAND

FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS THE SWISS ARMY HAS BEEN TRAINING FOREIGN TROOPS IN MOUNTAIN SKILLS AS PART OF SWITZERLAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO'S PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE PROJECT. TWO MEMBERS OF THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES COMPLETED THE FOUR-WEEK WINTER MOUNTAINEERING COURSE EARLIER THIS YEAR. PRIVATE THOMAS McHALE-ROE OUTLINES THEIR EXPERIENCES OF THE PROGRAMME.

**T**he mountain specialists of the Swiss army – Geb Spez (known locally as the 'Soldiers in Skis') are in the Swiss Military Mountaineering Service Centre in Andermatt at the foot of the Gotthard Pass in Central Switzerland.

From there they run a variety of international courses from skiing and winter- and summer-climbing to mountain rescue and dealing with avalanches. These training programmes form part of the Swiss contribution to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) project.

Switzerland still has national service and military service is compulsory for all Swiss men aged between 20 and 34;

women can serve voluntarily. The Geb Spez maintains a state of permanent readiness for training and support in mountain-rescue tasks for the entire Swiss army.

After their 15 weeks of basic training some Geb Spez personnel are posted to different combat units to assess and advise commanders on mountain exercises and operations.

There are 600 mountain specialists on active and reserve duty. In addition to their military duties Geb Spez personnel are occasionally called in to assist the civil authorities.

Mountaineering and skiing are core competences of the Swiss army, and it

is therefore natural that their international exchange courses should include these skills.

## MOUNTAINEERING TECHNIQUES

On 14 January my colleague Cpl Paul O'Connell and I underwent a Geb Spez-combined winter mountaineering course (CWMC) in Switzerland along with 13 other students from Belgium, Canada, Georgia, Great Britain, Israel, and Switzerland.

Combining two of weeks of basic winter mountain training with two weeks of advanced winter mountain training, this course is designed to provide students with mountaineering, avalanche and rescue



techniques to an expert level.

In addition, there were a number of tactical exercises in the mountains to allow the students the opportunity to apply the different techniques.

The main objectives of the courses were to give the participants the knowledge necessary to serve as a training instructor and adviser. Training is given to improve general knowledge and the ability to survive in mountainous areas under difficult winter conditions. The participants must learn how to perceive and evaluate avalanche risks, and then initiate and take avalanche rescue measures in fulfilling missions in different terrains

The courses provided by Geb Spez assume a certain level of skill in the subjects, so to participate in the basic course you must have mountaineering qualifications and a competent skiing level.

You also require a high level of fitness before attending the course. Most international participants usually come from

## COMMENTS ON THE COURSE FROM THE INSTRUCTORS

### **Lt Col Luciauo Fieschi (33 years' service: Swiss Mountain Rescue)**

*"There are two main benefits of the PfP Combined Winter Mountaineering course. Firstly, is the technical training from different military mountaineering units. As instructors we find we learn as much from the students as they do from us. Secondly, is the human element. These courses bring together troops from all over the world to work together with the same goals. This sharing of knowledge and experience is one of the main key elements to Pfp courses."*



### **Lt Daniel Schliefeiner (23 years' service: IFMGA mountain guide)**

*"The Pfp courses have a very good atmosphere compared to other courses. From my experience as a civilian mountain guide, I find working with soldiers is different to working with civilians. Soldiers have a different attitude and motivation to reaching the goals and objectives of the course that they are on. They are fully committed to the course and give it 100 per cent."*



### **Cpl Arno Caprez (10 years' service: mountaineering instructor)**

*"The course gives the students lots of practical training in the mountains. Every day they are putting theory into action, so progression levels on the course are rapid. The course may not be perfect for everyone, but it has well-experienced instructors and the students have a good opportunity to ask as many questions as possible and progress their alpine mountaineering skills."*



### **Pte Pascal Vendrame (7 years' service: skiing and mountaineering instructor)**

*"A lot of the soldiers on these courses come from countries that do not have extreme mountains like the Swiss Alps. This course introduces them to different terrain, teaches them how to deal with extreme cold, and how to survive in snow conditions overnight. They also learn how to work in rescue teams, both as a participant and leader, so the course has lots of benefits, from teamwork to survival skills."*



### **Pte Silvan John Roth (3 years' service: skiing and rock-climbing instructor)**

*"It's rewarding to spend time in the mountains with international students. As Geb Spez we are not only teaching, but also learning from the students. Whether its technical climbing skills or survival skills, each country seems to have different techniques and methods to share on the course."*



their own country's military mountaineering units.

Cpl Paul O'Connell and I are members of the Defence Force Association of Mountaineers (DFAM) and qualified confidence training instructors (CTIs).

On the basic course we started off with skiing on- and off-piste, before progressing to cross-country touring.

In the evenings, after dinner, we attended lectures on avalanche risks and rescue techniques, alpine navigation and survival skills.

All equipment on the course was supplied by the Swiss army, including insulated Gortex army uniforms.

### AVALANCHE RESCUE EXERCISES

On the second week we got the opportunity to put our skills into action as the class took part in avalanche rescue exercises during overnight expeditions staying in alpine huts.

Only those who successfully pass the basic course are allowed to continue on to the two-week advanced course. During the advanced course there was a lot more asked, and expected, of us.

The instruction was more in-depth and the students were given a leading role when planning routes and assessing conditions.

The class members also took part in carrying out snow profiles in steep terrain, which is the most important task in assessing avalanche risk.

An area roughly two metres squared is dug into the snow, to ground depth if possible, temperatures are taken, and the shape and consistency of the snowflakes are measured.

This information is then sent to the Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research in Davos Dorf, which analyses avalanche risk and issues daily avalanche bulletins for the benefit of tourists and the general public. The Institute also relies on qualified civilian mountain guides to forward information and also information from robotic stations situated throughout the country.

### TWO-FOLD BENEFITS

In the final week of the course we were based in a military bunker in the mountains from.

From this location the class set off on expeditions that included learning how to build snow holes and how to survive sleeping in the snow overnight.



The class members also took part in carrying out snow profiles in steep terrain.



In the final week of the course the class set off on expeditions that included learning how to build snow holes and how to survive sleeping in the snow overnight.

At the end of the four weeks everyone who had passed all the requirements of the course received a diploma in Winter Mountain Training, issued by the Swiss Military Mountaineering Service Centre.

The course has two main benefits. Firstly, it extends the knowledge and experience of mountaineering throughout different international military organisations.

Secondly, it spreads comradeship and

kinship between the participating military personnel.

*(Photography: Cpl Paul O'Connell)  
He and Pte Thomas McHale-Roe are based with the 1st Infantry Battalion, Renmore, Galway.*

*Article courtesy of An Cosantóir (the Defence Forces magazine)*

# ROUND OF A PAWS FOR RESCUE DOGS!

DID YOU KNOW THAT AS FAR BACK AS THE 17TH CENTURY DOGS WERE USED TO LOCATE SOLDIERS IN BATTLE? AND OUR CANINE COMRADES CONTINUE TO PLAY AN INVALUABLE ROLE IN SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS SINCE THEN. THIS YEAR'S MOUNTAIN RESCUE IRELAND CONFERENCE WAS HOSTED BY THE SEARCH AND RESCUE DOGS ASSOCIATION IN CLARE. REPORT BY MARY MULLINS.

**S**ARDA (the Search and Rescue Dogs Association) hosted the 2013 Annual General Meeting and Conference for Mountain Rescue Ireland (MRI) in mid-west seaside village of Doolin, Co. Clare.

In partnership with the local Doolin Cliff Coast Guard unit and Irish Cave Rescue Organisation, SARDA provided a great opportunity for Mountain Rescue Ireland to meet and share experiences and ideas at this year's conference and AGM.

Opening the conference Senator Martin Conway welcomed delegates to his native county of Clare and acknowledged the good work undertaken by Mountain Rescue Ireland.

Dr Jason Van Der Welde, a pre-hospital critical care physician with Medico in Cork, looked at suspension physiology and outlined that a person who hangs motionless in a harness will most likely be unconscious within 10 minutes, adding that this would lead to death. This is due to physiology and means the body will become stressed, leading to syncope and ultimately shock and death.

## PAIN MANAGEMENT

A vast amount of this research was carried out in New York in 2005 and published in the 'European Journal of Emergency Medicine'. The research resulted from investigating the mechanism of death by crucifixion.

It appears the Romans in early times discovered ways to prolong the method of death by crucifixion. From this research it is possible to deduce that if we keep the legs and the upper body moving, when in a harness to limit the motionless time, then the risk of syncope is reduced.

The remainder of his lecture looked at reperfusion injuries. For example, when someone has been trapped and the fluid



Zac and Lily pictured with KMRT members during a joint exercise.

reverts back into the system causing the heart to suffer an ST elevation.

Studies again deduced that if a person becomes trapped a combat tourniquet could be used and once the rescue has been completed and the patient is in a safe medical environment where they are monitored, the tourniquet is released and tightened again after 30 seconds.

Every three minutes the procedure is repeated until the patient becomes stable. Finally, Dr Van Der Welde stressed that no person in need of pain management should be excluded from relief of that pain.

Dr Jason Horan, Consultant in Emergency Medicine and Medical Advisor for Mountain Rescue Ireland, updated members on the work of the MRI's Medical Sub-Committee, which is chaired by Joe O'Gorman (DWMRT).

## MEDICAL INDEMNITY

During 2012 the Medical Sub-Committee secured medical indemnity insurance for MRI members. This policy covers all members of MRI, both north and south, to provide care in the jurisdictions of the Republic of Ireland and the UK.

It progressed with work on the Scope of Practice. It now has an accreditation committee to oversee the medical programme. It has started the MRI medical registrar and completed the first round to establish potential examiners for the wilderness examination process. It has also produced a new patient report form for teams to use.

In order to comply with legislation regarding the administration of medications, it is essential that MRI becomes a PHECC CPG-approved

organisation. This is to enable us to provide appropriate care to our casualties and to protect individual members from prosecution. There is a substantial body of work yet to be completed.

The committee is working towards a national standard for training. The MR EW (Mountain Rescue England & Wales) Cas Care examination will be the final common pathway to ensure training is fit for purpose.

The aim is to provide support for medics on the hill so that they can provide timely and appropriate care within a robust regulatory framework.

MRI now recognises the need to protect its members by allowing them to operate within the scope of current legislation and with appropriate clinical indemnity.

### NEW SIKORSKY CHOPPER

Jim O'Neill, winchman with the Coast Guard, gave an update on the new S-92, which will have four crew members and the capacity to carry up to eight passengers.

The S-92 has a flying time of four hours and 45 minutes, and a range of 260 miles. It carries a RIPS system – a rotor anti-icing system – which means that it can fly at higher altitudes

Other new features include dual hoist with 290ft cable, cargo hook, EGPOS, a database of land masses and obstacles which will allow the chopper to fly safely out of areas in fog, and this will certainly be an additional asset to mountain rescue teams. Improved Flir and rotor tip lighting.

An open door ramp at the rear of the vehicle will assist in getting a stretcher on board from the ground. Jim O'Neill indicated that training with the new S-92 will start soon and advised teams to contact the Coast Guard to arrange training.

Brian McMahon, an officer with the Coast Guard's/Cliff Rescue Team in Doolin, shared his experiences during four call-outs and discussed the risk elements that were evident at the time and the constant need for risk assessments when facing into a job.

He also stressed the value of critical incident stress debriefing as all call-outs are local to some areas and cannot happen without a sense of loss.

### DOGS TO THE RESCUE

The conference ended with an engaging talk by Harold Burrows of SARDA on the



Six qualified SARDA handlers and their dogs (l-r): Dave Geoghegan and Sheeba; Jarlath Folan and Hugo; Caitríona Lucas and Zac (Zac has since retired); Pauliina Kaupilla and Koiru; Catherine Kelly and Lily; and Michael Grant and Bono. (Bono recently died of cancer. He will be missed by the SARDA community and his handler) (Pic: Allegra Lawlor, Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Team)



SARDA handler Helen McNamara watches an area being worked by , Caher Valley.

history of how dogs came to be used in search and rescue. As far back as the 17th century it is recorded that dogs were used to locate soldiers in battle.

In 1960 Hamish McGuinness began training after he witnessed the use of dogs in Switzerland. Dog handlers are usually members of mountain rescue teams but they can also have backgrounds in other emergency services.

Up to 360 different scents can be found in the human body and a dog is the expert in using his sense of smell to locate each of those smells.

The value of dogs in search and rescue has widely been accepted and over the years, dogs now train in different disciplines; for example, urban search dogs are used to search for bodies in collapsed buildings.

Meanwhile, drowned victim search dogs can sit at the front of a boat and sniff the wind to try to locate a drowned victim. Avalanche dogs indicate a scent in the snow and then there is the mountain rescue dog.

To be a search dog they must have a large sense of play – locating the casualty

is the game of which they never seem to tire. For this reason Labradors, German Sheppard and Spaniels are the best breed for search and rescue operations.

### 2015 IKAR CONFERENCE BID

Finally, Mountain Rescue Ireland has submitted a bid to hold the 2015 IKAR Conference. IKAR compiles of four committees – terrestrial, avalanche, air and medical. This will be a very large event and it's estimated to host over 600 delegates.

Kenny Roberts, newly-elected chairperson for Mountain Rescue Ireland, said this would be a great opportunity to showcase both Ireland and Mountain Rescue Ireland and has encouraged all members to get involved.

**About the Author:** Mary Mullins, South East Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA), is a co-opted member of the Medical Sub-Committee of Mountain Rescue Ireland. She has vast experience in implementing the Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MR EW) Cas Care Programme in her own SEMRA team.

# VOLUNTEERS ON COURSE FOR FURTHER LEADERSHIP SKILLS

INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES WERE TWO MAIN THEMES RUNNING THROUGH THE RECENT COURSE FOR VOLUNTARY EMERGENCY SERVICES, ORGANISED BY MOUNTAIN RESCUE IRELAND, WRITES COURSE TEAM LEADER PAT HOLLAND, SOUTH EASTERN MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION.



The 'Leadership in Voluntary Emergency Services' course on 26-28 April once again attracted experienced personnel from the Coast Guard, Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, Civil Defence, Mountain Rescue and An Garda Síochána.

The expectations of the participants, brought out in our first discussions, were very interesting. Two main themes discussed were inter-agency working and different styles of leadership.

There are very few places where leaders of several emergency services can discuss these important topics together. We are proud and happy that we are clearly achieving our aim, as a course team, to provide such a space in Ireland and now abroad.

## Feedback from course participants

*'Great material and personal knowledge',  
'Very well communicated, well paced at right level and informative',  
'Very worthwhile, very thought generating on a personal level',  
'Excellent course, well balanced... very thought provoking'.*

## HONESTY AND CANDOUR

Guest speaker Colin Murray from Howth Coast Guard unit addressed the importance of honesty and candour of the task of leading a volunteer unit and of the leader's need to show commitment to their team, to put all into the advancement of their team.

He viewed leadership in articulating high standards and norms such as the need to make exercises very realistic to the actual accidents. It was striking how many times he used the phrase 'the job', showing a professional commitment to it and its ethos, while still being a volunteer. His clarity and



The course aims to provide senior emergency services and community leaders with appropriate leadership knowledge, skills and self-awareness.



Pat Holland is course leader of MRI's 'Leadership in Voluntary Emergency Services' course, and is also a member of the South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association.

task orientation were a perfect starting point for the course's exploration of the balance between task, process and relationships.

Evaluation and self-knowledge are two themes running through the course and this year's course benefited from the course team applying these themes to ourselves. We looked at the course syllabus critically and dropped one module, but kept core modules such as leadership values and team culture as well as our group discussions, trademark scenarios and practical psychology from transactional analysis.

We made clearer our use of the leadership triangle and heightened the focus on task, adding a focus on inter-unit relationships and also demonstrating the process of group coaching.

We added more demonstrations of the drama triangle and other models and further emphasised the role of the fundamental agreement between a volunteer and their unit. All of these were well appreciated.

#### PARTICIPANT COMMENTS :

*'Methods to understand and deal with personnel very useful'*

*'Although role play was at first daunting, it was a great teaching experience which incorporated a real sense of involvement, some of the questions and scenarios very relevant'*

*'The Rescuer-Victim-Persecutor triangle makes a lot of sense',*

*'The Parent-Adult-Child and translating the theory into real life examples through role play was very effective. We never did this before',*

*'Leadership styles and session on values excellent',*

*'The Task Process Relationship division all excellent makes you think'*

This positive feedback, together with the results of the our survey late last year where 60 per cent of responding participants noted that they had made changes to their leadership style/methods since the course, have confirmed that we have a valuable and valid concept and product.

We are using a life-business coaching ethos as a foundation for a course incorporating short formal teaching, with many group discussions and some mild acting in scenarios based on the concepts.

#### FEEDBACK FROM ORDER OF MALTA DIRECTOR



##### **Assistant Commander Brian Coote, Assistant National Director. Training & Development with the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps**

*Since the course I have reflected on the value of the 'Leadership for Voluntary Emergency Services' course run by Mountain Rescue Ireland. It struck me that while there was plenty of relevant and interesting theory, and some very practical exercises, the real value was in the actions and behaviours we carried away with us.*

*The leadership spotlight enabled us to look inside ourselves and examine how our leadership skills and our behaviour can influence situations and people around us. Equally it gave an insight into how we are often impacted by what and who is around us.*

*Leadership is essentially about people, understanding people, understanding their behaviour and choosing our own behaviour accordingly to motivate and lead with a mutually beneficial outcome.*

*Leadership requirements vary from person to person and situation to situation. Where better way to start this process of examining leadership than within yourself. This 'Leadership for Voluntary Emergency Services' programme is a modern look at leadership, exploring the key elements of leadership in the voluntary sector in a way that brings the learning to life in a meaningful way.*

*It is a positive opportunity for developing friends in fellow organisations, fostering a sense of shared experiences and challenges, and is overall a very worthwhile personal development experience.*

*It is certainly a learning experience that makes an impact long after the final session has ended. Thank you to Mountain Rescue Ireland for being real leaders and sharing your professionalism.*

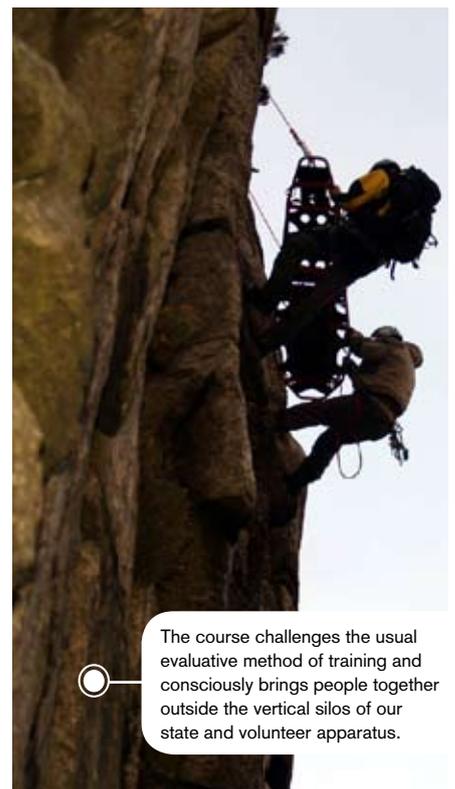
Our aims are 'to provide senior emergency services and community leaders with appropriate leadership knowledge, skills and self-awareness'. We also want to provide a space for leaders and future leaders to have discussions.

#### ON COURSE FOR CHANGE

However, fundamentally this course is to show leaders how they might change, with the team showing how relationships between services may change, by bringing people together in a neutral setting and presenting them with information and powerful questions.

In a small but vital sense the course is revolutionary. It not only challenges the usual evaluative method of training but consciously brings people together outside the vertical silos of our state and volunteer apparatus.

It challenges them to consider what kind of leaders they want to be in the company of others from different services but with the same questions. Can we



The course challenges the usual evaluative method of training and consciously brings people together outside the vertical silos of our state and volunteer apparatus.

be better leaders and create better organisations? Does bringing a better service to the casualty require thinking outside the established norms?

This sense of deeper questioning surfaced in the group coaching session this year where issues concerned with better interagency working, governance and the structures of voluntary bodies as well as the need for more inter-agency forums were discussed, often passionately.

#### NEED TO DO BETTER

There was a real sense of a need to do better for the casualty and for the services. However, we have to be realistic. The course team realises the need to point out that the course is currently only an annual weekend event, and that participants have to go back and work with their existing structures in a realistic and positive way.

As always the participants were generous with their feedback. The course team's meeting on lessons learned was particularly rich this year and we will work to further improve the course. We will give more time for groups to provide feedback at the end of their sessions, especially with regard to their discussions regarding their chosen 'hero' and his or her attributes and values.

This seems to have struck a real

chord for this year's participants and they clearly wanted more time to discuss the issue. The time available in a weekend is limited, however, and we may have to extend it next year.

We have also committed to improve our material and publicity as well as setting out a course team CPD list of training topics for ourselves.

*The course team (Pat Holland, Mary Mullins and Diarmaid Scully) would like to thank the participants, their agencies and MRI teams. They also want to acknowledge the South Eastern Regional Working Group of the Major Emergency Management process for financial support towards hosting the course in Co. Tipperary.*

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### Oxygen: you never know when you might need it!

For further information, please email BOC at: [healthcareinfo.ie@boc.com](mailto:healthcareinfo.ie@boc.com) / [www.bodifeline.co.uk](http://www.bodifeline.co.uk)



# PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ARE TWO OF MANY TARGET GROUPS INVITED TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVES ON WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY IT WILL BE CO-HOSTED BY THE CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM) NETWORK AND THE INSTITUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH AT NUI MAYNOOTH ON 11 JUNE.

**T**his will be the first time that the CISM Network has joined forces with the Institution of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH) to organise a conference entitled 'Occupational Health and Safety: A Psychosocial Perspective'.

Keynote speakers include Dr Geoff King, Director of the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council; Patricia Murray, Occupational Psychologist, Health and Safety Authority; Dr Lynda Sisson, Specialist Occupational Physician; and Adrian Twomey, Solicitor and Director of Employment Law Services at Advokat.

## Target Groups

- Emergency Services Personnel
- Military Personnel
- Voluntary and Rescue Personnel
- Community First Responders
- Occupational Health Professionals
- Employee Representatives
- Human Resource Personnel
- Health & Safety Managers
- Fire Safety Managers
- CISM Trainers and CISM Peers
- Mental Health Professionals
- Healthcare Staff and Managers
- Academics and/or researchers with an interest in mental health
- Management and staff of schools and higher education institutions

**Payment Fees:** €40 for CISM Network members and IOSH members; €50 for non-members and €20 for full-time students

**For further information:** Sharon Gallagher, co-ordinator of CISM Network Ireland, Department of Psychology, NUI Maynooth. Email: Sharon.Gallagher@nuim.ie; Phone: 01-7086659 or 087-9369378.

CISM Network Ireland: [www.cismnetworkireland.ie](http://www.cismnetworkireland.ie)  
IOSH [www.iosh.co.uk/ireland](http://www.iosh.co.uk/ireland)

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

09.00: Welcome by Professor Philip Nolan, President NUI Maynooth

09.30: Opening Address

Tom Madden, Chair of IOSH Healthcare Section, and Brigitta O'Doherty, Chair of CISM Network Ireland

09.45: Dr Lynda Sisson, Specialist Occupational Health Physician, Corporate Health Ireland 'Psychosocial Hazards in Healthcare Settings'

10.25: Roddy McNidder, CISM Coordinator, NHS Ayrshire & Arran 'From Reaction to Pro-Action: How CISM Benefits Organisational Well-Being within the National Health Service in Ayrshire & Arran'

11.20: Des O'Mahony, Clinical Psychologist, Irish Prison Service 'An Overview of Mental Health Issues in the Prison Service'

12.00: Sharon Gallagher, Department of Psychology, NUI Maynooth, & Lt Col Ollie Barbour, Director of Personnel Support Services, Defence Forces 'Networking CISM Research with Policy and Practice'

12.40: Question and Answer (Session One)

13.30: Adrian Twomey, Director of Employment Law Services, Advokat 'Occupational Stress: Cleaning Up the Legal Mess'

14.10: Patricia Murray, Occupational Psychologist, HSA 'Meeting the Stress Challenge – Managing Work Related Stress Through Health & Safety Approaches'

14.50: Dr Geoff King, Director, Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council 'Implementing CISM in Pre-Hospital Emergency Care: An Overview from the Regulator'

15.30: Kathleen Lynch, Minister of State, Department of Health and Department of Justice, Equality & Defence with Responsibility for Disability, Older People, Equality & Mental Health

16.00: David Maher and Tom Madden, IOSH Healthcare Section 'Bridging the Gap on Psychological Health/Injury'

16.40: Question and Answer (Session Two)

17.00: Close

# RAISING PROFILE IS KEY PRIORITY OF NEW PRESIDENT

THE IRISH SECURITY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION'S FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT, SHEENAGH McCULLAGH, STARTS HER TERM WITH PLANS TO RAISE HER ORGANISATION'S PROFILE AND OPEN A DEBATE ON OUTSOURCING GOVERNMENT SECURITY TO PRIVATE FIRMS, WRITES SHEILA RYAN.

The Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA) elected its first female president, Sheenagh McCullagh, at its annual general meeting in Croke Park on 14 March. McCullagh plans to use her term of office to make the association more outward-looking and concentrate on communicating the message of its quality and standards.

"Architects, procurement and specifiers of security services should be familiar with the ISIA, what we can bring to the party and why they should specify ISIA companies," said McCullagh.

She claims there is not enough awareness of the association's standards, adding that this is down to its inward-looking focus. "What we're not particularly good at is looking from the inside out and marketing those quality and standards to public and private sectors and commercial businesses," she said.

"The association concentrated quite heavily on ensuring the internal structures were correct in terms of the standards they've set for each discipline. They've done it the right way, so they've set the standards and the disciplines within the association ... Now I believe it's time to start looking outward."

## OFFICIAL ACCREDITATION

Ideally McCullagh would like to invite all tenders for security services to specify that applicants should be ISIA accredited.

"If you include it on tender lists then it's an automatic assumption that the company that you choose is going to be a quality company. That is one of my primary goals to make sure that ISIA is included on tenders as a prerequisite," she said.



ISIA president Sheenagh McCullagh pictured with vice president Nial Feely, MD of G4S Secure Solutions (Ireland) Ltd, following their election at the AGM in Croke Park in March.

**THE IRISH SECURITY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION**

Established in 1972, the ISIA represents security companies from small to medium Irish indigenous companies to large multinationals providing security services in the following areas:

- Guarding Services
- Electronic Security
- Event and Entertainment Security
- Monitoring Centres
- Transport/Cash-in-Transit
- Physical Security
- Security Consultants
- Secure Data Destruction.

Its membership base is representative of approximately 70 per cent of both the turnover and employees in the private security industry in Ireland.

**FACTFILE –****SHEENAGH MCCULLAGH**

The first female president has been involved in the ISIA for over six years, and becomes the 22nd president since its formation in 1972.

Sheenagh McCullagh, head of human resources for electronic security and systems provider Stanley Security Solutions, also served as chairman of the ISIA's Electronic Division and as vice president.

She was the first female to hold any seat on the ISIA's Council of Management, the team responsible for managing this representative body, which is made up entirely of representatives from ISIA member companies.

Founded in 1972 the ISIA has a long history of raising standards in the industry, and McCullagh hopes this will help in the task she has set herself.

"The ISIA has been around for a long time," she said. "I don't think it'll be that difficult to explain to people why they should do that because people have been burnt in the past by bad service providers. What we're saying is this will guarantee you a good service provider, whoever you choose."

In the UK it is common practice for government agencies to outsource some of their security functions to private security companies. UK police authorities outsource a range of policing services including detaining suspects, contributing to investigations and managing high-risk offenders. McCullagh plans to open a discussion about this in Ireland through a series of seminars on the subject.

**WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

"It's not about selling it, it's about discussing with the government the advantages and disadvantages of doing it, the challenges of it and how the private security companies can help overcome the issues involved. So, it's about working in partnership to ensure the best outcome," she said.

Services that have the potential to be outsourced in Ireland include the moving of prisoners and guarding embassies, according to the new ISIA president.

"Highly trained gardaí are currently

guarding embassies and residences where this could easily be a service provided by private security companies who are licensed and trained to undertake this type of work thereby allowing public sector resources to be allocated more effectively," she said.

Outsourcing certain government security functions could be cost-effective without losing quality, said McCullagh, however she anticipates resistance to the concept.

"I think it's something they will not be particularly open to, to begin with, but I think that it could benefit all parties concerned if it's done in the right way," she said. "We want to have that discussion and bring it to the fore."

At the same time McCullagh will continue to lead the ISIA's other initiatives, such as its annual awards night for the security sector, which will again be held in November. The awards are another way the ISIA highlights its drive for higher standards in the security industry.

It also recognises those outside the industry who show exceptional courage and provide security. Last year the Premier Award was presented to Dublin Fire Brigade, the largest full-time brigade in the country.

**THE SAME GOALS**

Asked about being the ISIA's first female president, McCullagh downplayed the idea that she is a woman who has been striving to reach the top in a male-



dominated industry.

"That's not so important really as long as you're striving for the same goal," she said, and that goal is to continuously improve standards in the security industry.

McCullagh did not set out for a career in security, but has learned about it through her role as human resources manager of Stanley Security Solutions Ireland, where she has worked for six years.

She became involved with the ISIA as

chair of the Electronic Division because she was interested in helping to raise standards across the industry. "I know most areas of the business here at Stanley so it's easy for me to be in this role," she said.

The ISIA represents 70 per cent of the security industry and McCullagh acknowledges that there will always be companies that opt not to participate. Although the Private Security Authority (PSA) licenses contractors who provide services such as intruder alarms, CCTV, security guards and access control, not everybody is compliant with the regime.

"Everybody knows we're here. If they don't want to jump through the hoops or go through the standards processes and procedures then they sit outside that," said McCullagh.

Contractors who remain outside miss the opportunity to have their work promoted by the ISIA and to allay the anxieties of some potential clients.

**ELEMENT OF TRUST**

"In the past there has been that sort of shady element. Security is one of those things where you need to be comfortable with them, you need to trust your provider, you need to understand and trust what he's doing, that he's doing a good job because he or she is providing security for you and your family, business or assets.

"So, you need to really trust in that person, and the Irish Security Industry Association

guarantees you that, rather than picking somebody completely at random," said McCullagh.

Just over five years ago FÁS launched a new apprenticeship in electronic security, and McCullagh said this has been a fantastic development for the sector.

She also takes her hat off to the PSA

for its work in seeing through a licensing regime that has been tremendously successful for the industry.

"It's a great industry. It's very much a developing industry," said McCullagh. "It's growing and evolving in a very positive way from an educational perspective, from recognition of learning perspective and from a licensing perspective."

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# THE CENTRE FOR HOLISTIC FAMILY DENTISTRY

HOLISTIC HEALTH PRINCIPLES ARE AT THE ROOT OF ALL DENTAL TREATMENTS OFFERED BY THE ISHSCO CENTRE, BASED IN WESTPORT, CO. MAYO, WHERE THE TEAM OF DENTAL PRACTITIONERS IS TRAINED AND QUALIFIED IN DIFFERENT KINDS OF BIO-COMPATIBILITY TESTING PROCEDURES.

**D**ental practitioners at the IshSko Centre evaluate and treat every person's dental needs individually. The aim of the centre is to create an environment in which you can sort out your dental health priorities, gain answers to technical questions and be assured that your overall health is our primary concern.

The IshSko Centre, based in Westport, Co. Mayo, offers all normal dental treatments. Procedures include gum treatment, restorative dentistry, crown and bridges, cosmetic dentistry, single root canal therapy, dentures etc.... but with a difference.

We follow holistic health principles and take into account that a very intricate inter-relationship exists between the teeth, the mouth and the body, which needs to be remembered. How restorations are made and what materials are used in the mouth may have repercussions on other parts of the body.

The team of practitioners at the IshSko Centre are trained and qualified in different kinds of bio-compatibility testing procedures. This will determine whether a foreign material, such as a dental filling, may be tolerated by the body.

Test options include Autonomic Response Testing, Body Terrain Management and serum allergy blood testing. Each test has its merits and limitations.

Most patients nowadays have a long history of medical issues, chronic disease, poor dental work, failed childhood orthodontics, deeply ingrained fears, obscure facial pains, and chronic heavy metal toxicity. Therefore, a multidisciplinary approach must be taken when treating many patients.

The Ish Sko Centre offers in-house support therapies such as nutritional therapy, massage therapy, cranial-sacral therapy, photon wave light therapy and allergy testing. This is in order to provide the best possible service to the general wellbeing of the patient.

For more information visit [www.mercuryfreedentistry.eu](http://www.mercuryfreedentistry.eu) or phone 098-26200

## THE PRINCIPALS OF HOLISTIC DENTAL CARE

*Holistic or biological dentistry incorporates the principals of dental care that provide:*

- *Optimum health (teeth and gums are free of cavities, worn-out leaking fillings)*
- *Non-toxic restorative materials.*
- *Stability (the teeth and gums are strong and sturdy)*
- *Function (the normal purpose and use of the teeth, gums and the jaw)*
- *Comfort (a natural relaxed feeling)*
- *Esthetics (pleasing attractive appearance)*



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# NEW TEAM INSPECTS CRIME INVESTIGATION METHODS

THE NEW GARDA INSPECTORATE TEAM IS CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE CRIME INVESTIGATION PROCESSES OF THE GARDA SÍOCHÁNA, WHICH WILL COVER A WIDE SPECTRUM OF POLICING ACTIVITY.

In late 2012, the new team began work on the Garda Inspectorate's current remit to evaluate the effectiveness of the crime investigation processes of the Garda Síochána, from the reporting and classification of crime through the investigation and prosecution/conclusion of cases.

This inspection on the following key areas and will be the subject of separate reports:

- **Crime Recording and Crime Investigation** (target report completion date mid-2013);
- **Prevention of Crime and the Victims' Experience** (target report completion date Autumn 2013);
- **Specialist Units, including Resources and Training** (target report completion date early 2014).

Two divisions in the Dublin Metropolitan Region (DMR) and one division in each region were selected for inspection, beginning with the DMR North on 10 December 2012. The process of conducting field visits is close to completion.

The inspection process includes:

- Identification of a broad and detailed range of information required under the inspection terms of reference;



Chief Inspector Robert K. Olson with his two Deputy Chief Inspectors Mark Toland and Heather Baily at the Inspectorate's offices on 80 St Stephen's Green, Dublin.

- The examination of responses to information material requested from An Garda Síochána;
- The conduct of field visits to each region to include interviews with individual members at senior ranks and focus groups of members of lower ranks and civilian staff;
- Meetings with stakeholders including personnel from the courts, prosecution, probation and prison services, local authorities, JPCs, and the HSE;
- The detailed analysis and consideration of data gathered from the information requests and field visits;
- Consideration of best international practice with particular regard to its

suitability for application in Ireland.

## POLICING RECOMMENDATIONS

Following consideration of all this material, the report will be drafted and will include recommendations which the Inspectorate considers are feasible and applicable to policing in Ireland. It will then be submitted to the Minister for Justice and Equality as required under the 2005 Act.

The Inspectorate is progressing work carried out by the previous team:

- Review of progress on Inspectorate Report "Responding to Child Sexual Abuse". This report was published in February 2012 and includes a commitment to review the implementation of the garda policy on

- sexual crimes within one year of the report's publication.
- Status Implementation updates.  
The Inspectorate conducts a twice yearly update on the progress of recommendations made in GSI published reports. The Inspectorate continues to work with An Garda Síochána on this monitoring process.

**NEW TEAM AT THE HELM**

In mid-2012, a new Garda Inspectorate team was appointed by the Government after six years of leadership by Kathleen O'Toole, who has left a solid foundation for the Inspectorate moving forward.

Established under the Garda Síochána Act, 2005, the Garda Inspectorate is an impartial independent statutory body; not connected to the Garda Ombudsman Commission or any other agency.

It is tasked to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the force and to recommend best practices in policing to the Government. This is done by making well thought through strategic recommendations that will add value to and complement progressive change in An Garda Síochána.

In June 2012 Robert K. Olson succeeded Kathleen O'Toole who was at the helm of An Garda Síochána Inspectorate since its establishment in 2006.

Chief Olson previously served three years in the organisation as Deputy Chief Inspector on the establishment of the Garda Inspectorate in 2006.

Prior to his appointment as Chief Inspector, Chief Olson served as a consultant for the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), working with the Chicago Police Department in facilitating an organisational study to assess the efficiency of their existing systems, policies and procedures.

**STATESIDE POLICING**

Other aspects of his wide and varied policing career include a successful two-year Youth Violence Prevention Project in Chicago, working with the Chicago Police and the Chicago Public School District. He was directly involved in addressing the significant number of shootings and homicides involving Chicago Public School students.

He also completed 14 months in

Jamaica working with PERF in Kingston, Jamaica as Chief of Party for the United States Agency for International Development's Grants Pen Community Policing Project.

Chief Olson was appointed Chief of Police in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA in 1995 where he served for nine years, retiring from active police service in 2004. Prior to Minneapolis, he served as Police Commissioner in Yonkers, New York, Chief of Police in Corpus Christi, Texas and was promoted through the ranks to Deputy Chief of Police in Omaha, Nebraska.

During his career he has been internationally recognised as a public safety consultant, past president of the PERF, a long-time member of the Major Cities Chiefs Association and a life member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

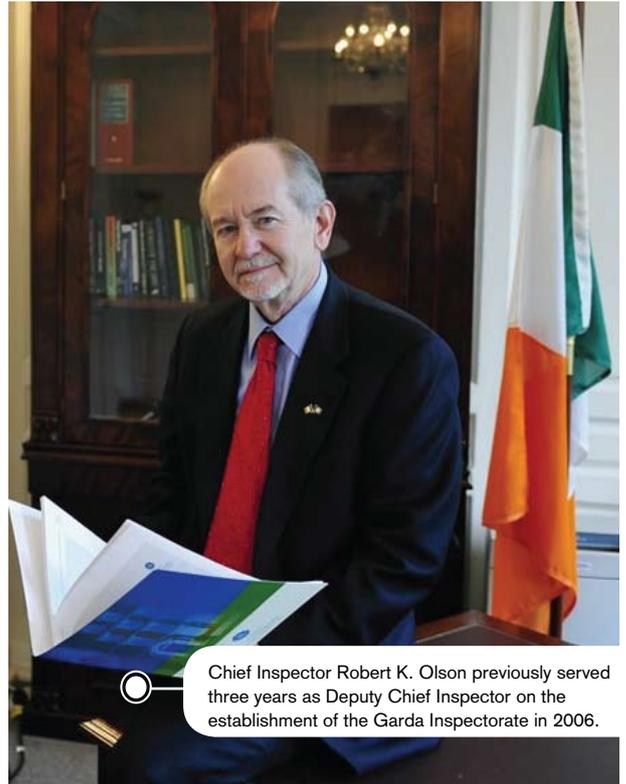
He has also served on numerous advisory boards at all levels of government, including an advisory committee to the FBI Director and newly appointed Homeland Security Secretary after 9/11. He has also been an adjunct instructor at three

universities and co-author of a book on community policing.

Chief Olson is a graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Criminal Justice.

He is a graduate of the FBI's National Executive Institute (Session XI) and the Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police (Session IV).

On his appointment as Chief Inspector,



Chief Inspector Robert K. Olson previously served three years as Deputy Chief Inspector on the establishment of the Garda Inspectorate in 2006.



"To understand the many challenges facing the Irish police force" Mark Toland said he has visited over 30 Garda stations and other specialist units since his appointment Deputy Chief Inspector.

Robert K. Olson said: "Having worked as a Deputy Chief Inspector from the establishment of the Inspectorate in 2006 to 2009, I gained a deep understanding of policing in Ireland and was privileged to work with so many dedicated police professionals all across the island.

"I am excited about returning to Ireland as the new Chief Inspector of this important body and working to provide a strong professional voice to Irish policing."

**PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS**

New Deputy Chief Inspectors and support staff were also appointed. The two Deputy Chief Inspectors Mark Toland and Heather Baily arrived at the Garda Inspectorate's office at No. 80 Stephen's Green in June and September 2012 respectively.

Mark Toland joined the London Metropolitan Police Service in 1980, serving nine years as a frontline officer and 11 years as a sergeant and inspector. For two years he was responsible for training all new student officers and managed in excess of 4,000 new members.

As a Chief Superintendent he led three busy, diverse and challenging London boroughs.

Whilst at Brent in North West London he ran a number of major undercover operations to tackle organised gangs, involved in shootings and drug dealing. In addition, he had responsibility for security and policing of major events at Wembley Stadium, Lords Cricket Ground and Twickenham Rugby Stadium.

He has lived in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork since 2009. He is dedicated to working constructively with An Garda Síochána and to offering practical solutions to the many challenges facing the force.

To understand the many challenges facing the Irish police force, Toland told 'Emergency Services Ireland' that he has visited over 30 Garda stations and other specialist units since his appointment.

"I've spent time with a large number of people performing a wide variety of roles. I have attended parades, gone out on patrol and spoken to lots of members and support staff."

He said he has met "some very hardworking and inspiring people who are trying to do their very best during some very difficult times".

**CONTINUED COMMITMENT**

Meanwhile, Heather Baily joined the London Metropolitan Police Service in

1979 and served in a variety of uniform and detective posts up to the rank of Detective Superintendent.

In 2003, she took up the role of Borough Commander for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and was the local Ground Commander in July 2005 for the terrorist attack at Shepherd's Bush Railway Station.

Baily was appointed Assistant Chief Constable with Hertfordshire Constabulary in July 2007, taking over the role of Deputy Chief Constable on a temporary basis in 2010 and was promoted substantively into the post in January 2011.

She led a significant corporate change programme which included collaboration with other forces.

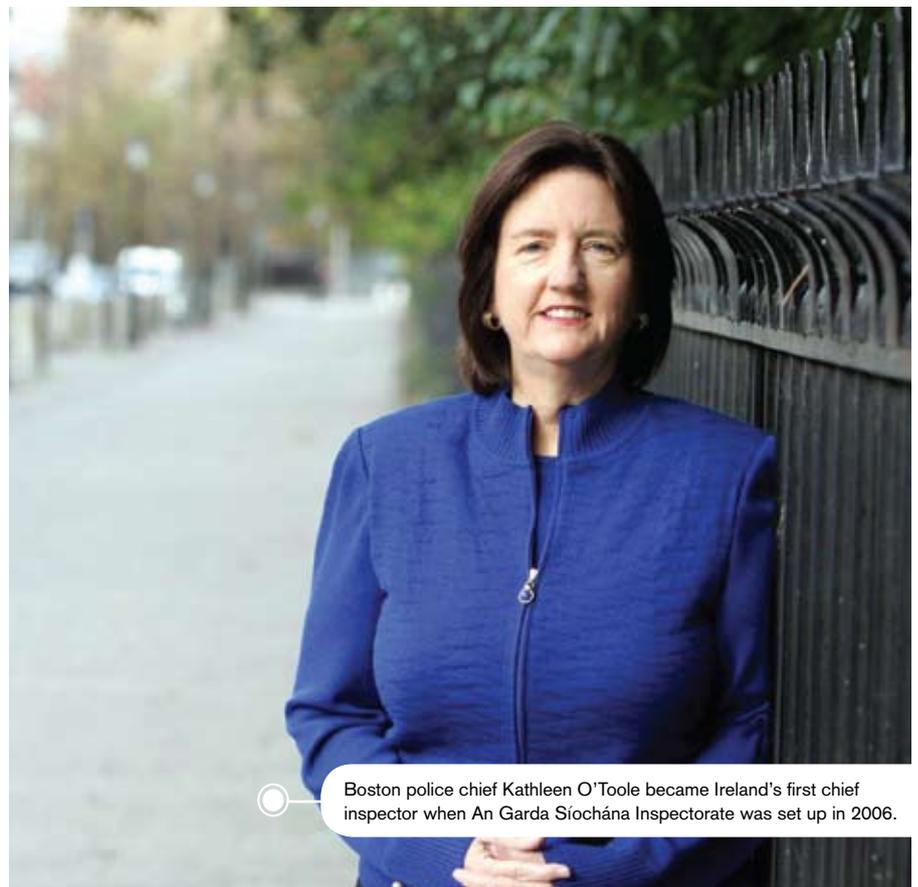
Now living in Ireland, through her work

Deputy Chief Inspector Heather Baily said she will "support colleagues within An Garda Síochána as they face increasing financial constraints".



supporting colleagues within An Garda Síochána, she said that she intends to continue her commitment to providing the best possible policing service to communities, particularly in respect of the needs of victims and witnesses.

"I have been committed to providing



Boston police chief Kathleen O'Toole became Ireland's first chief inspector when An Garda Síochána Inspectorate was set up in 2006.

the best possible policing service to communities for my entire policing career, particularly in respect of the needs of victims and witnesses,” Baily told ‘Emergency Services Ireland’.

“Now that I am living in Ireland, it is a privilege to be able to continue that role here and to support colleagues within An Garda Síochána as they face increasing financial constraints.”

To understand the many challenges facing the Irish police, both Mark Tolan and Heather Baily have been busy familiarising themselves with the current Irish policing environment.

They have visited all 28 operational divisions, over 40 Garda stations and other specialist units, in addition to attending parades, accompanying members on patrol and speaking to members and support staff.

**PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Previous Garda Inspectorate reports have been submitted to the Minister on topics such as senior management structures in the Garda Síochána, barricade incidents, roads policing, missing persons, resource allocation and child sexual abuse.

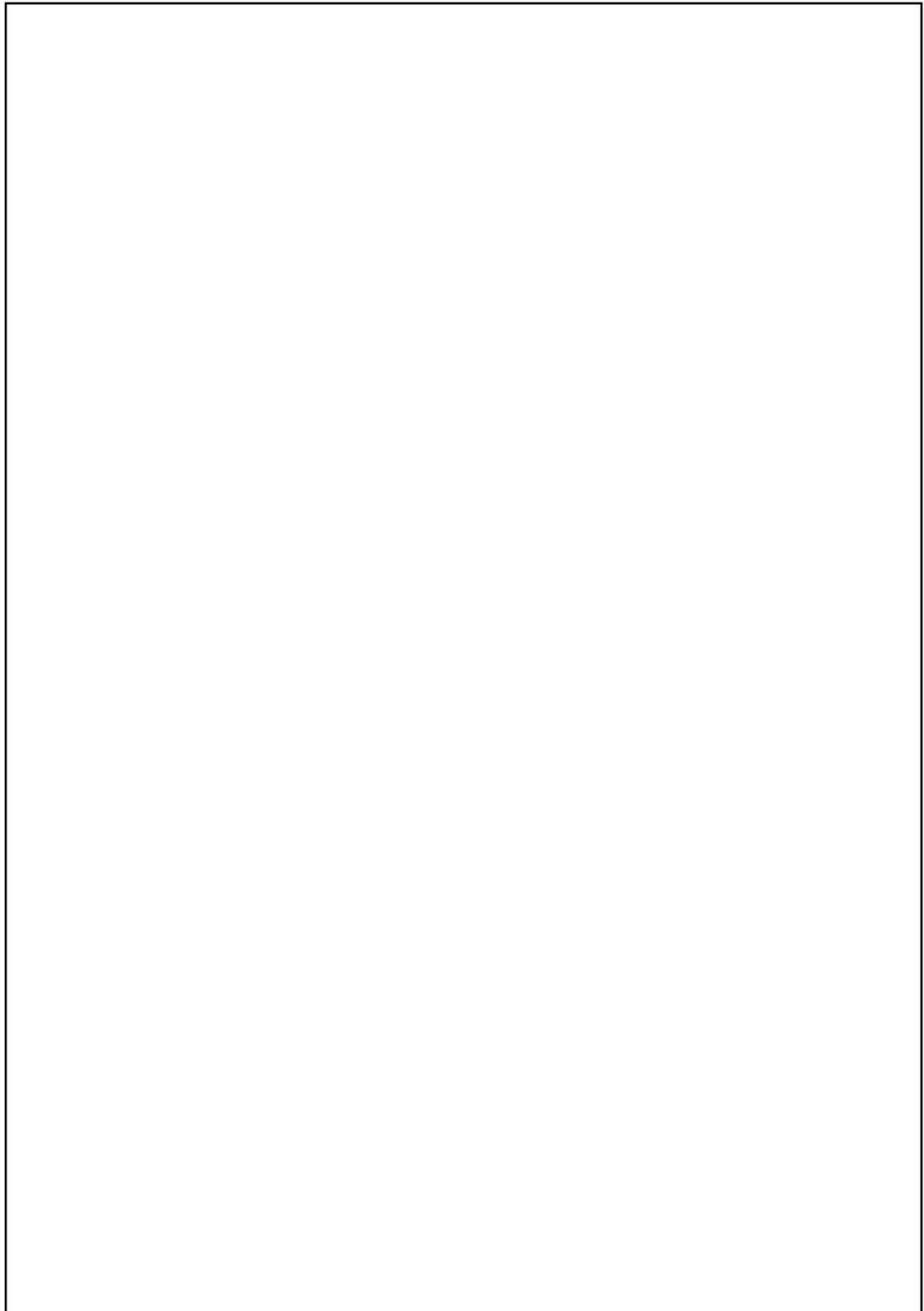
The reports contain a total of 244 recommendations which are at various stages of implementation and the most progress is being made in implementing the earlier reports.

In conclusion, the Inspectorate Team said it looks forward to meeting and working with members of An

Garda Síochána.

The team hopes to contribute positively by making meaningful professional recommendations that will enhance the working environment of the membership and the overall efficiency and effectiveness

of the force, especially during these times of ever diminishing resources. Further details of the Garda Inspectorate’s work, published reports and of the status on implementation of recommendations can be found at [www.gsinsp.ie](http://www.gsinsp.ie)



# MESSAGE OF HOPE IN A BOX FOR KENYA

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION GORTA IS TO PROVIDE SELF-SUSTAINING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TO KENYA, WITH THE LAUNCH OF 'FACTORY IN A BOX', A NEW SYSTEM DEVELOPED BY ZIMBABWEAN AND IRISH RESIDENT WAYNE DEEGAN. REPORT BY LINDA DALY.

**T**he box in question refers to all of the items that fit into a 20ft container. Inside that container is a collection of typical factory tools and materials such as machines, samples, jigs, fixtures and product designs.

"The factory can be producing goods within 24 hours of being unpacked and could pay for itself within a year," says Deegan.

The 'factory' will enable the recipients to produce shelters, steel furniture, medical and mobility aids. The materials inside have been equipped with exact instructions and marked for measurements. In the future, new products can be devised and tailored in conjunction with the demands of the local market.

"If someone's illiterate or struggles to measure tape, he or she doesn't have to read, they can follow the drawings. It's all self-explanatory because the steel is colour coded," says Deegan. "You can educate and train people in a vocation at the same time. They're making something that's of use, and you could also create employment for 30 to 40 people," he adds.

## DRAGON CONTACTS

An engineer by profession, Deegan created the system when he found himself redundant from the construction sector. A neighbour of his worked with former Dragon's Den Bobby Kerr, and Deegan approached Kerr with the idea. The entrepreneur was bowled over with its ingenuity and contacted Gorta's former CEO Brian Hanratty, with whom he had worked before.

Tom Kirley, Gorta's acting CEO, says the system was an ideal fit for Gorta, and recalls their trip to Kenya in April to do a review of some of Gorta's programmes. "We visited an agricultural college – Baraka College – which had been supported for a long time by various Irish aid agencies.



Pictured in Dublin Port (l-r): Wayne Deegan, inventor of the 'Factory in a Box' product, Irish entrepreneur Bobby Kerr and Aisling O'Broin, Gorta programme manager.

There was no furniture in the classroom. In fact, we noticed that furniture seemed to be a bit of an issue around schools and colleges.

The system goes the Gorta-funded agricultural college, and will be used by both students and employees of Baraka College. The students will use it to train in a craft, while the employees will make various products and to sell on, helping to generate an income.

Kirley says the agricultural training element complements Gorta's programmes in east Africa. "It is our fundamental belief that investment in vocational training provides a long-term, sustainable solution to the food security challenges that African communities face."

## FUTURE INVESTMENT

For Deegan the creation of Factory in a Box – the name of which was thought up by Kerr – came from a desire to design an income-generating project that would produce practical goods.

"Something like the Factory in a Box creates a social enterprise in Kenya, and

means NGOs aren't just giving hand outs. Social enterprise is key. There are many misperceptions about the developing world, among them is that they can't do anything for themselves. A project like this empowers people," says Deegan.

Kirley says Deegan's enthusiasm is infectious. "His can-do attitude and his enthusiasm is amazing. It's a good Irish idea, and is really well thought out. It will help people acquire vocational skills as part of a training exercise. It's a workshop that could provide significant employment between making the items and selling them," he says.

Gorta has invested in the region of €20,000 in the pilot scheme. Deegan will fly out to Kenya to help with logistical issues when the container arrives there. Kirley says Gorta will monitor the project to see how well it goes and how effective it is. "We're looking at other projects and will consider incorporating this idea into them," he adds.

For further information on 'Factory in a Box' visit [www.aprotech.com](http://www.aprotech.com).



# TRALEE TO TOAST EMERGENCY RESPONSE HEROES

FIRE, POLICE AND COASTGUARD SERVICES PERSONNEL FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE BEING INVITED TO TRALEE, CO. KERRY DURING 'HEROES WEEK' FROM 12-17 JUNE, FOR WHAT THE ORGANISERS ARE PROMISING WILL BE A MAJOR FESTIVAL IN THE KINGDOM TOWN.

The main aim of the not-for-profit event in June, which will form part of the national series of events taking place during The Gathering 2013, is to raise money to fund the local organisations whose primary objective is to save and protect lives.

Heroes throughout North America, Britain and Europe, especially those with a connection to Ireland, are invited to the Kingdom for a celebration of their bravery.

Vincent Hussey, Kerry's Chief Fire Officer, said: "It's all part of the National Gathering Ireland 2013 programme whereby people with direct or ancestral links to Ireland and their friends are being invited back to the Emerald Isle for a celebration of their heritage.

"While it will have a specific appeal to those who work in the emergency response services, it is open to everyone and a great time will be had by all."

## FINDING IRISH ROOTS

The emphasis of Heroes Week will be on experiencing the best of Kerry hospitality, its magnificent scenery, culture, heritage and outdoor activities in the company of colleagues from around the world. There will be an opportunity for those who wish to explore their Irish roots to do so with

trained genealogists.

The Mayor of Kerry, Cllr Terry O'Brien, said: "We salute the men and women who go to work each day with only one purpose in mind – to protect and save lives. Many of them have Irish roots and we want to invite them home.

"Kerry has a strong tradition of volunteerism and a collective pride-of-place that will see us roll-out the red carpet to welcome home our heroes to the Kingdom County. I hope you can join us and we assure you of a memorable visit with us and a warm Irish welcome."

## PACKED PROGRAMME

The five-day programme is packed with activities and competitions between the various services. Event highlights will

include the Heroes Gala Ball and the Parade of Heroes through the streets of Tralee led by marching bands from far and wide.

Tralee is one of the most accessible places in Ireland with three international airports within easy reach and a mainline rail and bus destination station in the town centre.

Emergency response personnel from across the USA, Canada, Britain and Europe are invited to secure an accommodation package that will include airport transfers, tours, events, meals and accommodation for approximately €600 (£500/\$800) per person sharing.

For further information and online bookings visit [www.heroesweek2013.com](http://www.heroesweek2013.com)



Members of the Kerry County Fire & Rescue Service, Red Cross, Irish Coast Guard and An Garda Síochána pictured at Tralee Fire Station in December 2012, to discuss plans for 'Heroes Week'. (Pic courtesy of Domnick Walsh/Eye Focus LTD ©)

# NORTHERN IRELAND IS ON TRACK FOR WORLD GAMES

BELFAST AND NORTHERN IRELAND IS ON SCHEDULE TO DELIVER ONE OF THE BEST WORLD POLICE AND FIRE GAMES EVER, ACCORDING TO MIKE GRAHAM, PRESIDENT OF THE WPFGE FEDERATION, DURING HIS VISIT FROM SAN DIEGO TO CHECK ON PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR THE 10-DAY EVENT IN AUGUST.

**W**ith the 2013 World Police and Fire Games (WPFGE) due to kick off on 1 August, athlete registrations stand at over 5,800 with 50 countries represented. The volunteer recruitment campaign surpassed all expectations with 6,400 registrations against the initial 3,500 target.

Congratulating the 2013 WPFGE team on its achievements, during his visit to Belfast from San Diego, WPFGE Federation President Mike Graham said: "The Federation is delighted with the progress made by 2013 WPFGE Ltd to deliver everything it required and more.

"Belfast and Northern Ireland are very worthy hosts given the excellent sports venues, leisure and tourism opportunities, infrastructure, quality accommodation and most of all the genuine passion and enthusiasm of the delivery team and the local people."

The Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Carál Ní Chuilín said: "The opportunity to host the Games provides all of us with a unique platform to demonstrate that we are capable of hosting major events. So much hard work has gone into preparations so far."

She said she has asked her officials to co-ordinate a complementary cultural programme of festival and cultural events to ensure visitors and local people enjoy a rich and memorable experience in Belfast this summer.



Fire officer Sam Irwin gets in some practice for this year's World Police and Fire Games watched by Sports Minister Carál Ní Chuilín, WPFGE Federation President Mike Graham, 2013 WPFGE Patron Dame Mary Peters and Judith Gillespie, 2013 WPFGE Board Chairman.

"There is no doubt that Belfast and the entire North of Ireland is ready to give a warm welcome to all visitors and ensure that the 2013 World Police and Fire Games will be the friendliest one ever."

#### KEY MILESTONES

**Registration:** As of 27 March, 3,406 athletes registered with another 2,417 in the pipeline. (Pipeline registrations are team members whose captains have already registered). Total 5,823 against a target of 10,000; 50 countries are represented with 38% of those registered coming from USA, Canada and Australia.

**Volunteers:** The recruitment campaign targeted 3,500 volunteers and over 6,400 registered. With the four-week programme of interviews now complete,

the process moves to assignment of roles.

**Venues:** Belfast City Council is well advanced with preparations for the content of the opening ceremony at The King's Hall on 1 August, which will include the athletes' parade.

Titanic Slipways will host the closing ceremony on 10 August 2013 when the WPFGE flag is handed over to 2015 hosts Fairfax.

All 42 sporting venues are confirmed including the new £38 million Bangor Aurora Aquatics and Leisure Centre with 50 metre pool and the newly refurbished eight-lane international Mary Peters Track.

**Sponsorship:** The current total stands at £1.5 million, which includes eight platinum sponsors – Food NI; Translink;

**SCHOOLS' ROADSHOW IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN**

The 'Get Ready for Eddie' Roadshow along with Sport Northern Ireland's unique Activ8 low ropes course is visiting primary schools until the end of June to promote the World Police and Fire Games special Schools' Programme and to highlight the importance of sport.

The programme has been designed as a free resource for every school in Northern Ireland with an Irish language version also available.

John Tully, WPFPG Chief Executive, said that schools are being asked to 'buddy up' with visiting teams. "Through the provision of information technology in classrooms, it will be possible for schools to video conference and communicate electronically with their partnered teams from around the world.

"It is our goal that pupils will not only be enthused to actively experience the events but that in the long term the Games will have increased mutual respect and understanding of young people towards the emergency services."

Danny O'Connor, board member of Sport Northern Ireland, said, "The Sport Northern Ireland Activ8 Challenge



Olivia McCaffrey, Rory Thompson and Jordan Gilliland, pupils at Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, 'Get Ready For Eddie' at the first Schools' Roadshow. Also pictured are Alan Hamill, NIFRS Group Commander, and Sports Minister Carál Ni Chuilín.

has been visiting primary schools and sporting locations throughout the year.

"Inspired by the London 2012 Games, Sport Northern Ireland's Activ8 programme encourages children and young people to do 60 minutes of physical activity every day and to eat a balanced diet, and uses eight simple steps to stay active and keep healthy."

Fujitsu; Kukri; Diageo; Coca Cola Hellenic Bottling Ltd; Dankse Bank; Deloitte.

**Schools Programme:** The WPFPG Schools' Programme has been launched as a free resource for every school in Northern Ireland. A 'Get Ready for Eddie' Roadshow supported by Sport NI is visiting schools to promote the programme and highlight the importance of sport.

**Charities:** 2013 WPFPG has selected three official charity partners – Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children (NICFC), Special Educational Needs Advice Centre (SENAC) and SOS Bus NI.

**POSITIVE MARKETING**

John Tully, chief executive 2013 WPFPG, said they are delighted with the milestones already achieved and are concentrating on maintaining that momentum in order to maximise registration and visitor numbers.

"It is our goal to create the friendliest Games ever and alongside DCAL, BVCB, Northern Ireland Tourism Board and Tourism Ireland we are steadfastly focused on positively marketing the Games and Northern Ireland as far and wide as possible," he concluded.



- The World Police and Fire Games is a biennial event for members of the police, fire, customs and prison services, in addition to some smaller enforcement agencies.
- There will be 57 sports held at 42 venues across Northern Ireland.
- WPFPG is the third largest international multi-sport event in the world.
- The mission of the World Police and Fire Games (WPFPG) Federation is to create community interaction with the emergency services, educate children on the benefits of sport, and develop camaraderie between emergency services from around the world.

For further information visit [www.2013wpfg.com](http://www.2013wpfg.com); [www.twitter.com/2013wpfg](http://www.twitter.com/2013wpfg) or [www.facebook.com/2013wpfg](http://www.facebook.com/2013wpfg)

# CLOSING THE GAP ON ROAD DEATHS IN IRELAND

A NEW SEVEN-YEAR ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY HAS BEEN ROLLED OUT TO MAKE IRELAND ONE OF THE SAFEST COUNTRIES IN THE EU, AND WILL ALSO FOCUS ON MEASURES TO CURB THE NUMBER AND SEVERITY OF SERIOUS INJURIES ARISING FROM ROAD COLLISIONS.

A specific target for 2020 to reduce the number of road deaths in Ireland to 124 a year (from 162 in 2012) and serious injuries to 330 per year (from 485 in 2012) was announced at a recent conference in Dublin.

National and international delegates at the Road Transport Safety Conference on Serious Injuries in Dublin Castle heard that this drop is necessary to close the gap between Ireland and other best performing countries such as the UK, Netherlands, Sweden and Australia.

During his opening address, Siim Kallas, Vice President of the European Commission, referenced the need to focus on serious injuries: "2012 saw the lowest ever number of people killed in road traffic in the EU. This is a hugely encouraging result. However, it is now time to focus also on the serious road traffic injuries."

He noted that major progress was made when a common EU definition of serious road traffic injury was identified.

"I expect member states to be able to report data for 2014 on the basis of this new definition. With comparable and reliable statistics, the EU can design more effective measures to reduce the number of serious injury collisions," said Kallas.

## OUTPERFORMING EU AVERAGE

Speaking at the event, organised by the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport and the Road Safety Authority (RSA) as part of Ireland's Presidency of the EU, Minister Leo Varadkar said: "This is a significant day for road safety as we launch the new Government Road Safety Strategy. Ireland has made huge advances, and was the fifth safest country



Minister Leo Varadkar said that Ireland outperformed the EU average in reducing road fatalities by 12 per cent in 2012.



Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan pictured with RSA chairman Gay Byrne at the conference.

in the EU in 2011.”

On launching the new seven-year strategy – Closing the Gap – at the conference, the Minister said that Ireland outperformed the EU average in reducing road fatalities by 12 per cent in 2012.

“The RSA is responsible for the overall implementation of the strategy and will report to me annually on implementation. We now want to make Ireland one of the safest countries in the EU in terms of road deaths, if not the world.

“However, the number of road fatalities since the beginning of this year is a stark reminder to us all that we cannot become complacent where road safety is concerned. The fatalities have increased on the same period in 2012 and, while it is too early to try to identify patterns, it does serve to demonstrate that we must continue to be vigilant when using the roads.”

He highlighted the need to step up good behaviour as drivers, to continue enforcement and educating drivers and reminding the public of their responsibilities as road users and the human cost of road traffic collisions.

“Any progress made over the last decade can be erased very quickly,” Minister Varadkar said.

#### ‘SAFE SYSTEMS’ APPROACH

The new strategy will be based on a ‘Safe Systems’ approach to road safety – an OECD standard which aims to minimise road accidents in terms of fatalities or injury. The strategy includes 144 specific actions to reduce road fatalities and the State body responsible for implementing each of the actions will be identified.

There will be a particular focus on areas of low compliance and vulnerable road users, along with a greater focus on education and public awareness. Enforcement will continue to target speeding, alcohol and drugs, helmets, belts, and mobiles.

Overall, the new strategy sets out to reduce road deaths in Ireland to 25 per million population or fewer (124 road deaths per year) and to reduce serious injuries to 61 per million population or fewer (330 per year) by 2020.

#### ENFORCEMENT IS CRITICAL

Over 300 conference delegates heard from international, EU and national experts on the topic of serious injuries from a

#### SEVEN-YEAR STRATEGY SIGNALS KEY SAFETY MEASURES

- *Rehabilitative/driving awareness courses for repeat offenders will be considered, along with the feasibility of alcolocks to immobilise vehicles;*
- *Consideration will be given to extending the safety camera network to offences other than speeding;*
- *Measures to combat car clocking will be considered;*
- *Employers will be encouraged to implement a handbrake lock for phone use by professional drivers;*
- *In-vehicle devices which sense tiredness will be encouraged;*
- *Regular audits of road markings, safety blackspots and signage will be recommended;*
- *Fixed charge notices for cyclists will be considered;*
- *The RSA will have more frequent access to PULSE data in order to spot trends;*
- *At least five new service areas on motorways will be built to combat tiredness;*
- *Legislation will be tightened to prevent the reintroduction of written-off vehicles;*
- *Breakdown kits for cars will be made compulsory;*
- *Rectification notices will be applied to common minor faults.*



research, medical and enforcement perspective. Delegates also heard from road collision survivor Siobhán O'Brien who suffered serious, life-changing injuries following a collision in 2001.

Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan said that during the period of the last strategy, the people of Ireland showed what can be achieved when a concerted effort is made to improve their behaviour on the roads.

“Enforcement of road traffic laws will continue to play a critical role in the new strategy as An Garda Síochána seeks

to ensure that fewer lives are lost and serious injuries sustained as a result of preventable tragedies.”

#### CHANGING PUBLIC ATTITUDE

Gay Byrne, chairman of the Road Safety Authority (RSA) said: “One of the most successful aspects of the last Road Safety Strategy was the marked change in public attitudes towards road safety, brought about by the co-ordinated efforts of road safety stakeholders.”

He added that if this new strategy was applied with as much spirit and stamina



Road collision survivor Siobhán O'Brien who suffered serious, life-changing injuries following a collision in 2001, addressed the conference.

as has been brought to bear over the past few years, the benefits for Ireland will be far-reaching.

"It is not just the road-builders, the educators, the enforcers and the other specialists who shoulder the responsibility for making our roads safer each day. It is every man, woman and child on every highway and byway, on four wheels, on two wheels, on 16 wheels, on foot. This strategy is ambitious and it will require a significant, co-ordinated and consistent effort by government, stakeholders and the public," noted Byrne.

#### BEST PRACTICE COUNTRIES

The 'Safe Systems' approach was developed in the Netherlands in the 1990s and has since been applied in best practice countries such as Sweden, Norway and Australia. The 'Safe Systems' approach to road safety builds on existing road safety interventions by adopting a holistic approach to reducing deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

The approach focuses on road safety as a responsibility shared and managed by everyone, from national and local government, private business and the road-users, working together national, regional, local and community level, to develop effective and innovative road safety initiatives and interventions.

#### GARDAI GET NEW POWERS TO CHECK MOTORISTS' PHONES

*A new clampdown on phone use among drivers is a key measure in the Government's new seven-year road safety strategy. This will allow Gardai to check the phone records of motorists involved in crashes, to see if they used a mobile phone at the time of the incident.*

- Some of the key measures including the following:
- Putting an onus on motorists to ensure their vehicles have undergone NCT or road-worthiness tests before they can secure motor tax.
- Clampdown on drivers suffering from a serious illness, ensuring that they have permission from their doctor to drive.
- Making it obligatory to keep a first-aid kit in a vehicle.
- Setting a target for the rollout of US-style roadside sobriety checks to test for drug use.
- More speed-calming measures to protect vulnerable road users, such as the elderly, children and cyclists.
- Greater promotion of safe cycling to increase the numbers cycling to and from work and school.
- Outlining a new policy on speed limits across road categories.
- Setting out serious injuries statistics in the ongoing daily toll of casualties.



# DRIVING DOWN SERIOUS ROAD INJURIES ACROSS EUROPE

NOW RANKED AMONGST THE TOP FIVE SAFEST EU COUNTRIES FOR FATAL COLLISIONS, IRELAND HAS BEEN URGED TO LEAD THE WAY IN DRIVING DOWN SERIOUS INJURIES BY EU TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER VICE PRESIDENT SIIM KALLAS, DURING HIS ADDRESS AT THE ROAD TRANSPORT SAFETY CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN.

For every death on Europe's roads there are ten serious injuries such as damage to the brain or spinal cord. Quite apart from the human tragedy of road accidents, the economic cost to society is estimated at €250 billion.

The next major battle is to drive down the unacceptably high numbers of serious road injuries. We need Ireland, and other EU countries who are leaders in road safety, to play a pioneering role in this area.

Road deaths in Ireland have fallen by 12 per cent a year for two years in a row, which is significantly higher than the EU average. Since 2011, Ireland ranks among the top five EU countries, which reported the lowest number of road deaths last year.

'Europe's Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020' sets out a comprehensive mix of initiatives targeting driver behaviour, car design and infrastructure. It aims to halve the number of road deaths by 2020. The EU strategy is delivering impressive results.

The latest figures showed a nine per cent decrease in road deaths last year, compared to 2011. This represents the lowest number of EU road deaths recorded since the start of data collections in the 1960s.

## FOCUSED STRATEGY MISSING

Currently however, there is no EU-wide target, or focused strategy, for the reduction of serious injuries. Only a few



EU Transport Commissioner Vice President Siim Kallas opened the road transport safety conference in Dublin Castle.

EU countries such as Austria and the Netherlands have specific serious injury targets in place.

Current estimates indicate that every year 250,000 people are seriously injured in road accidents in the EU – compared to 28,000 road fatalities in 2012. For every death on Europe's roads there are 10 serious injuries and 40 slight injuries.

While the number of EU road deaths decreased by 43 per cent during the last decade, the number of seriously injured people decreased by only 36 per cent. The most common serious road injuries are head and brain injuries, followed by injuries to the legs and spine.

Vulnerable road users, for example

pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists or users in certain age groups – notably the elderly – are especially affected by serious road injuries. Serious road traffic injuries more often occur in urban areas than on rural roads.

## SERIOUS INJURIES TARGET

The European Commission's document on serious road traffic injuries outlined the next steps towards a comprehensive EU strategy on serious road injuries. It included agreement on a common EU-wide definition of serious road traffic injury, as well as a way forward for member states to improve data collection on serious road accidents. The aim is to adopt an EU-level

target for the reduction of serious road traffic injuries (for the period 2015-2020).

The measures proposed by the European Commission on serious road injuries will be discussed by EU Transport Ministers at the next Council meeting in Brussels in June 2013.

Europe's roads have become considerably safer during the last decade: between 2001 and 2011, with road deaths falling by 43 per cent.

This is the result of several elements in the EU's road safety policy: for example, work on national and cross-border enforcement, deployment of vehicle safety devices and tougher rules on vehicle testing, particularly for motorcycles.

#### MOVING TO 'VISION ZERO'

There is a need to move towards the 'vision zero' for road fatalities by 2050 and to halve the number of road casualties by 2020.

Estimates for the same 10-year period show the number of injured people decreased by 26 per cent with serious injuries down by almost 36 per cent.

Estimates for 2010 show almost 1.5 million people were injured in traffic accidents, and about 250,000 of these were serious, compared with 28,000 road fatalities reported in the EU for 2012.

Injuries are often overlooked and are now a major health problem. For every person killed in a road accident, there are an estimated four life-long disabled, 10 serious injuries and 40 slight injuries.

The most common serious injuries are to the head and brain, then legs and spine. Many of those injured become permanently disabled. The socio-economic costs are very high – and not just the pain and suffering endured by crash victims.

If you add up the expense of medical treatment and of losing members of the workforce, and the extra financial burden placed on insurance, legal and social support systems, the EU's road injuries give rise to a combined annual bill of around two per cent of GDP. For 2012, that would be about €250 billion.

Most fatal accidents occur outside urban areas. But nearly 70 per cent of slight injuries and more than half the number of serious injuries happen inside



In most EU countries, it is not the job of the police to carry out a full medical assessment at every accident scene.

built-up areas, rather than on rural roads.

#### COMMON DEFINITIONS NEEDED

It is difficult, if not impossible, to compare data across Europe. National figures vary widely. Europe needs some common definitions of road injuries. Our overall aim is to reduce the total number of road accidents – to prevent both deaths and injuries – and at least reduce the severity of accidents.

The European Commission's action plan proposes three main elements:

- A common definition of serious injury;
- An EU-wide target for reducing serious injuries, to complement the existing one for reducing fatalities;
- Improving national data collection on serious accidents.

Some EU countries use medical classifications; others use the long-term effects of the injury, or perhaps other criteria, such as the length of hospitalisation needed or the extent of trauma suffered. These differences mean we cannot compare national data compiled by member states. Neither can we really understand the extent and nature of the problem.

Common EU definitions are a precondition for pinpointing ways to improve prevention of injuries and reduce their rate and severity. They will also help to set European and national reduction targets.

#### MONITORING TRENDS

By 2014, all countries should be able to collect comparable, reliable and relevant

data using the common definition of serious injury. The Commission is ready to help with any changes that may be needed.

This will become the baseline year for monitoring trends and improvements, allowing an EU-wide reduction target to be set up to 2020. This target should be similar to the one that the EU already has for reducing road fatalities. A key element of the Commission's action plan is to create a better, more systematic and uniform collection of in-depth accident data.

In most EU countries, national road traffic injury figures are only based on police reports. It is not the job of the police to carry out a full medical assessment at every accident scene.

#### UNDER-REPORTING

This means not all accidents are filed and many non-fatal injuries are not reported. But if the relevant parts of the police and hospital statistics are linked for each accident, a more complete picture emerges.

This is the ideal solution to the problem, and substantially reduces the risk of underreporting and misreporting.

However, member states can continue using the police accident reports but must apply a national correction co-efficient to get a true estimate of numbers. Although numbers still vary a great deal around Europe, member states have been working hard to improve road safety.

It is now time to do the same to reduce the amount of injuries, whether serious or slight, to make Europe's roads a safer place to travel, for everyone.

The emphasis in a modern emergency service is on highly trained health professionals that can perform life-saving interventions at the scene of an emergency.



# MOVES TO MODERNISE AMBULANCE SERVICE IN WEST CORK

PLANS TO MODERNISE THE AMBULANCE SERVICE OPERATIONS IN WEST CORK HAVE BEEN OUTLINED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE HSE NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE AND SENIOR HSE MANAGEMENT TO GPs, PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS IN THE REGION.

In all discussions relating to West Cork, the HSE and National Ambulance Service (NAS) management were cognisant of finding a service model to best suit the area's remote geographical location.

A briefing followed in the footsteps of discussions between NAS staff, management and SIPTU union representatives on a model of service for West Cork.

The proposed model of service follows an analysis of the needs of the West Cork area and the best use of available resources, including paramedics and advanced paramedics. The plan follows a consultation process that has taken place with a wide range of interested groups such as GPs, local public representatives and community groups.

The West Cork area will be strategically supported by Cork city resources, in addition to resources redeployed from South Kerry, given that traditional boundaries will now be eliminated, emergency resources will be

moved to support surges in demand in any area.

A further development is the availability of an emergency aeromedical service. Paramedics will have access to air support from the Air Corps, in clinically defined circumstances, for example a patient requiring specialist intervention within a specific timeframe.

Ground emergency ambulances and helicopters will be able to meet up at pre-designated landing zones around the West Cork region to transfer these patients to Cork University Hospital or Kerry General Hospital.

The new model of service being implemented in West Cork has been informed by the modernisation developments that have already taken place in East and North Cork.

## WORLD CLASS POTENTIAL

Robert Morton, NAS Director and practicing advanced paramedic, said the HSE is confident that the modernisation of the National Ambulance Service in Cork

and Kerry has the potential to provide a world class pre-hospital emergency care service to the people of the area.

"People in West Cork will now have access to an 'on duty' service 24/7 with the appropriate personnel and fleet to best match this model of service."

Morton added that the intermediate



Robert Morton, Director of the National Ambulance Service, said the HSE is confident that the modernisation of the service has the potential to provide a world class pre-hospital emergency care service.

care vehicles focus on the routine patient transfer work that previously used up to 30 per cent of emergency ambulance time / workload.

“In particular, the additional emergency ambulance capacity that has been freed up by the introduction of the new intermediate care vehicles provides further resources to improve our pre-hospital emergency care services to our patients.

“The emergency aeromedical service will also make a positive contribution to patients in West Cork requiring transportation to Cork University Hospital or Kerry General Hospital. We are confident that this emergency service will benefit specific patients such as those suffering heart attacks.”

**LIFE-SAVING INTERVENTIONS**

Dr Cathal O'Donnell, medical director of the National Ambulance Service and consultant in emergency medicine at the Mid-Western Regional Hospital, said: “The emphasis in a modern emergency service is on highly trained health professionals that can perform life-saving interventions at the scene of an emergency.

“The National Ambulance Service has invested significantly in recent years in training ambulance staff to very high standards in both paramedic and advanced paramedic training.”

Dr O'Donnell added that both paramedics and advanced paramedics can provide a very high level of medical assessment and medical treatment, in many cases potentially life-saving treatment.

“The elimination of ‘on-call’ in the region now sees the availability of emergency resources in the entire Cork area, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, ensuring people have equal and timely access to highly skilled paramedic and advanced paramedic staff day or night.”

**BROADER CHANGES**

The elimination of ‘on call’ work practice is a key element of a broader range of changes planned across the entire country including Cork and Kerry.

Phase 1 of this element of the plan focussed on the elimination of ‘on-call’ for ambulance crews in East Cork; Youghal, Middleton and Fermoy Stations, Monday to Thursday, between 8pm and 8am.

Phase 2 focussed on the elimination of ‘on-call’ for ambulance crews in North Cork; Mallow, Millstreet, Kanturk and

**PROPOSED MODEL OF SERVICE FOR WEST CORK**

*The proposed model is extremely detailed and aims to provide benefits ultimately agreed by HSE management, union representatives and staff :*

- *The elimination of the current ‘on call’ work practice to an ‘on duty’ work practice which will bring NAS operations in West Cork in line with the majority of the rest of the country.*
- *Deployment of a fleet of emergency vehicles and paramedics (emergency ambulances, rapid response vehicles, paramedics and advanced paramedics) that will best serve the people of West Cork.*
- *Routine transfer of patients between West Cork and city-based hospitals in ‘intermediate care vehicles’ thereby freeing up emergency ambulances for emergency calls.*



Macroom, Monday to Thursday, between 8pm and 8am. Both of these phases are now complete.

The ‘on call’ system sees crews available for work from their own homes not working unless called in, predominantly for 999 emergency calls. The activation time from home to the ambulance station is, on average across all rural stations, 21 minutes. The new system will see the elimination of ‘on-call’ with paramedics and advanced paramedics moving to a new work practice where they are rostered ‘on duty’ 24/7, 365 days a year.

The ‘on duty’ resource will include a mix of emergency ambulances and rapid response vehicles which will be strategically located where most likely to be required.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

A significant factor in the broader reconfiguration plans is HIQA's

new performance standards, based on international evidence and experience, for life-threatening and potentially life-threatening emergency calls.

‘Life-threatening’ emergency calls



account for less than two per cent of all 999 calls while "potentially life-threatening" emergency calls account for approximately 37 per cent of all 999 calls.

Approximately 60 per cent of all 999 calls made to the NAS are neither life threatening nor potentially life threatening, while 10 per cent of all 999 calls to the NAS are inappropriate for an emergency ambulance.

These statistics are consistent with international experience.

The new standards require a first responder to be on the scene at a life-threatening or potentially life-threatening emergency within eight minutes in 75 per cent of cases.

Meanwhile, a vehicle should be on scene to a life-threatening and potentially life threatening emergency within 19 minutes in 80 per cent of cases. In the context of these new standards, it appears that the 'on call' system of working is no longer fit for purpose.

**CONSULTATION PROCESS**

The introduction of the new system requires the full co-operation of all staff. The HSE has completed a consultation process with staff at each ambulance station in West Cork on the proposals in relation to the elimination of 'on call' and other associated changes.

HSE South

management and the NAS have also conducted an extensive consultation process with community leaders such as GPs and other healthcare professionals, public representatives and community groups. This is with a view to providing as much clarity as possible on the changes to

come and to assuage any public concerns that may exist.

The outcome of this consultation exercise has informed the final shape of the HSE's plan for the third phase of modernisation of the ambulance service in Cork and Kerry.



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# MEDICALL MOVES UP A GEAR WITH NEW AMBULANCES

A FLEET OF NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART AMBULANCES OPERATED BY MEDICALL WILL BE THE FIRST IN EUROPE TO BE CONTROLLED BY ONBOARD TABLET PCs THAT CAN PROVIDE REMOTE MONITORING OF A PATIENT'S LIFE SIGNS DURING TRANSPORT.

These three new Renault Master ambulances will be the first in Ireland not only to be CEN certified (the latest EU safety standard) but also to have single vehicle type approval, a huge step in patient and crew safety which ultimately leads to improved road safety.

Also a first for Ireland is that these new ambulances are fitted with the latest patient care equipment and a revolutionary new patient data collection technology which is unique to Medcall ambulances.

Operated by Medcall Ambulance, for the first time in Europe the ambulances will use onboard tablet PCs for command and control, to guide them accurately and quickly to their destinations, and to help track patient vital signs.

The technology used in the ambulances was developed by another Irish company, Valentia Technology, which was developed similar technology for ambulance services in Europe and the Far East.

## PATIENT CARE STANDARDS

The ambulances, which were converted in Poland by Baus AT, were officially handed over by South Dublin City Council Mayor Cllr Cathal King and the Polish Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Marcin Nawrot, at the official launch in Renault Belgard.

Andrew Lyle, Operations Director at Medcall Ambulance, said the new vehicle safety standards and the use of tablet computer technology for command and control will allow his company to deliver the very highest standards of patient care.

"Medcall Ambulance has operated Renault ambulances in its fleet for many years and they have proven themselves to be economical and highly reliable in service with us.



Barry Dunne, Commercial Manager, Renault Belgard, Tallaght, pictured with Paul M. French O'Carroll, MD, Medcall Ambulance Service.



Barry Dunne, Commercial Manager, Renault Belgard; Paul M. French O'Carroll, MD, Medcall Ambulance Service; Duncan Minto, MD of Renault Ireland; Declan O'Grady, MD of Renault Belgard; and Gary Breen, Fleet Zone Manager, Renault Ireland.

"The Renault Master's reliability in service was the deciding factor for us when we commissioned Baus AT to build the latest additions to our fleet of ambulances."

## AN IMPROVED SERVICE

Lyle pointed out that Medcall's client hospitals regularly entrust very seriously ill patients to his company. "So, therefore, these new state of the art ambulances and new technology will enable us to provide an ever better and improved service."

Barry Dunne, Commercial Manager with, Renault Belgard, said they are delighted to supply Medcall with the first CEN-certified state-of-the-art Renault Master Ambulances.

"Renault has long been associated with providing Medcall with their Renault Traffic and Master ambulances and we are also very proud to be involved in a first for Ireland where the latest patient-care equipment, safety and revolutionary new patient data technology is fitted in these Renault vehicles."

# RNLI OPENS THE DOORS TO NEW STATION IN CASTLETOWNBERE

CASTLETOWNBERE RNLI HAS OPENED ITS NEW €950,000 LIFEBOAT STATION AND FACILITIES ON THE BEARA PENINSULA IN WEST CORK. THE PROJECT HAS RESULTED IN THE VOLUNTEER LIFEBOAT CREW MOVING FROM THE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION, WHERE THEY WERE BASED FOR 15 YEARS, TO A MORE CENTRAL LOCATION AND IT HAS RESULTED IN HALVING THE LAUNCH TIME OF THE LIFEBOAT.

**T**he official opening of the new Castletownbere RNLI station is testament to years of hard work by the people of Castletownbere, according to John Coyle, chairperson of the RNLI Irish Council.

“Long before there was a station here the people of Castletownbere supported the lifeboats. What this station has achieved in less than two decades is nothing short of remarkable,” he added.

Marine correspondent Tom MacSweeney, who officially opened the facilities, said the building provided facilities essential for the lifeboat crew.

“They deserve every support and facility in the difficult and dangerous task which they undertake; saving lives at sea.

“The modern facilities might only have been the dream of past lifeboat crews, today they are welcome, adding to this voluntary service.”

## FIRST CLASS RESCUE

RNLI, lifeboat operations manager Tony O’Sullivan noted that the Castletownbere lifeboat is well equipped to provide a first class rescue service to all marine traffic in the vicinity.

“Together with other organisations the crew in Castletownbere provides an excellent service to their community. The crew is ready and willing to respond to a call for help no matter what time of day and whatever the weather.”

The volunteer lifeboat crew moved into the new station late last year after spending 15 years in temporary accommodation at Dinish Island.

The ambitious building project includes a two-storey lifeboat station with an adjoining pontoon from where the station’s Severn class all-weather lifeboat launches. The station houses a crew changing



Castletownbere RNLI volunteer lifeboat crew member (l-r): Killian Martin-Sullivan, Ciara O’Driscoll and Cian Murphy.



Marine Correspondent Tom MacSweeney officially opened Castletownbere’s new RNLI station.

room, RNLI shop, training room and an operations office.

Castletownbere RNLI has launched 223 times since the lifeboat was first put on service. Its crews have rescued 288 people and saved 30 lives.

Last year alone, the lifeboat launched 10 times, bringing 12 people to safety. Five of those services took place in the dark while the volunteer crew spent 258 service

hours at sea.

Among those in attendance at the event were John Nolan, chairman of the Castletownbere RNLI Lifeboat Management Group, Father Sean O’Shea, RNLI chaplain and Reverend Paul Willoughby, who both performed a service of dedication.

*Photographs courtesy of RNLI/Provision*



HSE North Leinster ambulance paramedics Colm Megan and Willie Howard pictured at the exercise with Philip Ferguson, volunteer helm with Skerries RNLI. (Pic: Mary Courtney)

# SKERRIES RNLI CREW SHADOW AMBULANCE STAFF IN LINE OF DUTY

SKERRIES RNLI VOLUNTEERS RECENTLY ROLLED OUT A PILOT TRAINING EXERCISE IN WHICH CREW MEMBERS SHADOWED HSE AMBULANCE STAFF IN AN OBSERVATIONAL CAPACITY. SKERRIES RNLI'S MARY McNALLY SAID THE EXERCISE REVEALED SOME POSITIVE AND ENCOURAGING TRAINING AND CROSS-SERVICE AWARENESS EXPERIENCES IN IRELAND.

**A**dvanced first responder with Dublin Fire Brigade and Skerries RNLI crew member Philip Ferguson believed this exercise would be beneficial for the lifeboat station crew to gain some insight and knowledge into the operations of the HSE Ambulance Service.

With over 15 years of service to the RNLI under his belt, Ferguson has been on many sea rescues and 'shouts'. Not all have resulted in call-outs by the HSE Ambulance Service but there are always those incidents that require specialist ambulance services. In this regard, he believed the exercise would be invaluable for the local lifeboat crew to witness the ambulance teams in action.

All crew members at the RNLI Lifeboat Station are trained to the level that will equip them to carry out their duties to the best of their ability. The training provided by the RNLI is one of the best in the world and is such that the RNLI is often asked to provide training for volunteer rescue teams all over the globe.

The volunteer crew who man the

RNLI lifeboats around the country receive intensive training which allows them to take their craft out to sea in all weathers, to protect themselves and the team and above all else, they are trained to save lives at sea.

#### PERMISSION REQUESTED

Ferguson requested permission from Skerries lifeboat operations manager and divisional operations manager to allow some local RNLI crew members to join the ambulance teams on some of their shifts, in an observational capacity.

The volunteers were not allowed to take part or assist the HSE crew at any point and were there to look and learn. He then contacted the HSE Ambulance base at Swords and spoke with the station manager and advanced paramedic.

They agreed it was an exercise worth doing and in turn put it to their management for approval; it would show both parties their capabilities and strengths. It would also give everyone a glimpse into their working environments.

This would all serve to provide a

seamless handover of casualty from RNLI Lifeboat crew to HSE ambulance crew, in the event of an incident.

#### OBSERVATORY ROLE

A number of the crew members at Skerries Station put their names forward to attend, in all 12 were available. Each crew member was assigned a date to attend the HSE ambulance base to spend a full shift with the ambulance crew.

Over the three-week period, all RNLI crew members took either a day or a night shift with the HSE ambulance crews. As the ambulance teams were called out, the RNLI volunteer was also there in an observatory role to view the HSE teams at work.

They witnessed first-hand the long hours and the dedication by the HSE ambulance teams as they waited in A&E at hospitals and transported patients with care. Each individual who went on the exercise said it was, without doubt, an enlightening experience. They witnessed the professionalism of the HSE ambulance crews in sometimes very difficult

circumstances.

They experienced how the ambulance crews worked with each other and how they did their utmost to provide care and attention to the patient as they reviewed the situation, analysed the needs of the patient and did what was necessary to stabilise and transport that individual to hospitals. Each of the RNLI crew who went on the training came back with renewed and utmost respect for the ambulance crews.

Willie Howard, advanced paramedic at HSE Ambulance base at Swords, said the exercise was certainly beneficial for the HSE crew.

He said that speaking with the RNLI volunteers, the HSE ambulance teams realised the volunteers put to sea in sometimes atrocious weather, often in pitch darkness with only the light on their boat to allow them carry out their searches.

**LEARNING FROM PARTNERSHIP**

Howard became even more aware that the RNLI crew were using their skills, including their casualty care training, in a lonely place at sea.

With no other manpower or back-up whilst on the confined space of the lifeboat, he hoped that the new partnership formed by the observational training would allow the RNLI crew understand the work of the HSE ambulance crew and it would allow the ambulance crew provide even greater support and back up to the RNLI volunteers.

Journey time from the HSE base in Swords to the RNLI station in Skerries was 12 minutes.

To many of us, that doesn't sound too long, but when a casualty is being brought back to land by the RNLI lifeboat crew, every minute is crucial.

Thankfully, the RNLI volunteer crew has not yet had to put their latest training to the test this year. However, with the knowledge they gained on the observational placements, they have added to their skills and they now know that the experiences and the time spent with the HSE ambulance crew will stand to them when the time comes.

Following the success of this exercise, it is hoped it can be repeated with other RNLI lifeboat crews.

**FEEDBACK FROM RNLI CREW MEMBERS**

**Comments by the RNLI crew members who attended the exercises**

*"I wanted to record my appreciation for all the help given by the HSE ambulance team during our recent exercise. I did the Sunday night shift...I gained more practical experience in that one shift than you would learn in months. The team members were very informative and helpful and carried out all tasks with great good humour and professionalism. I look forward to getting the opportunity to work with them again."*

*"This hugely rewarding and beneficial exercise really helped me to understand how the HSE ambulance service works as well as observing many of the skills we covered within our RNLI first aid course in a real life situation. Having a familiarity of the layout of an ambulance will prove very useful should the occasion arise for a casualty transfer. The crew I shadowed on the two shifts were extremely friendly and shared any knowledge they could. It was quite inspiring to see the paramedics work with such calmness, skill and care in each individual case, no matter how big or small."*

*"I thought the medical experience with the EHB was extremely beneficial in providing first hand patient/casualty care along with the following provided by the paramedics."*



HSE Ambulance Base at Lissenhall, Swords, Co. Dublin.

# COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF POLICING IN WATERFORD

COMMUNITY POLICING IS NOW A VITAL LINK BETWEEN GARDAÍ AND MEMBERS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES, WITH INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE JUNIOR LIAISON PROGRAMME AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH PROVING VERY POPULAR. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT AT WATERFORD GARDA STATION'S SECOND ANNUAL COMMUNITY POLICING OPEN DAY ON 6 MAY.

Joining the Waterford Community Policing Unit for the Open Day were various other services such as the Regional Armed Support Unit, the Mountain Unit, Public Order Unit, Traffic Corps, Dog Unit and the Garda Command and Control Unit.

Explaining the background to the Community Open Day, Waterford's Garda Sergeant Gavin Hegarty said: "Along with a number of other stations Waterford opened up to the public last year and it was such a success that we felt it would be a shame not to do it again this year. We have tried to bring along a range of Garda and support services so the public can see what we do behind the scenes and on the street."

Sgt Hegarty has been involved in community policing since his days in Dublin's Bridewell Garda Station. He has brought his experience and commitment to Waterford, and has always found it to be very beneficial to the community; to both the people they serve in the community and An Garda Síochána.

The Garda Mountain and Dog Units and the Waterford City River Rescue boat and crew were a big attraction for the visitors. Garda John O'Sullivan explained the protective gear and equipment used by the Public Order Unit while Garda Claire O'Sullivan demonstrated by force, the bashing and impact which some Gardaí in the unit may have to endure during an incident.

Meanwhile, the Garda Command and Control Unit is no stranger to Waterford as it has also been utilised during the Tall Ship festivals and other major events in the city.

Sgt Hegarty says the Community



Gardaí John O'Sullivan and Claire O'Sullivan, members of the Public Order Unit, pictured at the recent Community Policing Open Day in Waterford.



Gardaí Alan Golden, Jimmy Whyte and John Hanlon, members of the Regional Armed Support Unit.

Policing Unit is vital to any community.

"We work for and on behalf of the people. It's the people who demand and drive our services and it's that commitment and engagement we have with the community through areas such as the Junior Liaison Programme, the Neighbourhood Watch.

"All of this forms the link between

us and the community and that link is absolutely vital. It would be a sad day if it is ever lost, because it is through this link that we gain intelligence and information, and we get to know the people we serve. This is what community policing is all about."

Images courtesy of [Emergencytimes.ie](http://Emergencytimes.ie)

# ADDITIONAL SPEED ZONES TO HIT THE ROAD

WITH A LARGE DROP IN ROAD FATALITIES IN AREAS WHERE SPEED ENFORCEMENT ZONES ARE LOCATED NATIONWIDE, THERE ARE NOW PLANS TO ROLL OUT AN ADDITIONAL 243 ZONES ON BOTH REGIONAL, LOCAL AND NATIONAL ROADS.

In total there are now 727 identified speed enforcement zones in operation in Ireland, with 48 per cent of all fatal collisions in the five-year period 2006 to 2012 occurring on these sections of road.

The launch of the safety cameras in 2010 received the support of the public, because the Gardaí were able to show that 30 per cent of fatal collisions took place in these speed enforcement zones, according to Assistant Garda Commissioner Gerard Phillips,

“After three years of high visibility enforcement and surveying, this has changed dramatically and now we have reduced this ratio to 17 per cent of fatal collisions happening in these zones.”

He also pointed to increased compliance to 99 per cent on some roads. “This effectively means in 2012 alone, we have prevented 20 lives being lost. We must thank the public for this and acknowledge this positive change in driver behaviour.”

The primary purpose of safety cameras is to reduce speed related collisions, lessen injuries and save lives. Since 2010, An Garda Síochána has contracted a service provider ‘GoSafe’ to operate safety cameras on its behalf.

More than 408,000 fixed-charge notices were issued for speeding offences caught on camera by both GoSafe and Garda-operated robot vans during the last two months of 2012.

When launched in November 2010, a total of 518 stretches of road were selected as speed enforcement zones, based on a five-year analysis of fatal and injury collision data from 2004 to 2008.

## ‘GOSAFE’ MONITORING

‘GoSafe’ monitoring commenced operation

on a phased basis in November 2010 and reached full operational capacity in March 2011. GoSafe is contracted to provide a minimum of 6,000 hours speed enforcement per month as directed by An Garda Síochána, and sets key performance indicators to ensure enforcement is targeted at key days and times – with a particular emphasis on night time and weekends.

GoSafe has completed over 162,000 hours of enforcement since its launch and 26,500 hours of surveys (as of end January 2013). Following the introduction of the safety cameras most zones saw a dramatic and sustained improvement in compliance with speed limits.

The number of vehicles detected continues to fall as drivers modify their behaviour and on average less than 1 person per hour of enforcement is detected by GoSafe.

In the same period road deaths fell to record lows with 186 deaths in 2011 and 162 deaths in 2012. Similarly between 2004 and 2008 the proportion of fatal collisions occurring in the GoSafe zones was approximately 30 per cent. In 2012 this had reduced to 17 per cent, or 26 road deaths.

In human terms this 13 per cent reduction in GoSafe zones represents 20



fewer fatal road traffic collisions in 2012 alone.

This improvement in driver behaviour and compliance has helped contribute to the continuing reductions in road deaths. An Garda Síochána has conducted a review of existing zones and identified new zones, in a bid to ensure that the safety camera project continues to be targeted in line with emerging road traffic collision trends.

Using more recent collision data from 2006 to 2012 the existing zones were reviewed together with the results of speed surveys. As a result of this ongoing review which was outlined at the launch of the GoSafe initiative in 2010, 34 zones have been identified where enforcement is no longer as relevant due to reduced collisions and/or improved compliance with speed limits. This is the first time An Garda Síochána has removed speed enforcement zones for GoSafe locations.

These new locations are listed on [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) or [www.garda.ie/gosafe.htm](http://www.garda.ie/gosafe.htm)

# RED ARROWS GET SET TO FLY OVER BELFAST LOUGH

ROYAL AIR FORCE PILOTS AND AIRCRAFT WILL TAKE PART IN THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF ARMED FORCES DAY AT CARRICKFERGUS ON 22 JUNE, MARKING 100 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST MILITARY AIRCRAFT ARRIVED IN IRELAND TO SUPPORT AN ARMY EXERCISE NEAR LIMERICK.

**T**he RAF's Red Arrows are set to display their breathtaking aerobatics over Belfast Lough for the centenary celebrations of Armed Forces Day on Saturday 22 June.

There will also be a flying display from an RAF Typhoon fighter aircraft, which is guaranteed to deliver one of the loudest public performances. Military aviators will be well represented on the ground with static displays, aircraft cockpits, simulators and helicopters.

The event will mark 100 years since the first time military aircraft took part in an exercise in Ireland 100 years ago, and also the first ever 'overseas' exercise involving air support and the first ever formed formation flight over the Irish Sea.

In 1913 the then Royal Flying Corps undertook its first-ever overseas flight when five BE2a aircraft flew from Castle Kennedy in Scotland, via Newcastle in County Down, to Limerick to play a role in a large-scale command exercise at Rathbane Camp. This was a dress rehearsal for the aerial component of the British Expeditionary Force, which would be engaged in France less than a year later.

## MILITARY DISPLAYS

Around 100,000 people are expected in Carrickfergus for the biggest military event in the County Antrim town involving all three armed services as well as veterans, vehicles, musicians and cadets.

The day kicks off with a parade involving over 400 veterans who will be joined by Chelsea Pensioners and Cadets as well as military musicians and vintage vehicles. Events planned across the town will also include visiting ships from the Royal Navy and displays by both regular



HMS Example will again represent the Royal Navy in Carrickfergus Harbour.



The Search and Rescue helicopter will once again be open for public visits.

and reserve soldiers..

Representing the Royal Navy alongside in Carrickfergus Harbour will be HMS Example, which will be open for public visits, in addition to a Sea King Search and Rescue helicopter. The Royal Marines, HMS Hibernia and the Sea Cadets will all have stands around the harbour.

There will be a wide selection of military stands where the public can engage with service personnel, talk about their experience on military operations, sit in vehicles and handle military equipment. A number of military societies, service charities, emergency services and military re-enactors will also be represented.

# EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW BOUND FOR BIRMINGHAM

THIS YEAR'S EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW IS MOVING TO THE NEC, BIRMINGHAM. NOW IN ITS EIGHT YEAR, THE UK'S PREMIER EVENT FOR BLUELIGHT SERVICES, VOLUNTARY WORKERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS IS ALSO MOVING FROM ITS TRADITIONAL NOVEMBER DATES, TAKING PLACE INSTEAD ON 25 TO 26 SEPTEMBER.

**A** number of changes have been announced for this year's Emergency Services Show. After seven years at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire, the exhibition is moving to The NEC, Birmingham, adjacent to Birmingham International Airport with direct flights from Ireland.

The organisers have also brought the event forward to 25-26 September, so that the outdoor exhibition can benefit from longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures.

Multi-agency networking, interoperability and cost efficiencies are all addressed at the two-day event which brings together everyone involved in the emergency services. These include strategic planners and first responders, the manufacturers and suppliers of equipment and services used by leading professionals.

Entry to the show gives visitors access to over 400 companies and organisations supplying relevant emergency kit and solutions, as well as the opportunity to interact with live demonstrations and attend free workshops.

Exhibiting companies include leading names in civil resilience, search and rescue, extrication, first response, communications, IT, protective clothing and uniforms, vehicles and fleet, vehicle equipment, training, community safety, station facilities, water rescue and medical supplies.

**Emergency Response Zone:** Aimed at developing relationships and partnerships between voluntary organisation and the bluelight services, the Emergency Response Zone is a networking focus of

the show. Around 80 companies, charities and other organisations will exhibit in this area alone.

#### Professional Development:

Building on the success of its continuing professional development (CPD) demonstration area during last year's Emergency Services Show, the College of Paramedics is planning a series of new workshops, to run in the morning and afternoon on both days of the show.

**Innovations and New Exhibitors:** Among the many new names exhibiting this year are Mercedes Benz, which will exhibit its versatile Unimog vehicle, Blizzard Protection Systems will showcase the new Blizzard Baby Wrap, while Fiberweb Geosynthetics will be showcase its TERRAM Fire Hydrant Mark Plates. Prometheus Medical will highlight the new Prometheus ChitoGauze® XR Pro, its next generation of haemostatic dressing. Tactical Ventilation Solutions will showcase a new range of remotely-controlled machines for cutting tactical ventilation exhaust/outlet vents in a wide range of roofing materials.

**Heavy Rescue Demonstration:** Following a high level of interest at last year's show the Road Haulage Association is planning another heavy rescue demonstration.

**Car Crash Simulator:** Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service will bring along a state-of-the-art car crash simulator, designed to educate young drivers about the dangers of the 'Fatal Four': driving



under the influence of drink and drugs, not wearing a seatbelt, using a mobile phone and speeding.

#### The new venue

- Direct flights to Birmingham International Airport from Dublin, Knock and Cork.
- Physically linked to Birmingham International Airport and Birmingham International Station.
- Direct access to UK motorway network.
- No parking costs thanks to dedicated parking sponsored by Emergency Services Times.
- Excellent indoor and outdoor demonstration space.

Registration for free entry is available now on [www.emergencyuk.com/esi2](http://www.emergencyuk.com/esi2)

To book a stand contact Carol Fox on 0044-1737-824010 or email [carolfox@brodenmedia.com](mailto:carolfox@brodenmedia.com)



# POLICING COLLEGE CENTRES ON CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGIES

THE UK'S NEW COLLEGE OF POLICING WILL HOST A 'WHAT WORKS CENTRE' TO IDENTIFY THE BEST APPROACHES TO CRIME REDUCTION AND POTENTIAL SAVINGS TO THE POLICE SERVICE, THEIR CRIME REDUCTION PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC.

The College of Policing will work with academics, police and other crime reduction partners to review the evidence base and produce results for decision-makers such as police and crime commissioners.

The 'What Works Centre' will inform the police service and their crime reduction partners about how to tackle the most pressing crime reduction issues. The centre will use the most robust and comprehensive research methods to review evidence on practices and interventions.

It will draw the evidence together and identify which approaches are likely to be effective. The centre will also provide the knowledge, tools and guidance to support practitioners and decision makers to target their resources more effectively.

In recent years there has been a strong drive to implement 'evidence-based policing' through using the best available evidence to inform decisions about practices and policies. The introduction of the What Works Centre gives this approach greater momentum and puts the evidence-based approach at the heart of what the College is trying to achieve.

## CORE COLLEGE TEAM

The centre will be led by a core college team and will also be commissioning the support of universities and other providers to deliver the requirements. The college plans to tender with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for academic partners in 'What Works Centre' activity in the near future.

Chief Constable Alex Marshall, chief executive of the College of Policing, said: "We welcome this opportunity for the college to work with partners to ensure 'What Works' knowledge is at the heart of our shared efforts to prevent crime and



Chief Constable Alex Marshall is chief executive of the College of Policing.



The College of Policing will help forge a force fit for the 21st century, noted Policing Minister Damian Green.

protect the public."

The College of Policing 'What Works Centre' is part of a world-leading network of centres providing robust, comprehensive evidence to guide public spending decisions. The network will build on two existing centres of excellence – the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) – and the Educational Endowment Foundation.

## ACCESS TO BEST EVIDENCE

Four new independent institutions, including the College of Policing, will be responsible for gathering, assessing and sharing the most robust evidence. This will be to inform policy and service delivery in the areas of tackling crime, promoting active and independent ageing, effective early intervention and fostering local economic growth.

Chief Constable Marshall said that the college's mission is to ensure that everything they do equips everyone in policing with the right tools, skills and knowledge to reduce crime and protect the public.

"We will work closely with police forces

and universities to ensure that all forces and police and crime commissioners have access to the best evidence available for effective interventions, and that we remove unnecessary bureaucracy."

He said they will work to find the best ways to deliver policing in an age of austerity and support the development of an evidence-based profession.

## SETTING NEW STANDARDS

Policing Minister Damian Green added: "The College of Policing will help forge a force fit for the 21st century, setting and maintaining new standards that will build on the professionalism of police officers, ensuring they remain among the best in the world.

"Under the strong leadership of Alex Marshall, it will promote the highest standards of integrity and ethics so important to public trust. Crucially it will be independent of government, with officers from all ranks having a direct say in their training and development."

For more information on the College of Policing visit [www.college.police.uk](http://www.college.police.uk)

## WALES TO HOST 'WILDFIRE 2013' CONFERENCE

**The UK and Ireland's only national wildfire conference and exhibition will take place on 22 and 23 October in the Vale of Glamorgan, near Cardiff.**

Wildfire 2013 will feature a range of conference sessions, workshops, field trips, equipment demonstrations and networking opportunities to make it the "must go" event in 2013 for all those involved in the prevention and suppression of wildfires.

The overall theme running through the two-day conference is Partnership Working. It's about sharing expertise and experience between the sectors that aim to prevent and respond to wildfires, work with local communities, conduct research or inform policy.

The conference provides delegates with the opportunity to mix fire and rescue service personnel, countryside managers and rangers, emergency planning and resilience

staff, researchers and policy makers, get to hear at first-hand about each other's experience and knowledge.



For further information or to book online visit [www.ruraldevelopment.org.uk/wildfire](http://www.ruraldevelopment.org.uk/wildfire)

## MONITORING GROUP TO REPLACE PRISON VISITING COMMITTEES IN SCOTLAND

**A new independent monitoring system, which will replace the current system of prison visiting committees in Scotland, is expected to be up and running by autumn 2014.**

The new system will consist of four part-time prison monitors and will be supported by lay monitors and overseen by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons. Under the new system, prison monitors will be afforded unrestricted access to all prison areas in the course of their visits, including hearing complaints from prisoners.

An advisory group, made up of key stakeholders from the justice sector, will also be set up to provide guidance on monitoring, appointments and training. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, Brigadier Hugh Monro CBE, welcomed the proposal, stating that such a system will provide a framework for independent prison monitoring that has the potential to become the benchmark for the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT).

This new system has been proposed in response to a review by Prof Andrew Coyle, Director of the International Centre for Prison Studies, of proposals to improve the independent monitoring of prisons.

The report found that the existing prison monitoring system did not meet the standards set out in OPCAT, since budgetary matters and administrative arrangements of the visiting committees are managed by the Scottish Prison Service, which also runs the institutions they are charged with monitoring.



## FIRE SERVICE PRIVATISATION WILL 'SACRIFICE LIVES'

**New government plans to privatise the whole fire and rescue service will cost lives, the general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has warned.**

Matt Wrack spoke out after Fire Minister Brandon Lewis wrote to the Regulatory Reform Committee at Westminster seeking views on new laws to "enable fire and rescue authorities in England to contract out their full range of services to a suitable provider".

However, the FBU chief said handing over parts of the service in London and Lincolnshire to private firm AssetCo had "already brought near-disaster", with the firm

subsequently collapsing.

He said the new proposals "are grotesque and if they come to fruition will sacrifice lives on the altar of profit. This is the same disastrous model that has been used in the health service, the rail industry and local government to slash services while providing bountiful profits for private companies".

He added: "There is no public demand for privatising the fire and rescue service.

There is no support among firefighters for these measures. The government should stop now before it does untold damage."

## AMBULEX 2013 GEARS UP FOR COVENTRY ARENA IN JULY

**A**mbulex 2013 – the only UK event specifically for ambulance and wheelchair-accessible vehicles – returns to the Ricoh Arena in Coventry on 10-11 July.

New to 2013 will be the inclusion of Community and Accessible Transport vehicles. Closely linked to the Patient Transfer Service (PTS) vehicles, service providers will have the opportunity to examine and compare the vehicles and equipment on offer from the industry.

Coventry's Ricoh Arena is centrally located just off the M6, at Junction 3, 15 minutes from Birmingham International Airport and 70 minutes by train from London. The event will be held in the Jaguar Exhibition Hall.



For further information visit [www.ambulex.com](http://www.ambulex.com)

## HEALTH PROFESSIONALS URGED TO ATTEND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE

**N**urses, GPs, A&E staff, paramedics, and other professionals from across the NHS and private healthcare sectors have been urged by Women's Aid to attend its national conference in July.

The conference will provide them with the opportunity to brush up on best practice in dealing with patients affected by domestic and sexual violence. The one-day event on Thursday 11 July at Warwick University will also be helpful to healthcare managers looking to ensure their services provide the best possible response to women and children at risk of domestic violence.

The charity is highlighting that with renewed attention on the role of police and other services to protect women

and children experiencing domestic violence, no frontline NHS service can afford to neglect training in this key area. Specialist talks on female genital mutilation and workshops on family intervention projects will be of particular value to professionals in the field.

Polly Neate, chief executive at Women's Aid said that their national conference provides a key opportunity to develop links with other organisations in the sector and learn the best ways to safeguard patients at-risk of abuse.

For further information visit [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) or contact Katie Ross by phone on 0044- 1179-8371210 or email [k.ross@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:k.ross@womensaid.org.uk).

## £50M INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE EMERGENCY MEDICINE ACROSS SCOTLAND

**A** three-year £50 million investment programme aims to transform emergency and urgent healthcare services across Scotland, under new plans that aim to ensure fast and efficient treatment of people following their hospital admissions.

The plans will also look at improving links with other areas of healthcare so that support is in place for people to be treated in the community if possible.

With the investment, health boards will increase the number of frontline staff and introduce more flexible hours, develop projects that offer options to be treated at home and offer separate facilities for minor injuries beside or close

to the Emergency Department.

Health Secretary Alex Neil said: "We are seeing more people than ever before coming to hospital as emergency admissions due to the ageing population. The majority of people who go to A&E don't need to be there and could get more appropriate treatment somewhere else – such as a minor injuries clinic.

"We have looked at the whole system and developed this action plan to improve how quickly people are seen in our hospitals, who treats them and how quickly we can get them back on their feet at home. We are making sure these services are fit for the future."

## LIFT OFF FOR SCOTLAND'S CHARITY AIR AMBULANCE

**Scotland's first and only charity-funded air ambulance helicopter has now taken to the skies, flying emergency frontline clinical care into the hearts of communities across the whole of the country.**

The launch of 'Helimed 76' for operational deployment on 22 May marks the culmination of several years' work by a small team of private individuals who have successfully pulled together a partnership of public, private and third sector organisations to deliver an additional helicopter air ambulance for Scotland. In Scotland the Government funds two helicopters and two fixed wing aircraft based in Glasgow, Inverness and Aberdeen.

Scotland now has an additional helicopter air ambulance supplementing the work of the Scottish Ambulance Service in delivering an even more extensive frontline emergency response service.

Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) will cost around £1.5 million each year to fund the aircraft, pilots, paramedics and charity staff. But, with the public backing 32 similar helicopter air ambulances in England and Wales, SCAA is confident the people of Scotland will support one.

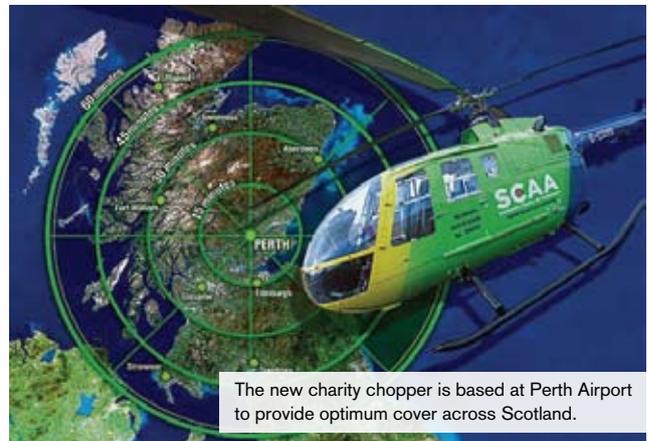
"This will be the people's air ambulance, funded by the public and supported by communities the length and breadth of the country who recognise the value of fast-reaction clinical air support in the face of mishap, illness and tragedy," said Mr Bullough.

"We've been really heartened by - and appreciative of - the amazing support the charity has received in order to bring us to operational readiness. But we need the help

of everyone in Scotland to keep the country's charity air ambulance flying in the months and years ahead."

Based centrally at Perth Airport, Scone, to provide optimum cover across Scotland, SCAA will operate 10 hours a day, seven days a week, tasked through the 999 emergency service. "Helicopter air ambulances can get patients to vital clinical help rapidly, especially from remote communities," added Bullough.

Pauline Howie, chief executive of Scottish Ambulance Service, said: "The additional helicopter will bring more flexibility and resilience to air ambulance operations across Scotland. It will be crewed by our own paramedics and tasked by our Ambulance Control Centre in the same way as our own aircraft."



The new charity chopper is based at Perth Airport to provide optimum cover across Scotland.

## MET POLICE SET TO OUTSOURCE £1 BILLION SUPPORT SERVICES

**The Metropolitan Police is looking to outsource more of its operational support services in the summer, with a substantial amount of the £1 billion cost likely to go to the private sector.**

The force already outsources IT, property and estate-related services, payroll and pension and administration. Following a market engagement exercise earlier this year, where it is understood the force spoke to prospective providers, decisions over forthcoming contracts are set to be concluded this summer.

The force's website said the engagement exercise had been looking to engage providers in relation to various support areas such as finance, customer service, media and communication and procurement.

A Met spokesman said: "A large proportion of the £1 billion cost of support services is already outsourced, these contracts have a variety of renewal dates over the next two years or so. For these services this will be the main determinant of the dates of any contract awards."

Following positive market engagement exercise earlier this year, the Met is currently reviewing the options for

those support services which are currently delivered in-house and are outsourced.

The spokesperson added that this exercise is expected to conclude in the summer which will determine whether the Met would seek to outsource any additional services.

"It is not possible to say what the value of the outsourced contracts would be until the exercise is complete but the total of the existing and any future contracts will be substantial."

The force said it had to ensure it was delivering support services as efficiently as possible. It has to make £500 million savings by 2015.



Met Police says outsourcing could help plug the £500 million saving shortfall by 2015.

## LONDON'S AIR AMBULANCE SIGNS UP TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

**L**ondon's Air Ambulance has signed a strategic partnership with International SOS to secure additional funding in order to sustain vital lifesaving services the air ambulance delivers across the capital and support key enhancements being made by the charity.

London's Air Ambulance helped almost 2,000 patients last year and is keen to enhance its expert medical services that are delivered across the capital by adding a second helicopter, additional medical teams, and an enhanced research and innovation programme.

Regional managing director of International SOS, Andrew Skehel, said: "Both organisations understand the importance of providing expert medical support, so we're pleased to join forces to share expertise, commission research, and promote better healthcare awareness and emergency treatment."

Graham Hodgkin, CEO of London's Air Ambulance described the new relationship as "mutually beneficial, with a complementary focus on collaborative education and research".

London's Air Ambulance delivers an advanced trauma



team to critically injured people in London. Using a helicopter by day and rapid response cars by night, a doctor and paramedic team can be at a patient's side within minutes, providing life-saving medical interventions, such as open chest surgery, blood transfusion, and anaesthesia, at the roadside. ([www.londonsairambulance.co.uk](http://www.londonsairambulance.co.uk))

International SOS ([www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com)) is a leading medical and security services company that operates from over 700 sites in 76 countries with 10,000 employees, led by 1,100 physicians and 200 security specialists. ([www.londonsairambulance.co.uk](http://www.londonsairambulance.co.uk))

## DROP IN OVERALL CRIME IN ENGLAND AND WALES

**C**riminal statistics for England and Wales again reveal a fall in overall crime, compared to the previous year, with a significant drop in violent and sexual crimes.

Deputy Chief Constable Jeff Farrar, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead for Crime and Statistics, said the statistics reflect the police efforts to do all they can to protect communities from harm.

"Crimes recorded by the police decreased by eight per cent compared to the previous year with violent and sexual crimes falling, a four per cent decrease in homicides and the number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument down by 16 per cent.

"While there's a three per cent reduction in recorded sexual offences, we would continue to encourage all victims to come forward and report crimes to the police." Recent statistics show a further fall in robbery offences, representing the lowest levels since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in 2002/03.

"Police-recorded data shows that theft from individuals has increased by eight per cent in the last year. The major driver has been the rising number of mobile phone thefts. We urge the public to take particular care of mobile phones

and personal items when in public places where thieves may seek to take advantage."

The UK Peace Index Report also highlighted the significant fall in violent crime and homicides, with the UK becoming more peaceful since 2003. The percentage of people who believe that crime is increasing at the local level has almost halved in the last decade.

"However, while overall these results are positive the police service will need to adapt and innovate to continue bringing down crime as their budgets decrease."



## FIRE BRIGADES UNION CALLS FOR 'COMPO' FOR WORK INJURIES

**F**irefighters who are injured at work are entitled to and should seek compensation, claims the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), after recent criticism of emergency service workers for seeking compensation for injuries sustained at work.

Such injuries can be very serious, and the FBU released details of some recent successful claims for compensation. These include firefighters who were poisoned by *Campylobacter* bacteria during a water training course in Nottingham, which required them to be submerged for long periods. Several FBU members became ill with serious stomach complaints, and some suffer lifelong bowel problems as a result.

Another case involved a firefighter who broke his ankle during a routine drill after tripping on uneven ground at Porth Fire station in Wales. The dangerous area, which the FBU say should have been cordoned off, was instead marked with yellow paint, and the training drill involved the wearing of masks which restricted vision. The firefighter in question was only able to perform light duties and eventually resigned. He received £10,000.

These cases demonstrate that emergency service workers are at risk of injury at any time during work and training, not just at the precise moment when they are saving a life, helping the injured or preventing a crime.

They are criticised for reporting injuries which are not

sustained in the process of protecting lives and property, but these key workers are exposed to workplace risks like any others and should be able to claim compensation like anyone else, says the FBU.

The vast majority of injuries caused by faulty or out-of-date equipment could be avoided, says the FBU, if employers made improvements to equipment and training and carried out adequate risk assessments. Escalating legal costs would be kept to a minimum if culpable employers admitted liability and settled legitimate claims for compensation swiftly.



Firefighters who are injured at work are entitled to and should seek compensation, says FBU.

## LARGEST WILDLAND FIRE EXERCISE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

**T**he largest live multi-agency wildland fire emergency training exercise was organised by Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) across areas of Antrim, Fermanagh and Down.

The training exercise 'Exercise Forest Flame' was designed to test NIFRS operational response, procedures and resilience, as well as the ability of multi-agencies to integrate and respond to a major uncontrolled wildfire incident across a large geographical area.

Chris Kerr, NIFRS Chief Fire Officer, said the major public safety enhancing exercise involved over 210 people from a wide range of agencies. "It simulated spate conditions when major wildfire fires and multiple smaller wildfires occurred simultaneously across Antrim, Fermanagh and Down over a protracted period of time."

Participants included the PSNI, Forestry Service, British Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Skywatch, Mourne Rescue Team and North West Mountain Rescue Team.

"This exercise was an essential training initiative for our firefighters and partnership agencies and will ensure we continue to build upon this type of operational response

experience. It ultimately enhance interagency working between the emergency responders and enhance our capability in protecting our community," noted Kerr.



EMS personnel take part in 'Exercise Forest Flame' in Northern Ireland.

## NEW PSNI RECRUITS TO BE PUT THROUGH THEIR PACES

**New recruits to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) could be put through a shortened version of the initial training package to put them on duty more quickly.**

Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie said that the process to bring new blood into the organisation was now underway – and putting more pairs of boots on the ground quickly was a key priority.

She said that around 300 officers would initially be taken on in an imminent wave of recruitment – and envisaged there would be up to 30 transferees from UK mainland forces in this number. The Force would then “take stock” of the situation.

Addressing the Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI) annual conference, DCC Gillespie explained: “We are thinking of shortening the initial training programme and I know that this is something that has been welcomed by the Federation. We are hoping that we can get as many officers in through the door as quickly as possible.”

Gillespie is confident that with a recruitment process now in place it would be easier to attract new recruits into the PSNI in future. She also highlighted that a review of personnel and resources was currently being carried out by chief officers – and the results of the study would be known within weeks.

But she did not believe it was possible to recruit 1,000 extra officers – the minimum number chairman of the Federation, Terry Spence, has continually called for in order to tackle the growing terrorist threat and public order situation. Spence has suggested that resilience is being compromised with the PSNI strength now reduced to fewer than 7,000 personnel – with more than 1,000 due to retire soon.

Gillespie maintained that the uplift would be “a huge ask” and was unlikely to be affordable in light of the financial situation. She suggested that efficiencies could be found elsewhere, and some activities undertaken by the police could be dealt with by other organisations.

## SECOND TERM FOR FORENSIC SCIENCE REGULATOR

**A retired West Yorkshire Police officer, with 30 years’ service under his belt, has been appointed Forensic Science Regulator for England and Wales for his second three-year term.**

Andrew Rennison is responsible for setting and monitoring quality standards for forensic science in England and Wales, including police forces with their own forensic capability and the commercial Forensic Service Providers (FSPs).

As well as setting standards, it is his role to issue codes of practice in relation to specific areas of forensic science – and ensure all forces pursue accreditation for the areas of forensics they bring in.

Rennison, whose decision making is independent of government despite his appointment being funded by the Home Office, said his policing background had proved invaluable since taking up the role.

While at West Yorkshire he led on organised crime and surveillance before leaving to help establish the Gambling Commission as the regulator of the gambling industry. “I have teams of scientists advising me and they are competent people willing to give me time and support – my background has helped me build a good relationship with the police.”

Rennison said he had established strong ties with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) leads on forensic science, including West Midlands Chief Chris Sims.



Andrew Rennison, new forensic science regulator for England and Wales.

In addition, he highlighted that he had been visiting forces and said he was impressed by the commitment shown by officers and staff in the frontline of the new forensics landscape.

The Forensic Science Regulator explained that his aim was to develop a “comprehensive framework” of quality standards, incorporating all areas of forensic science. It is also his role to set and monitor standards for the National DNA database (NDNAD) and the National Ballistics Intelligence System (NBIS).

In the case of the NDNAD, further upgrades will need to be made to the software as new DNA kits and methods are introduced in laboratories to enhance DNA profiles.



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF OKLAHOMA STORM CONTINUES

**The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the US Department of Homeland Security are urging the survivors of the Oklahoma storm disaster to register for assistance.**

FEMA has more than 400 people on the ground in support of response and recovery efforts, including a liaison officer, three national Urban Search and Rescue (USR) teams, a national Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) and a regional IMAT to Oklahoma to co-ordinate with state and local officials in support of recovery operations.

Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) assets also are in Oklahoma to provide self-sustaining telecommunications, logistics and operations support elements.

At the US President's direction, FEMA continues to provide resources to support response and recovery efforts. President Obama has declared a major disaster for the State of Oklahoma, supporting state, local and tribal emergency work in affected areas.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano travelled to Moore, Oklahoma to meet with Governor Mary Fallin, state and local officials and ensure that first responders are receiving the assistance they need in ongoing response and recovery efforts to the severe weather that impacted the region.

At the direction of the President, Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams (DSATs) are on the ground to help federal, state and local partners gather detailed information on the affected communities. DSATs address immediate and emerging needs of disaster survivors including on-site registration, applicant status checks, on-the-spot needs assessments, and access to partners offering survivor



services.

Disaster recovery centres have been set up in the affected areas where survivors can register for assistance and receive information about FEMA and other disaster assistance programmes.

Rapidly removing disaster-related debris enables a community to recover more rapidly. FEMA has implemented a pilot programme for debris removal that offers communities financial incentives for the timely removal of debris and a time-limited financial incentive for having a pre-incident debris management plan.

The State of Oklahoma in co-ordination with the United Way of Central Oklahoma, has established the OK Strong Disaster Relief Fund Donations. Those who wish to provide assistance to support disaster relief efforts can donate online at [www.unitedwayokc.org](http://www.unitedwayokc.org) or find additional information on the voluntary agencies playing a vital role in disaster recovery by visiting National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD).

## PILOTS PLAN TO FLY 'ROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS' FOR CHARITY

**Two pilots plan to fly 'round the world in 80 days' in 2014 in a single engine to raise £327,000 (circa €391,000) for two charities – Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital and Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance.**

The fundraising challenge – 'RTW80' – starts in Toronto and will involve three Atlantic crossings, six continents, up to 50 airports and will cover 37,000 nautical miles (68,000 km) in 80 days.

Dave McElroy and Chris Elgar have shared ownership of two Comanches over the past 25 years. They purchased a Comanche 250 in the Pittsburgh, Pa area, imported it into Canada as C-FDCM, and proceeded to fly it for almost 3,000 hours over a 23-year period (the equivalent of more than 15 circumnavigations).

In 2007, Chris purchased a derelict Comanche 180, C-FYHU, and has since restored it to mint condition. After

four years of painstaking work, it took flight in late 2011. This is this aircraft that the pair will use for their global flight.

As their website says, "Chris and the aircraft, officially known as C-FYHU, are based at Burlington Airpark, Ontario, whereas Dave is based in Scotland. The fact that the two pilots will be flying for two separate charities – Sick Kids Foundation in Toronto, and Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, based at Perth Airport, Scotland – makes for an interesting flight plan."

Toronto's Sick Kids Foundation is recognised as one of the world's foremost paediatric healthcare institutions, while Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance delivers frontline emergency care to the remote communities of Scotland, and is funded solely by donations.

For further information visit [www.flyw80.com](http://www.flyw80.com)



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## CROATIAN POLICE CHIEF COMMITS TO REINFORCING BORDER SECURITY

**The General Police Director of Croatia has reinforced his country's commitment to international police co-operation, in particular through the enhanced use of INTERPOL's global tools and networks to protect Croatia's and the EU borders.**

With Croatia one of the most active members of the world's largest police organisation, recent meetings with INTERPOL's Secretary General Ronald K. Noble and other senior officials focused on ways the country's law enforcement agencies can further increase their information sharing of INTERPOL data at the national level. The aim is to ensure that Croatia remains one of the safest countries for its citizens, businesses and tourists.

Vlado Dominić highlighted how his country's activities in the areas of organised crime, fugitive investigations and terrorism prevention demonstrate the value of international law enforcement collaboration and the utility of INTERPOL's tools and services.

"Once Croatia enters the European Union and has access to the Schengen network and related police data, we will be able to screen even more information against both our own and INTERPOL's databases. Only through

a constant sharing of information internationally, can we keep our country, the EU and the world safe from serious international crime," said Dominić.

"We have constantly partnered with INTERPOL in bringing innovative solutions to policing and are proud to be one of the first countries to support INTERPOL's creation of a database of stolen vessels which is important to a country such as ours with such a long coastline used by so many types of sea vessels," added the Croatian General Police Director.



INTERPOL's Secretary General Ronald K. Noble pictured with General Police Director of Croatia Vlado Dominić.

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM TO FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY AGAINST CRIME

**Recent talks between France's Minister of the Interior and the Head of INTERPOL took in preparations for an inaugural international forum on the use of technologies against crime, to be held in Lyon in July.**

At the initiative of the French Interior Ministry and INTERPOL, the Technology Against Crime Forum will bring together ministers from all corners of the globe, as well as security and police professionals, scientists, technology experts and representatives from universities and research centres. They will look at how technology can best be used to combat crime in the 21st century.

The meeting with INTERPOL President Mireille Ballestrazzi, Secretary General Ronald K. Noble and other senior INTERPOL officials provided an overview of the world police organisation's co-operation with France and of its activities across the 190 member countries.

France's Interior Minister Manuel Valls was briefed by President Ballestrazzi and Secretary General Noble on new initiatives to assist member countries combat crime areas such as drug trafficking and terrorism, and emerging threats such as cybercrime.

"Over and over again France has proved itself to be one of INTERPOL's most innovative and constructive partners and our joint Technology Against Crime forum will provide another platform to identify where

we provide added value and support to other national law enforcement efforts," said Secretary General Noble.

The visit underlined the close relationship between France and INTERPOL whose world headquarters were established in the country in 1946, first in Paris and in Lyon since 1989.

With France among the 56 countries which to date have formally recognised the INTERPOL travel document, the visit by Valls also addressed efforts by the world police agency to encourage all member countries to formally endorse the INTERPOL travel document initiative.



Minister Manuel Valls (left) with senior French officials at the meeting with INTERPOL.



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## UKRAINE GETS READY TO TAP INTO 112 EMERGENCY PHONE SYSTEM

**T**he creation of the 112 emergency phone system in Ukraine could be completed in three years if there is stable funding, according to the director of the state-owned Center for Civil Security 112.

“There are many organisational tasks that have to be resolved. Given stable funding, such a project could be implemented in three years,” noted Tyberiy Bolvari recently, adding that no funds were envisaged in the state budget for 2013 for the creation of the 112 system.

“But this does not mean that the implementation of the project has been suspended. The absence of funding does not stop the process of the implementation of the project to create the 112 national system,” he said.

He said that the Ukrainian Emergencies Ministry was currently being reorganised into the State Service for Emergency Situations. “I’m confident that this reform will

help not only introduce new standards for the activity of rescue forces, but also give a significant impetus to the introduction of the 112 system,” he said.

Bolvari said that the approved provision on the State Service for Emergency Situations envisages that among its tasks is ensuring the introduction of the 112 emergency phone system.

The Cabinet of Ministers approved a resolution on the approval of the 112 emergency phone system, which determines the legal and organisational framework for the system.

The law provides that the 112 number will replace several numbers of emergency services – 101 (fire), 102 (police), 103 (ambulance), 104 (gas explosions). At its implementation stage, the 112 will be used simultaneously with the numbers of other emergency services.

## STUDY SHOWS MURDER VICTIM RISK LINKED TO MENTAL ILLNESS

**P**eople with mental illnesses are at an increased risk of becoming the victim of a murder, a new study from Swedish and US scientists reveals.

According to the scientists, while murders carried out by people with mental illnesses often get a lot of attention, their risk of being the victim has rarely been investigated. The scientists analysed mental disorders and murders throughout the entire population of Sweden between 2001 and 2008.

The mental disorders were divided into: substance use disorders; schizophrenia; mood disorders, including depression; anxiety disorders, and personality disorders.

The study of more than seven million people found that at least one in five murder victims had a mental disorder. After taking into account relevant factors, such

as age, gender, education level and income, the scientists determined that those with mental disorders had a five-fold increased risk of being murdered compared to people without mental disorders.

This risk was highest among people with substance abuse issues – they had a nine-fold increased risk of being murdered.

The scientists said that one reason for this may be that people with mental illnesses are more likely to live in areas of high deprivation, which generally have higher murder rates.

Other interventions could include access to substance abuse treatment, increased financial stability and better housing, they added. Details of these findings are published in the *British Medical Journal*.

## EUROPEAN EMERGENCY NUMBER ASSOCIATION HELPS SAVE LIVES

**A**n association representing mobile phone operators worldwide has joined the European Emergency Number Association (EENA) to support the efforts in advancing the quality of emergency services across Europe.

The GSMA will work closely with public authorities and emergency service providers within the ‘112’ service chain to ensure that advances in mobile technology continue to enhance this life-saving system.

As Europe has the highest mobile penetration rate in the world, with total connections of 135 per cent in the region in 2012, mobile communication plays a crucial role in the

success of 112. European nationals are also crossing regional borders for personal and professional reasons more than ever before.

The number instantly mobilises emergency services in any EU country, free of charge and 24/7.

Mobile innovations offer significant potential for saving lives.

For example, eCall will be fitted as standard into all new models of cars and light vehicles in the EU from 2015. In the case of severe accidents, an eCall-equipped vehicle will automatically trigger an emergency call decreasing emergency response times.



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## NO INSPECTIONS FOR 28 YEARS AT DEADLY TEXAS FERTILISER PLANT

**A Texas fertiliser plant where a fire and explosion recently destroyed dozens of buildings, claimed at least 14 lives – including firefighters and emergency medical staff – and injured more than 200, was last inspected by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 1985.**

The West Fertiliser plant disaster is a ‘stunning indictment’ of the safety watchdog’s under-funding, critics have charged. There are some 2,200 OSHA inspectors for the country’s eight million workplaces and 130 million workers.

In Texas, OSHA conducted 4,448 inspections in the past fiscal year, a pace that would mean it would take 126 years to visit every workplace, according to the national union federation AFL-CIO.

In addition, AFL-CIO director of safety Peg Seminario said that the West Fertiliser plant had just seven employees, adding that these kind of workplaces are not typically inspected by OSHA.

Labour correspondent Mike Elk, writing in the ‘Washington Post’, compared the media treatment of the factory tragedy with that of the Boston marathon bombings the same week, in which

three people died.

He wrote “unlike the tragedy in Boston, the Texas plant explosion began to vanish from cable TV less than 36 hours after it occurred”, while a major manhunt launched to catch the bombers received blanket coverage.

“Where are the crowds of reporters trying to find the owner of the plant? And what about experts being rolled out to discuss what caused the explosion and how those responsible for this disaster will face justice?”



## TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS JOIN ‘112’ EMERGENCY NUMBER CAMPAIGN

**The European Commission and the European Travel Agents’ and Tour Operators’ Associations (ECTAA) are asking tour operators and travel agents to promote the pan-European emergency number ‘112’ on their websites, e-tickets and at major tourist destinations.**

European Commission Vice President for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes said: “Transport companies are already helping raise awareness, now it’s the turn of tour operators and agents to step up and help. European citizens should know that help is only one call away, wherever they are in the EU.”

President of ECTAA, Boris Zgomba said: “ECTAA supports the Commission’s campaign to raise awareness of the 112 emergency number. We are happy to be associated with this campaign, as a single emergency number applicable across the EU is of great benefit for travellers who may not necessarily know which local number to dial in case of emergency when travelling outside of their home country.”

The European 112 emergency number is reachable from fixed and mobile phones, free of charge, everywhere in the EU. The number links the caller to the relevant emergency service (local police, fire brigade or medical services) and allows them to speak to an operator in a choice of European

languages.

Available 24/7, the number is now operational in all EU member states alongside existing national emergency numbers (such as 999 or 110).

Denmark, Finland, Malta, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden have decided to make ‘112’ their main national emergency number. It is also being used in countries outside the EU, such as Switzerland, Croatia, Montenegro and Turkey.

Findings of a recent Eurobarometer survey show that an estimated five million more people are aware of the 112 number than was the case a year ago.





# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## EMERGENCY CALL TECHNOLOGY FOR NEW CARS FROM 2015

**All new cars produced in the EU from October 2015 would have to be fitted with an 'eCall' system that calls emergency services in the event of a crash, under new proposals by the European Commission.**

The Commission estimates that the new technology could save up to 2,500 lives a year.

The system automatically dials 112 – Europe's single emergency – and communicates the vehicle's location to emergency services, even if the driver is unconscious or unable to make a phone call.

The proposal has been delayed over a disagreement about whether car manufacturers that provide their own private emergency dispatchers would be exempt from the requirement. In the end a decision was taken against any exemption, although car manufacturers can continue to install their own dispatcher services as long as the 112 eCall system is also installed as a back-up.

The Commission has been pushing eCall since 2005, but a previous attempt to encourage member states to roll out the technology voluntarily by 2009 failed. Much of the resistance was due to cost concerns among member states. The Commission estimates that installation will cost less than €100 per car.

A 2011 impact assessment concluded that the only way to ensure adoption was to make it mandatory.

eCall could speed up emergency response times by 40 per cent in urban areas and 50 per cent in the countryside.

"When an accident happens, every minute counts to

rescue injured victims," said Siim Kallas, European commissioner for transport.

"The eCall technology has great potential to save lives in shortening dramatically the time of intervention of emergency services and this across the EU."

The proper infrastructure will also have to be set up in member states' emergency response centres. Ford and other car manufacturers have complained about being compelled to install a signalling system which cannot yet be received and understood by emergency dispatchers.

Ford uses an in-vehicle technology that would call 112 via a Bluetooth-connected smartphone, which would not satisfy the requirement that the vehicle itself must be able to make the call.

The proposal consists of a regulation on type approval for new passenger vehicles, and a decision on the deployment of the system in emergency centres. The Commission is also seeking to oblige member states to rapidly upgrade their emergency services through the Intelligent Transport Systems directive.



## NEW OUTLOOK FOR MEDICA 2013

**The world-leading medical marketing, information and communication platform - the MEDICA Congress – which will take place from 20 to 23 November, is taking on a new outlook.**

The end of the contract with the current congress partner, MEDICA - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Interdisziplinäre Medizin eV (the German Society for Interdisciplinary Medicine), at the close of MEDICA 2012 (14-17 November) forms the starting point for further developing the congress's programme.

For MEDICA 2013 the focus of the congress will be the responsibility of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. The Messe Düsseldorf Group now has experience lasting a good 60 years in the direction of medical trade events in Germany and abroad.

"The health and medical sector is one of the most important and most successful business areas of our company group," explains Joachim Schäfer, MD of Messe Düsseldorf. The repositioning of the content of the MEDICA Congress is a further milestone of the "MEDICA 2015 strategy," he added. This was drawn up with the event advisory

body on the 40th anniversary of MEDICA 2009.

The trade fair offering has subsequently been focused in terms of content and new themed areas have been established with innovative event formats, such as MEDICA Tech Forum, MEDICA Wound Care Forum and in 2012 the MEDICA Econ Forum).

Examples include recently-introduced project presentations that are integrated in the trade fair by co-operation partners such as the decision maker's workshop on best practices in health IT, wearable technologies or wireless solutions.



For information about MEDICA 2013 visit [www.medica.de](http://www.medica.de)

# US AND CANADA INVEST IN BORDER PLAN

THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA HAVE JOINED FORCES IN THEIR FIRST-EVER BI-NATIONAL BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN, WHICH AIMS TO OFFER ENHANCED SECURITY ALONG THE US-CANADIAN BORDER, WHILST ALSO REDUCING WAITING TIMES AT MAJOR BORDER CROSSINGS.

The first-ever joint United States-Canada Border Infrastructure Investment Plan (BIIP) has been released by Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, along with Ray LaHood, Secretary of the US Department of Transportation, Denis Lebel, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety.

The development and release of this initiative fulfils a commitment made under the 2011 United States-Canada 'Beyond the Border Action Plan'.

"An integrated, bilateral approach to border investment is critical to both the US and Canadian economies," said Secretary Napolitano. "The Border Infrastructure Investment Plan offers enhanced security along our shared US-Canadian border, while reducing wait times at major border crossings — increasing the flow of traffic across the border while ensuring safe and secure trade and travel."

Secretary LaHood said, "This first, joint US-Canada binational plan shows that our collaborative approach to border planning, which includes feedback from our local partners, will serve both of our countries well and ensures that we are working together on our common interests."

"Modern border crossings are essential to trade, which is why the Border Infrastructure Investment Plan and the collaborative relationship with our American neighbors are so important," said Minister Lebel. "Our government is investing in border crossings, ports and gateways to reduce wait times, increase trade and create jobs."

## BI-NATIONAL PLANNING

The BIIP is an interagency and bi-national planning mechanism developed to



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and US President Barack Obama announce shared vision, perimeter security and economic competitiveness between Canada and the US.

establish a mutual understanding of recent, ongoing, and potential border infrastructure investments. It outlines the approach that the US and Canada will take to co-ordinate plans for physical infrastructure upgrades at small and remote ports of entry. This initiative will be updated and disseminated annually.

"Our government, in collaboration with the US, is committed to enhancing our security and economic prosperity through significant investments at key crossings," said Minister Toews. "These investments will reduce border delays, speed up trade across our shared border and will allow the Canada Border Services Agency to focus on facilitating the flow of low-risk people and goods while keeping the border open to legitimate trade and travel."

The BIIP, along with other initiatives under 'Beyond the Border: A Vision

for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness', is designed to benefit the integrated economies of the US and Canada, which depend on the fluid movement of commercial and non-commercial traffic across our border.

Its release follows recent announcements by the Government of Canada of significant investments at four initial priority land ports of entry identified by Canada in the Beyond the Border Action Plan, in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Modernisation of major border crossings will reduce wait times, increase reliability of just-in-time shipments, and decrease fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The US and Canada enjoy the world's largest trading partnership – with two-way merchandise trade totalling \$570 billion in 2012.

# REVIVE ACTIVE TO BOOST ENERGY LEVELS

AT A TIME WHEN MORE PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC FATIGUE AND STRESS IN THEIR DAILY LIVES AND IN THE WORKPLACE, A NEWLY-FORMULATED HEALTH FOOD SUPPLEMENT AIMS TO CHANGE ALL THAT BY OFFERING TO BOOST CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH, INCREASE ENERGY LEVELS AND SUPPORT THE IMMUNE SYSTEM.

**A** new dietary supplement, developed by a team of doctors and scientists in association with the Galway Natural Health Company, is available from select pharmacies and health shops nationwide and also online.

'Revive Active' is formulated with specifically selected active ingredients to help the process of slowing down ageing. This water-based soluble supplement comes in a sachet and is easy to prepare; its orange and mango flavour makes it pleasant to consume.

Revive Active comprises over 26 ingredients that, when combined, have a more potent effect than if taken individually. To purchase all the individual ingredients in the same quantities, with the same quality would cost five times the recommended retail price of one month's supply: circa €350 vs €69.95.

Key ingredients of Revive Active include Coenzyme Q10 (Co Q10), L-Arginine, L-Citrulline, L-Carnitine, Vitamin K2. Other ingredients include Vitamin D3, B6, B12, Folic acid (B9), Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Selenium, D-Ribose, Taurine and Pomegranate.

## PATIENT FEEDBACK

Dr Dillis Clare, a Galway-based leading authority on integrated medicine, said she has been recommending Revive Active to some of her patients over the last year.

"They reported it to be particularly beneficial for fatigue, low energy, borderline hypothyroid problems and patients with early evidence of raised blood pressure."

Where chronic stress causes debility or patients report feeling 'run-down', Dr Clare said that her patients are pleased with the results of taking Revive Active. "The combination of nutrients offers value for money, the range of supplements is well chosen and the ingredients are well absorbed. The use of natural sweetener and the pleasant taste makes for good compliance with treatment. Overall patients report good results with Revive Active."

Others who have reported positive results from taking Revive Active on a daily basis include Warren Gatland, Lions Rugby Coach 2013, who says: "Revive Active has helped with my clarity and focus in pressure situations. My energy levels and overall well-being have improved."

Tracy Piggott, television presenter with RTE and BBC, reports: "I've noticed that my concentration levels have improved immensely. But above all else I just feel so much more energy."

For further information visit [www.reviveactive.com](http://www.reviveactive.com)

## BACKGROUND TO GALWAY NATURAL HEALTH COMPANY

Galway Natural Health Company was founded by Daithi O'Connor and Liam Salmon in 2010. Revive Active is the first product the company has developed and it is currently stocked in over 280 retail outlets in Ireland and 20 outlets in London, with one third of sales online. Now employing five people, the company plans to double that figure by the end of 2014.

The medical expert team includes Galway-based GP and herbalist Dr Dillis Clare, nutritionist Erina McSweeney and the research partners at the Department of Chemistry, NUIG.

In collaboration with NUIG the company is also planning to diversify into other dietary supplements and is currently working on a 'joint' solution product with a view to launching in December 2013.

Through its website, the product has sold in America, Australia and mainland Europe and the company is in discussion with Belgian and Russian distributors to launch the product in these markets.

Revive Active is manufactured by Shannon-based ABC Nutrition who have been instrumental in testing and trialing the product from the outset. ABC Nutrition was formed by a group of PhDs in nutrition and they have refined the product in terms of blending, taste and colour.

Through the EIS scheme Galway Natural Health Company is currently seeking funding to expand into the UK and the plan is to enter the US market by early 2015.

