

Emergency

I Services Ireland

NATIONALISATION OF FIRE SERVICE BECOMES A BURNING ISSUE

**REMOTE DIGITAL RESPONDERS IN
DISASTER ZONES**

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Ireland's level of preparedness in the event of a major incident will be high on the agenda at the National Emergency Planning Summit on 5 December in Dublin.

25 TRAUMA INNOVATION 2014

Trauma Innovation 2014 – Europe's largest gathering of military, humanitarian and emergency medical healthcare professionals – takes place on 15 & 16 January in London.

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High rates of solitary confinement, the issue of prisoner protection, and whether or not St Patrick's Institution in Dublin can help solve the problem are discussed by the heads of the Irish Penal Reform Trust and the Irish Prison Service.

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A free Smartphone App now enables boat owners to log their journeys directly from their phone, so that in an emergency, these details can be accessed by their contacts and the Coast Guard.

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New research shows that people in Ireland continue to support overseas aid programmes, despite the Government imposing further cuts of over €19 million in Budget 2014.

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A DIT product design graduate, who has invented a unique road traffic control device to make crash sites safer for emergency services personnel, now hopes to attract suitable industry partners and bring his product to market.

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Despite continuing efforts by Kildare County Council and other agencies to drive home the road safety message far and wide, more needs to be done to curb the high level of fatalities in Ireland.

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With the reorganisation of maritime safety

and marine emergency response services in Ireland, which will bring together the Irish Coast Guard and Marine Survey Office, has the Government's latest staff overhaul gone overboard?

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The Irish Coast Guard launched a number of safety initiatives during the summer months, which included a new TV advertising campaign, a community water safety programme and the distribution of over 100,000 lost child wristbands to parents around the country.

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The spirit of volunteerism behind so many of the emergency services is scheduled to hit our screens this autumn, when the fourth instalment of 'Ireland's Search and Rescue' six-part series is rolled out by RTE.

63 EU DRUGS REPORT

A new European study has revealed that Irish youths are the biggest users of dangerous designer drugs in the EU. The European Commission is now planning to tighten its rules on the growing problem of these psychoactive substances, which are used as an alternative to cocaine or ecstasy.

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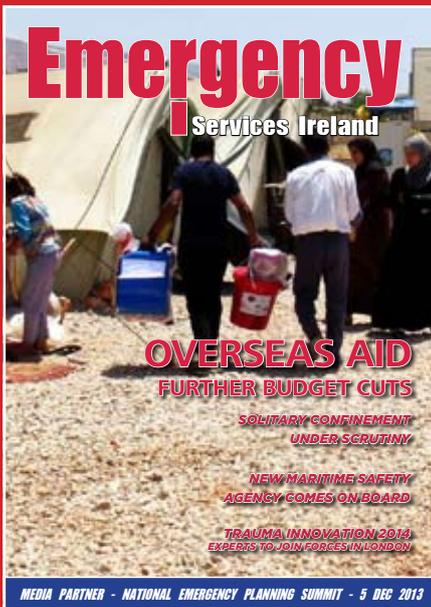
The Garda Boxing Club recently raised over €1,000 for the Jack and Jill Foundation, following their comprehensive win over a visiting team of NYPD boxers to Castlebar as part of The Gathering in Mayo in early October.

67 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS

A wide framework of actions will be undertaken by government departments, public sector organisations, businesses and communities to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation.

69 LIMERICK FOCUS

Limerick is currently undergoing a process of profound change as it prepares to become Ireland's first National City of Culture in 2014, which will also be the year in which a new single local authority will be established in mid-west capital.



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75 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Women's Aid believes the best practice principle of protecting the child through protecting the non-abusive parent (usually the mother) needs to be further acknowledged and reflected in any changes to family law or domestic violence legislation

83 LIFESAVING FOUNDATION

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the Lifesaving Foundation has rolled out a new recruitment campaign, and plans to increase its range of services for members and appoint a part-time employee.

85 WATER SAFETY

Water safety agencies are now calling for more education not regulation and cite the need for a greater safety culture in Ireland for people using water facilities.

91 HARBOUR EXERCISE

A recent multi-agency training exercise at the TOPAZ Terminal in Galway Harbour identified a number of learning points, and the post-exercise report will now help to further enhance their response to emergency incidents in Galway Harbour in the future.

99 SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

With over 5,000 sudden cardiac deaths in Ireland each year, new legislation is needed now to ensure that lifesaving defibrillators become commonplace across the country.

103 BRAIN TRAIN TECHNOLOGY

Scientific Brain Training PRO, the revolutionary software now available in Ireland to remediate and rehabilitate disorders such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, represents an



alternative approach to conventional forms of treatment.

107 HEALTH RESEARCH

One in four deaths from coronary heart disease or stroke could be prevented each year, according to new evidence from the Health Research Board Centre for Diet and Health.

109 PERSONAL HEALTH

With up to half a million people suffering from migraine in Ireland, health professionals generally believe that the condition can be managed at GP level and through specialist referral clinics in Dublin, Cork and Galway.

117 ARMY RESERVES

Major changes to the structures and basing of army reserves in Northern Ireland, in line with its concept for the future army of 2020, will mean substantial changes in both numbers and linkages with regular units, as well as in rationalisation of bases across the UK.

119 ARMED FORCES DAY

The success of Armed Forces Day 2013 was mainly due to the great level of planning and complete buy-in from the emergency services, local authorities and voluntary agencies.

121 WORLD POLICE & FIRE GAMES

The 2013 World Police and Fire Games, which took place for the first time ever in Northern Ireland in August, was described as "the best games ever".

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INDIVIDUAL POST CODES TO BE DELIVERED BY 2015

Emergency services are finally to benefit from a new unique national post code system, due to go live in early 2015, following the recent announcement of the new €25 million system by Communications Minister Pat Rabbitte.

Every address in the country will have a new seven character postcode by early 2015. – the new easy-to-remember identifier will be in the format A65 B2CD with the first three digits relating to the postal district.

When the system goes live, Ireland will join other European countries, which have used postcodes for

decades.

But we will be the first country in the world to have a unique postcode for each individual address.

Communications Minister Pat Rabbitte said: “This will benefit emergency services such as ambulance drivers to locate destinations for call-outs, which in some instances are life and death situations.

“Given the prevalence of satellite navigation systems in cars, drivers will simply be able to insert a postcode into their device which will provide the accurate location,” he said.

WHITE PAPER ON DEFENCE TO BE ENFORCED IN 2014

A number of significant reforms made within the Defence organisation in addition to the ongoing level of operations both at home and overseas were outlined by Defence Minister Alan Shatter, when he announced the Defence Budget allocation for 2014.

“The last 12 months has seen a major re-organisation of the Defence Forces, both Permanent and Reserve.

This has consolidated army units within a new two-brigade structure and enabled the re-deployment of personnel from administrative and support functions to operational units.”

The current White Paper on Defence was published in 2000 and there have been significant changes in defence and security sectors in the intervening period. The Government’s new White Paper on Defence will

consider future challenges and aims to ensure that Ireland’s defence policy is appropriately updated. It is anticipated that the White Paper will be published in 2014 and will provide the policy framework for Defence for the next decade.

Ireland is currently contributing 570 PDF personnel to 14 different missions throughout the world, with the largest deployment (361) being to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Furthermore, 115 personnel have been deployed to Syria for service with the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights.

The recruitment of the first tranche of 188 general service recruits took place in September, with approximately 300 further recruits due to be inducted by mid-November.

MEDICS IN TRAINING FOR INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE

Health service personnel, including military reservist doctors and nurses, recently participated in an intensive three-day intensive specialist course for those who may be deployed to international disaster zones worldwide.

The training programme, which was attended by participants from the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain, was held in the UN Training School in the Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare.

Sponsored and organised by the Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) – the cross-border health partnership – on behalf of Irish Aid and the Department of Defence, the course included participants from Irish Aid Rapid Response initiative, a number of military medical/disaster response personnel, in addition to personnel from the HSE and the National Ambulance Services.

The training was delivered by the Faculty of Conflict and Catastrophe Medicine, which is part of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London and is acknowledged as one of the leading training organisations in the field of humanitarian response

training.

A range of health-related issues associated with humanitarian response was discussed, such as disasters in an urban environment, refugee basic needs, humanitarian response, planning and risk assessments and communicable diseases, epidemiology and medical air evacuation of casualties.



CAWT organisers and course participants at the UN Training School in the Curragh.

MEDICAL CARD FRAUDSTERS CROSS BORDER TO ACCESS FREE HEALTHCARE

Questions have been about whether the free healthcare system in the North is being abused by people in the Republic, in light of the large number of medical cards registered in Northern Ireland exceeding the total population by up to 80,000.

The Belfast Telegraph has recently revealed that significantly more people are registered to avail of healthcare, such as GP services and A&E than there are people actually living in Northern Ireland. According to the 2011 census, the population currently stands at 1.8 million. But the number of medical cards registered to addresses in the north is up to 80,000 higher than this figure.

The newspaper recently reported that there are fears the

number is largely inflated by people who live in the Republic, who have managed to secure a medical card through an address in the north.

Information shown to the newspaper reveals that houses in Northern Ireland show multiple occupancy in terms of people on the medical register, particularly along the border areas. For example, it reported that one house in south Armagh has 16 people registered to it despite the premises only having two bedrooms. In some cases the register shows three or four generations still living at one address. Another indication of the fraud is premises with higher than usual occupancy where the people concerned may all have different surnames.

DOORS OPEN TO IRELAND'S FIRST SUICIDE RESOURCE CENTRE

The legacy of inspiring Kerry teenager Donal Walsh is set to live on in two special rooms in Ireland's first suicide resource centre, which will be dedicated to furthering Donal's message to young people not to take their own lives.

Donal's parents Elma and Finbarr Walsh have donated funds to refurbish two rooms in memory of their son at the Console Centre, at Balloonagh, Tralee. The message of the 16-year-old inspired the nation before his death from cancer in May 2013. According to Paul Kelly, CEO of the national suicide prevention and bereavement charity Console, young people in difficulty can get immediate professional help, counselling and support.

Donal's mother thanked the community for their contributions to the Donal Walsh LiveLife fund. "We are delighted that Donal's two main messages, the need for suicide prevention and teen care facilities, are now coming together under one roof at Console's Tralee centre," said Elma Walsh.

Kerry Coroner Terence Casey has said there were no suicides in the south Kerry area in the six months after Donal spoke out on the issue. Console's Tralee Centre provides a broad range of community-based supports, services and

resources for those affected by, or at risk of suicide.

Nationwide professional suicide prevention and bereavement charity Console offers counselling services and 24-hour helpline support to people in crisis and those bereaved by suicide (Freephone 1800 201 890).

The charity has full-time counselling centres in Limerick, Cork, Dublin, Wexford, Galway, Kerry and Mayo. It also offers services in Kildare and Athlone and has recently opened a service in London. For further details visit www.console.ie



Pictured (l-r) Donal's mother Elma, Paul Kelly (CEO and founder of Console), Donal's father Finbarr and Margaret Tierney (Console).

WESTMEATH AND LONGFORD FIRE SERVICES TO JOIN FORCES

As part of a national plan to consolidate fire services from 30 to 21 units, the brigades of Mullingar, Athlone, and Longford are to amalgamate by 2015.

However, this will not result in the closure of any of the four fire stations in Westmeath, or the five in Longford, according to chief fire officer Dave Stuart. The plan will also see a reduction in senior fire officers across the two counties from nine to seven, but Stuart does not believe that this will lead to any compulsory redundancies either.

According to international best practice, a population of between 120,000 and 200,000 is the basic population for a fire service, and it was this that has led to the amalgamation of the services in Longford and Westmeath.

This came to light as he gave a presentation entitled 'Developing Community Resilience' at a recent meeting of Westmeath County Council. "I made this [title] up myself, and it refers to the ability of a community to return to normal after a period of extraordinary conditions," he stated, citing the 2009 floods in Athlone, and the 2010 frost as two recent examples.

After learning from such disasters, a major contingency plan is now in place in association with the Gardaí, the HSE, and the fire service. He explained how important local knowledge can be in circumstances like these. He included the IFA on the list of stakeholders that would be liaised with, and described them as "amazingly helpful".

GUARDED WELCOME FOR €20M BUDGET FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The national coalition Mental Health Reform has given a guarded welcome to the additional €20 million for community mental health services, as announced in Budget 2014.

Dr Shari McDaid, Director of Mental Health Reform, commented: "While we welcome the commitment to invest €20 million in 2014 in community mental health services, we had hoped to see the Government fully honour their Programme for Government commitment of €35 million for community mental health services."

She said that Mental Health Reform is concerned that the €20 million investment will not translate into the needed staff on the ground unless the recruitment takes place in a timely fashion and departing staff can be replaced.

"Mental health services are continuing to lose staff

through retirements and other departures, and services continue to be under pressure. Of the 477 staff promised for 2013, just four per cent had completed the recruitment process as of the end of September.

"We are concerned that once again this year there has been a significant delay in spending the €35 million promised in Budget 2013. We want to see early agreement on the plans for spending the 2014 funds so that the same doesn't happen again next year.

"It is however encouraging to see the Government's continuing commitment to developing Ireland's community-based mental health services. This is what the 21,000 people who supported our pre-budget campaign called for: continuing investment to ensure that everyone has access to good quality mental health services," concluded Dr McDaid.

ACCOUNTANTS ROLL OUT OVER €5,000 IN CHARITY CYCLE

Over €5,000 has been raised to date by a team of accountants, tax and business advisors on behalf of the Peter McVerry Trust in this year's Wexford Cycle.

Starting out at UCD on 14 September, the 136km journey took the Baker Tilly Ryan Glennon team through many towns and villages ending just up outside of Wexford town.

As part of a charity fundraising campaign 2013, the staff took to their bikes and completed the cycle challenge.

George Maloney, corporate recovery partner, said he was delighted that some members of the firm got on their bikes this year and joined him in the event.

The Peter McVerry Trust supports young homeless people and helps them move towards independent living through the provision of a continuum of care services.

To donate visit www.mycharity.ie/event/btrg_welcome_home_cycle_2013_event



Pictured at the start of the cycle (front row) – Catherine Barry, Aoife Fennell, George Maloney, Suki Gray; (back row) – Declan Walsh, Ronan Smith, Eoghan Lundy, Cian Brassil, Jane Dawson (Conor Foley is missing from the picture)

NAVAL SERVICE NETS PRESTIGIOUS EMPLOYER ACCREDITATION

The Irish Naval Service has netted the CPD (Continuing Professional Development) Accredited Employer standard, following an audit of the navy's lifelong learning practices for engineering professionals.

"The Irish Naval Service has a clear focus on developing skills to produce better services and to work with partners to protect Ireland's interest at sea and to help create jobs. The company's current CPD framework helps develop its engineering skills needs to support the body's overall strategic objectives," noted John Power, director general of Engineers Ireland, when presenting the standard.

Captain Robert Scarrott, Officer Commanding

Naval Support Command, said: "The Irish Naval Service is a core partner in both the Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster (IMERC) and the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI). Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for our technical staff supports us meeting these goals."

The Irish Naval Service is tasked with a variety of defence roles, including defending maritime jurisdiction, deterring intrusive or aggressive acts, conducting maritime surveillance, maintaining an armed naval presence, ensuring the safe rite of passage of ships, protecting marine assets and contributing to a blockade if required.

PDFORRA CONCERNED OVER DEFENCE FORCES FUNDING LEVELS

The organisation representing soldiers, sailors and aircrew of Defence Forces has called for adequate resources to be provided to the Defence Forces under the current White Paper process.

Gerry Rooney, General Secretary of PDFORRA, claims that adequate funding for the Defence Forces must be a priority for the current White Paper process. "The evidence of underfunding is clear from the statistics on the defence spending by EU countries; Ireland is one of the lowest at 0.6 per cent of GDP while the average spend is 1.6 per cent. The Defence Forces has very specific roles at home, with the UN and in the EU and it unacceptable that our members are not resourced at comparable levels in fulfilling their roles".

Rooney also said: "Further evidence of inadequate resources is available from the current poor condition

of the Naval Service. Ships are kept at sea only through the very high levels of sea time being demanded and delivered by our members. And planned maintenance has been cut back with a result that ships are suffering greater levels of breakdown.

"The Naval Service had three of the eight ships out of commission due to unscheduled maintenance problems. The solution is to apply greater resources to solving the manning level problem or reduce the service to be delivered."

The PDFORRA chief said Irish Defence spending of 0.6% of GDP is very low compared to other EU countries. "The Irish Permanent Defence Forces provides a very high level of domestic security and support organisations compared with other EU states, which often exist to exclusively provide a contingent capacity or to service overseas operations."

VSO CALLS ON HEALTH WORKERS TO VOLUNTEER IN AFRICA

VSO Ireland is urgently calling on Irish healthcare professionals to share their skills in a bid to clamp down on the 350,000 women who die needlessly in childbirth every year in Africa and Asia.

The development charity has a range of placements available in Ethiopia for paediatricians, midwives, GPs, obstetricians, gynaecologists, hospital managers and health management information advisors later this year. VSO will pay for flights, accommodation and local salary.

VSO is an international development organisation that works through volunteers to build capacity among local people in areas such as health and education. By helping communities take charge of their own development a ripple effect is created and the benefit of each volunteer's work lasts well into the future.

In Ethiopia, VSO is working alongside Irish Aid, the Irish government's development programme, to reduce the infant mortality rate. This currently stands at 10 per cent, compared to just 0.4 per cent in Ireland. Irish health workers' skills are considered precious in such a resource poor setting. VSO urgently needs Irish people to share their skills with local nurses and doctors in

Ethiopia.

Jacqueline McAuley, a midwife from Northern Ireland who volunteered in Ethiopia with VSO, won the prestigious 'Volunteer of the Year 2012' award. While volunteering as a midwife instructor she taught, supervised and supported local midwives to help improve conditions in the hospitals and the lives of hundreds of patients. For details visit www.vso.ie



Jacqueline McAuley, who won the 'Volunteer of the Year 2012' award, pictured in Ethiopia.

HELP IS AVAILABLE AROUND THE CLOCK, SAYS SAMARITANS

Samaritans has said that while World Suicide Prevention Day offered an opportunity to focus on the issue at a macro level, it is important that people who are feeling down or have a sense of despair know that they can still access services in a timely way.

According to Samaritans' national chairperson Pio Fenton, World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September often illuminates areas of service provision and supports that are lacking for people who need them.

"Talking about feelings can be an important

intervention in suicide prevention, and Samaritans is always available – around the clock and each day of the year – to listen. Apart from being a listening ear, Samaritans acts as a sign-posting service for people who need more support. Making contact with someone who knows the services and how they can be accessed can be a great relief."

Last year Samaritans received a total of 412,167 calls to its helpline. The busiest period for the helpline falls between 6pm and mid-night. For further information visit www.samaritans.ie

CUT TO OVERSEAS AID BUDGET A BACKWARDS STEP, SAYS GORTA

Gorta has said that yesterday's cut of €19.4 million to the overseas aid budget is a contradiction to the Government's commitment to development policy, while UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Olivier De Schutter said defeating hunger must remain a top priority.

Speaking at their annual World Food Day conference, Gorta Chairman Sean Gaule said, "Just five months ago, the Government committed to continuing to lead in the fight against hunger. However, this cut in funding raises questions as to just how committed they are.

"This cut comes on top on five earlier cuts – totalling over 34.6 per cent with this sixth cut. We have always stressed that Ireland's aid promise should be made as a percentage of Gross National Income, therefore it should not depend solely on economic circumstances. If our GNI goes down, so does the aid budget."

He said that the work of Ireland's development NGOs makes a real and tangible impact in the lives of thousands of people around the world. "It is turning poorer countries into richer and better societies. This is an obligation, not an option, and it should have been maintained," he added.

Keynote speaker at the conference Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, said, "Defeating hunger must remain our number one priority – recent figures showed that 842 million people go hungry and malnutrition still affects one

person out of three.

"Providing food is not enough. Food and nutrition security must be developed in a sustainable way, and the status quo is no longer viable. Long-term sustainable development strategies must supported by an enabling international environment and that includes strong policy and aid commitments from governments around the world.

"Ireland's overseas aid programme is internationally recognised as being very effective in terms of value for money and effectiveness. I would hope that as economic conditions improve, Ireland will renew its commitment to overseas aid funding."



The cut of €19.4 million to the overseas aid budget is a contradiction to the Government's commitment, says Gorta.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE CO-OPERATION NEEDED TO TACKLE COUNTERFEITING

Closer co-operation between the public and private sectors to combat the 'sinister consequences' of illicit trade and counterfeiting is essential, delegates were told at the 2013 International Law Enforcement Intellectual Property Crime Conference.

Bringing together some 500 delegates from more than 60 countries, the three-day conference (15-17 October) co-hosted by INTERPOL and the An Garda Síochána, in partnership with University of Limerick, addressed a range of issues behind intellectual property crime.

INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble warned of the very real consequences and dangers of criminal and terrorist networks gaining funding through illicit trade and counterfeiting.

"The risk of relying solely on law enforcement services could be too high for the safety and security of citizens worldwide," said Noble. "We face a reality where our governments have increasingly limited abilities to financially support the fight against illicit trade, a reality where private sector entities are also affected and willing to join this fight.

"Profits from crime could be reaching anyone, anywhere, and INTERPOL believes that now is not

only the time to act, but to anticipate, innovate, partner and be proactive," noted the INTERPOL chief, pointing to the successes already achieved though his agency's Trafficking in Illicit Goods and Counterfeiting (TIGC) programme.

Since its launch in 2012 actions co-ordinated via INTERPOL's TIGC programme have already led to the seizure of more than \$300 million in counterfeit items and hundreds of arrests worldwide.

Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan said that the importance of co-operation between the public and private sectors in the fight against IP crime cannot be understated. "Consumers are put at risk through the sale of inferior, dangerous goods. Businesses are deprived of a return for their investment in the product's development. Governments and citizens lose out on revenue and employment opportunities."



INTERPOL secretary general Ronald K. Noble

MAYO CAMPAIGNS FOR HEART ATTACK AWARENESS IN COMMUNITY

Learn what a heart attack feels like – It could save your Life! was the message from heart and stroke charity Croí following the launch of its heart attack awareness campaign in Mayo during October.

This campaign stems from the ongoing partnership between Croí and Mayo HSE on the 'Mayo Action on Heart Disease & Stroke' programme, which aims to reduce the impact of heart disease and stroke in the county. This campaign is a first of its kind in Ireland, and will be piloted in Mayo during October.

Croí nurse and co-ordinator of this partnership programme, Ailish Houlihan said: "We are encouraging everyone in the county to learn the main signs and symptoms of heart attack and to take immediate action by phoning 999 or 112 for an ambulance, if you suspect that you, or a family member, may be having a heart attack."

Co-ordinator of Cardiac Rehabilitation in Mayo General Hospital, Ann Marie Brown, said that many people still believe that the experience of a heart attack

will be similar to that portrayed on the TV or in the movies.

"If they do not experience these, they are left thinking that their symptoms are unrelated to heart attack. It is important that the public realize that there are many other signs of heart attack, and by becoming aware of these, we hope people will seek help sooner."

For more information visit www.croi.ie/heartattack



Pictured at the launch of the campaign (l-r): David McHugh, Operations Resource Manager, National Ambulance Service; Ailish Houlihan, Croí Prevention Nurse Lead; Charlie Meehan, General Manager, Mayo General Hospital; Neil Johnson, CEO, Croí, the West of Ireland Cardiac Foundation; Ann Boland, Director, Public Health Nursing, Mayo PCCC; Ann Marie Brown, Co-ordinator, Cardiac Rehabilitation, Mayo General Hospital; and Brian Moran, Paramedic Supervisor, National Ambulance Service.

'MOMENTOUS' STEP TOWARDS ENDING IMPRISONMENT OF CHILDREN

The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) has hailed as 'momentous' news by Minister for Children, Frances Fitzgerald, that the construction of a new national children detention centre in North Dublin is underway.

The construction of a new centre, which is being added to existing services at Oberstown near Lusk, was first proposed in 2008 and will be completed next year.

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald said that once completed the facility at Oberstown will end the practice of 16- and 17-year-olds being detained in adult prisons, specifically St Patrick's Institution.

Turning the sod on the last phase of its construction, Minister Fitzgerald said that the €56 million project, which will be completed next year, will accommodate approximately 90 young people in ten units.

The location already accommodates 16-year-olds at the location and 17-year-olds will be transferred by the end of next year.

Liam Herrick, Executive Director of the Irish Penal Reform Trust, said that given the current pressures on fiscal resources, "IPRT believes that the construction of new facilities at Oberstown is a significant statement of the Government's commitment to the rights of children,

including children in conflict with the law."

However, he added that due to the serious issues which remain in St Patrick's Institution, more clarity is needed around when and how the proposed transfer of 17-year olds from St Patrick's Institution to Wheatfield Prison will take place. He said that clarification is needed on issues such as measures to ensure that the endemic problems in St Patrick's do not merely transfer with the young adults to Wheatfield Prison."

The practice of detaining 16-year old boys in St Patrick's Institution ceased in July 2012; the exclusion of children in prison from making complaints to the Ombudsman for Children was ended in July 2012.



BLOOD PRESSURE ROADSHOW

This autumn, the national charity fighting heart disease and stroke has partnered with global healthcare products company Covidien to launch a national blood pressure roadshow offering free checks in communities nationwide to detect the silent risk factor.

The roadshow, which is being supported by Covidien, is travelling the country and to find out where to avail of the free checks people can visit www.irisheart.ie.

Nearly one million adults in Ireland are at increased risk of heart attack and stroke due to high blood pressure and half of them do not know it. According to the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) six out of 10 Irish adults over 45 years (945,000 people) are affected by hypertension. Those with uncontrolled high blood pressure are three times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke compared to people with healthy or controlled blood pressure.

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, said: "Cardiovascular disease is a serious problem in this country and it is through initiatives like this one that we can continue to raise awareness and provide information on the changes people can make to take better care of their health."

Prof Alice Stanton from the Irish Heart Foundation Blood Pressure Council, explained that high blood pressure also known as hypertension, often has no symptoms. "So, a person can feel fine and look fine but on the inside, silent damage is happening to blood vessels which can lead to serious health problems like heart attack, stroke and heart or kidney failure.

"A five-minute check is all it takes to detect the condition, which can then be effectively managed through lifestyle changes such as being a healthy weight, being active and consuming less salt, less fatty foods and less alcohol."

The roadshow will visit up to 30 locations countrywide with a target of at least 3,000 free blood pressure checks given to the public. Those attending will receive a 'Know Your Blood Pressure' leaflet with practical advice on how to manage the condition.

For a free blood pressure check visit www.irisheart.ie and for a free blood pressure leaflet or general health advice contact the National Heart & Stroke Helpline on 1890 432 787.



An Taoiseach Enda Kenny pictured with Ben, Don and Rob (sons of the late 'Father Ted' actor Dermot Morgan) and Donal Balfe, vice-president of Covidien, at the launch the Blood Pressure Roadshow, which is visiting locations nationwide this autumn.

CASUALTY REDUCTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN HITS THE ROAD

With an overall increase in road fatalities in the Dublin region during 2013, the Casualty Reduction Implementation campaign for October and November aims to reduce deaths and serious injuries.

The plan is receiving multi-agency support from transport agencies, local authorities and the Road Safety Authority. The Railway Procurement Agency in conjunction with Dublin City Council and An Garda Síochána is due to introduce automated red light running detection on Queen Street and Blackhall Place in Dublin city centre.

These are key junctions and many thousands of commuters are inconvenienced every time the Luas trams are involved in an incident. There is also a very serious risk to life when these incidents occur. This can all be avoided if motorists/ pedestrians obey the traffic light signals. In the interim Gardai will operate in plain clothes and

in uniform, monitoring compliance with the traffic light.

Garda Chief Supt Aidan Reid said the publicising of the top 10 speeding locations, full use of both marked and unmarked robot safety camera vans and LUAS red light running operations will assist the Gardaí.

Noel Brett said "In Ireland excessive speed is directly responsible for one in three fatal collisions, over one half of all single vehicle collisions and is the primary contributor to vulnerable road user fatalities. Higher speeds result in more severe injury.

"This is particularly true for occupants of light vehicles, when colliding with more heavy vehicles and for unprotected road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists when colliding with vehicles. Pedestrians have a 90 per cent chance of surviving a car crash at 30 km/h or below, but less than a 50 per cent chance of surviving impacts of 50 km/h or above."



The latest road safety campaign was recently rolled out for October and November.

'LIGHT IT UP GOLD' FOR CHILDREN WITH CANCER

A vigil was held in Dublin recently to mark the journey of those affected by childhood cancer, children going through treatment or who are finished treatment and, sadly, those who didn't survive.

Launched by Dublin's Lord Mayor at the Mansion House on 31 August, the 'Light it Up Gold' vigil was attended by over 1,000 people who travelled from all over Ireland.

Childhood cancer statistics in Ireland:

In 2010 alone, there were 238 new cases diagnosed. On average, four families per week are told their child has cancer.

- One in every 300 children is diagnosed with cancer before they reach 20.
- Over 1,200 children were diagnosed from 2005-2010.
- Cancer is the leading cause of death from disease in children (2012).
- Treatment is aggressive and can last for years. It can cause lifelong health issues.
- One in five children diagnosed with cancer will die within five years. Many childhood cancer types

have much lower survival rates and are in desperate need of progress.

- On average, 34 children die from cancer each year.

The idea originated from the US when Tony Stoddard, whose five-year old

twin son Cole died from cancer in January 2012 created a campaign, called 'A Day of Yellow and Gold'.

He decided to do something to honour his son's battle and to raise awareness for childhood cancer.

He came up with the concept of lighting renowned buildings up in gold. On board are Niagara Falls, the Prudential Tower in Boston and the CN Tower in Toronto, as well as many local buildings and landmarks.



Jack Nugent (6) from Blanchardstown, Dublin, pictured outside the Mansion House at the start of the vigil.

OPPORTUNITY TO COMBAT TRAFFICKERS AND PIMPS

Ireland has a real opportunity to put human traffickers and pimps out of business, according to Ruhama and the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Both agencies have welcomed recommendations by the Oireachtas Justice Committee on future laws on prostitution. Ruhama and the Immigrant Council of Ireland are two of the founding members of the 'Turn off the Red Light' campaign which is seeking laws to end exploitation, abuse and trafficking by targeting the buyers of sex.

Responding to the proposals a campaign spokesperson said: "We have now reached a landmark stage in the efforts to put pimps and traffickers out of business. We are delighted that the bulk of the testimony and submissions put forward by 68 groups, which form the 'Turn Off the Red Light' campaign, have been accepted.

Sarah Benson, CEO of Ruhama said: "As the

dedicated frontline service to women in prostitution, including victims of sex trafficking, we meet and support hundreds of women every year who attest to the dangers and devastating harm of the sex trade, at both a physical and emotional level.

"Criminalising those who fuel the demand for women and girls is the most effective way to tackle trafficking and exploitation of prostitution," she claimed.

Denise Charlton, CEO of the Immigrant Council of Ireland, said the members of the Oireachtas Committee have heard that prostitution is absolutely linked to organised crime in this country and is run by Irish and foreign gangs," she added.

During the review process official figures confirmed 134 people were sex-trafficked in three years, of which one in four was a child. Charlton said they want to get the message out that "Ireland is not a soft target for sex traffickers".

2013 IRELAND MEDAL GOES STATESIDE TO SPORTS MEDIC

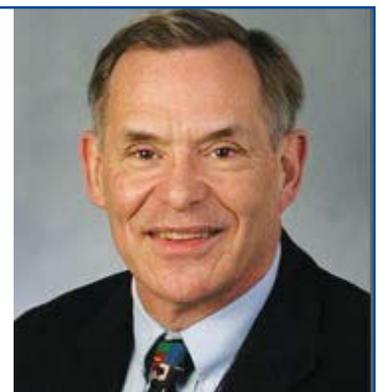
The Lifesaving Foundation recently presented the 2013 Ireland Medal to American Professor Stephen J. Langendorfer for his lifelong contribution to swimming and saving lives from drowning.

Dr Stephen J. Langendorfer, PhD, is interim director of the School of Human Movement, Sport, and Leisure Studies and Professor, Exercise Science

(formerly Kinesiology), at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, USA.

He is a recognised authority in the areas of aquatics and lifespan motor development.

In his career, he has been employed by Lansing (NY) Central Schools, SUNY-Cortland, University of Wisconsin, Kent State University, and Bowling Green State University.



CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE DRILLS HOME NEED TO IMPROVE RESPONSE

A large-scale drill undertaken by Clare Civil Defence has focused on further improving responses to major emergencies, search and recovery, environmental issues, stewarding, flooding problems and forest fires.

The annual exercise at the Civil Defence HQ in Ennis featured team-based competitions for the 70 participants who were put to the test in first-aid, rope/heights rescue, auxiliary fire service, radio communications, boat handling, land and water search, and radiation monitoring.

Mayor Joe Arkins said the Civil Defence volunteers give freely of their time and expertise to provide an invaluable and important public service. He added that constant up-skilling and training are key to most lines of work, "but it is especially important in the case of Civil Defence personnel, and all emergency services and response teams".

Clare Civil Defence Officer Liam Griffin said such

events provide opportunities for large-scale exercising of team members, and help to broaden their skills and provide a forum to inject external influence and expertise into the organisation.



CLIFDEN RNLI UPGRADE INSHORE LIFEBOAT TO NEW ATLANTIC 85

A new Atlantic 85 lifeboat for Clifden RNLI has replaced the Atlantic 75 lifeboat that has been on service in the Galway lifeboat station since 1999.

The crew is also awaiting the delivery of an all-weather lifeboat, which will be trialled there for a year, to work alongside an inshore lifeboat.

The Atlantic 85 lifeboat can operate in conditions up to a force seven and further to the Atlantic 75, allows for a fourth crew member, more survivors and more kit

onboard.

The vessel is powered by two 115 horsepower engines, is composed of a strong hull and has a top speed of 35 knots. The added radar allows the crew to operate more effectively in poor visibility and to locate vessels in difficulty faster.

It carries a full suite of communication and electronic navigation aids, including VHF radio, as well as a searchlight, night vision equipment and illumination parafares for night-time. Four out of ten RNLI call-outs occur in the hours of darkness.



Clifden RNLI's new Atlantic 85 lifeboat 'Joyce King' with the D class lifeboat 'Grainne Uaile' and the Atlantic 75 lifeboat 'Benjamin Downing Fairbridge'.

SERIOUS DEFICITS HITTING LIFE-SAVING CARDIAC REHAB SERVICES

Serious deficits have been revealed in a nationwide survey of cardiac rehab services credited with cutting the rate of heart disease mortality by over 25 per cent.

The research, carried out by the Irish Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation (IACR) and the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF), showed that staffing cuts meant that none of the 36 surveyed hospitals providing cardiac rehab had all the expertise required to provide the life-saving services.

It also found that more than 1,800 patients –

including many with life-threatening conditions – are on a waiting list of up to six months for cardiac rehab. "This survey exposes the impact of sustained cutbacks in cardiac rehabilitation and how these now threaten its long-term viability," said IACR President, Dr Charles McCreery.

Dr McCreery, who addressed the recent IACR's annual Scientific Conference in Dublin, said that cardiac rehab is vital to thousands of patients coping with the physical and psychological impacts of heart attacks and heart surgery.

HAVE YOU SUMMIT TO SAY ABOUT EMERGENCY PLANNING?

'EMERGENCY SERVICES IRELAND' IS THE MEDIA PARTNER OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SUMMIT ON 5 DECEMBER IN DUBLIN'S CROKE PARK, WHERE IRELAND'S LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT WILL BE HIGH ON THE AGENDA.

If a major emergency were to strike, how ready would we really be? As the past few years have revealed, Ireland is far from immune to such occurrences.

For example, the extreme weather of two winters ago resulted in a serious interruption to our services, practically bringing our country to a standstill.

In these challenging economic times, we can ill afford such financially crippling disruptions.

Emergency preparedness requires attention to steps that increase readiness for any type of hazard, and not just specific hazards such as extreme weather.

The summit will examine, amongst other things, the role of technology and social media in disaster response and recovery, and discuss why sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now at the forefront of emergency response.

The event will provide an insight into the challenges facing Ireland's emergency

services, the country's local authorities and the business sector.

It will look at managing the impact on communities whilst at the same time continuing to focus on the wider risks to ensure that this country is ready for every eventuality.

For further information visit
www.emergencysummit.ie

THE PANEL OF SPEAKERS

- Conor Galvin, Chartered Engineer, Office of Public Works
- Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive, National Flood Forum, UK
- Brian Honan, Principal Consultant, BH Consulting
- Krishna De, Digital Communications Strategist
- Edina O'Driscoll, Programme Manager, National Rehabilitation Hospital
- Anthony Lawlor, National Director of Units, Irish Red Cross
- Tom Hegarty, National Incident and Leakage Manager, Bord Gais Networks
- Mark Doyle, Consultant in Emergency Medicine, Waterford Regional Hospital
- Edgar Morgenroth, Associate Research Professor, ESRI
- Margaret Desmond, Climate Change Unit, EPA
- John Kidd, Chairman, Irish Fire & Emergency Services Association (IFESA)



Paul Cobbing



Anthony Lawlor



Margaret Desmond



Brian Honan

THEMES AND TOPICS

- Supporting Flood Risk Communities
- Climate Change
- Flood Risk Management
- Cyber Security
- Technology in Contingency Planning
- Leadership in a Crisis
- The Future of Ireland's Emergency Services
- Emergency Preparedness
- Social Media in Emergency Planning
- Benchmarking Ireland's Performance



TRAUMA INNOVATION 2014 MEDIA PARTNER

'EMERGENCY SERVICES IRELAND' HAS TEAMED UP WITH TRAUMA INNOVATION 2014 AS MEDIA PARTNER OF EUROPE'S LARGEST GATHERING OF MILITARY, HUMANITARIAN AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, WHICH TAKES PLACE NEXT JANUARY IN LONDON.

Clarion Defence & Security – organisers of DSEI, The World Leading Defence and Security Event, Counter Terror Expo, and Forensics Europe Expo – has announced the return of the only dedicated international forum focused on connecting innovators, suppliers and end users from the military, humanitarian and emergency medical healthcare sectors.

Now in its fourth year, Trauma Innovation 2014 aims to promote awareness and active dialogue about the latest cutting-edge equipment, techniques, technology and training.

Taking place in Central London in January 2014, Trauma Innovation will connect over will connect top international exhibitors with hundreds of trauma and emergency medical professionals in a keynote conference, show floor workshops, training forums, and live product demonstrations.

The conference provides a wealth of cross-sharing and learning with strategies, discussion and debate on case studies and innovations, thereby providing delegates with CPD accredited learning to take back to their daily roles.

Visitor statistics from the 2013 event show that 84 per cent of attendees rated their experience as 'Good, Very Good, or Excellent', 79 per cent said the speakers

KEY THEMES OF TRAUMA INNOVATION 2014

- Sharing lessons learnt from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Evolving points of conflict.
- The continuum of care.
- Advances in telemedicine – key to future deployments and remote healthcare.
- Future developments that will be necessary after full withdrawal.
- Training and simulation to keep skill sets and procedures fresh in-between deployments.
- Advances in R&D and technology to deal with evolving threats.
- Advances in telemedicine.
- The continuum of care: point of injury – pre-hospital care – in-hospital care – rehabilitation.
- New innovations and developments in areas including eICU and regenerative medicine.
- Fire and rescue, emergency response, blood, resuscitation, pre-hospital care/care in transit.
- Skillsets needed within NGOs and veteran care.

during the 2013 conference were 'Good, Very Good, or Excellent', while 66 per cent of attendees had direct decision-making ability and purchasing authority.

Feedback from the 2013 post-show visitor survey provides further evidence of Trauma Innovation's position as the 'must attend' event for all military, humanitarian

and emergency medical healthcare professionals.

For further information visit
www.traumainnovation.com/register

Europe's Largest Gathering of Military, Humanitarian and Emergency Medical Healthcare Professionals



In July, 114 at-risk prisoners were being held in isolation for 23 hours a day.

PRISONER LOCK-UP REGIMES UNDER SCRUTINY

LIAM HERRICK, DIRECTOR OF IRISH PENAL REFORM TRUST, AND MICHAEL DONNELLAN, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE IRISH PRISON SERVICE, DISCUSS OUR HIGH RATES OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, HOW TO HANDLE PRISONER PROTECTION, AND WHETHER OR NOT ST PATRICK'S INSTITUTION IN DUBLIN CAN HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM. REPORT BY PAVEL BARTER.

In March, 2013, the Inspector of Prisons paid a visit to St Patrick's Institution, Dublin, where he encountered a 19-year-old prisoner on protection, locked up for 23 hours a day. The prisoner's last visit was the previous November.

"It was obvious his mental health was deteriorating," noted the Inspector, Judge Michael Reilly, following the visit.

In July, 114 at-risk prisoners were being held in isolation for 23 hours a day and 61 inmates were behind bars for 22 hours a day, amounting to almost five per cent of the prison population.

Campaigners are now calling for the Irish Prison Service to reduce its lock-up regimes. According to studies, solitary confinement can have long-term repercussions, such as insomnia, confusion, hallucinations. However, in worst case scenarios this could lead to mental illness.

"The UN is moving to recommend

that 15 days should be a limit to a solitary confinement regime, because of the harmful psychological effects that isolation can have," said Liam Herrick, Director of Irish Penal Reform Trust.

"In extremis, you have situations like in the United States where prisoners have been in solitary confinement for 30 or 40 years. We don't have those punitive type of regimes here. It's not the state's intention to detain people for extended periods of time, but in the absence of alternatives they can occur."

PRISONER PROTECTION

Prisoners do not necessarily find themselves in 22 or 23-hour lock-up for breaking prison rules. The majority have requested protection, explained Michael Donnellan, Director General of the Irish Prison Service.

"There will always be a need, in any prison system, for vulnerable prisoners and others, to be separated from the

general prison population. Similarly there is also a need to keep certain prisoner groups or factions separated from each other. This poses an operational challenge for the prison governor.

"The fact that prisoners seeking protection are immediately separated... clearly demonstrates the commitment of the Irish Prison Service to ensuring their safety and security," continued Donnellan.

"The status of each prisoner subject to a restricted regime within the prison system is regularly reviewed. If possible, prisoners can be transferred to other institutions where a restricted regime is not necessary."

While some prisoners are removed from segments of a prison's population, others "cannot associate with any other prisoner, even others on protection," according to the IPS Director General. "The [latter] provide the biggest challenge for the Irish Prison Service. In most cases, they are only able to leave their cells when



The UN is moving to recommend that 15 days should be a limit to a solitary confinement regime, said Liam Herrick, Director of Irish Penal Reform Trust. (Pic: Derek Speirs)

all other prisoners are locked up.”

Herrick said the prison service has a difficult task in balancing issues of protection and confinement regimes, but the long-term damage could outweigh the short-term solution. Commentators suggest solitary confinement is high in Ireland, in comparison to EU levels.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Méndez, meanwhile, has proposed a worldwide ban on prolonged solitary confinement of over 15 days.

ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES

Donnellan agreed that restricted regimes posed challenges for prisoner rehabilitation “The challenge for the prison service and the prison governor is to ensure that, when prisoners are removed from general association, there is adequate access to structured activities on a daily basis.”

Access to education, work and training, and other services available to the general prison population, are not readily available to prisoners in lock-up. “Every effort is made to ensure that prisoners on restricted regimes get as much access to these services as possible.”

However, alongside human rights issues surrounding solitary confinement, there are also legal implications. “The High Court regards this as a serious issue, which can potentially lead to violations of Article 40 of the Constitution,” said Herrick. “Some cases were brought where prisoners sought release on the basis that their continued detention was unconstitutional.”

US PRISONS TO REVIEW PRACTICE OF ‘RESTRICTIVE HOUSING’

The US Federal Bureau of Prisons has agreed to a comprehensive review of the use of solitary confinement in its prisons. The review will include the fiscal and public safety consequences of the controversial practice.

The National Institute of Corrections plans to retain an independent auditor to examine the use of solitary confinement, which is also known as ‘restrictive housing’. Prisoners in isolation are often confined to small cells without windows for up to 23 hours a day.

“We are confident that the audit will yield valuable information to improve our operations, and we thank Senator (Dick) Durbin for his continued interest in this very important topic,” Federal Bureau of Prisons spokesman Chris Burke said in a statement.

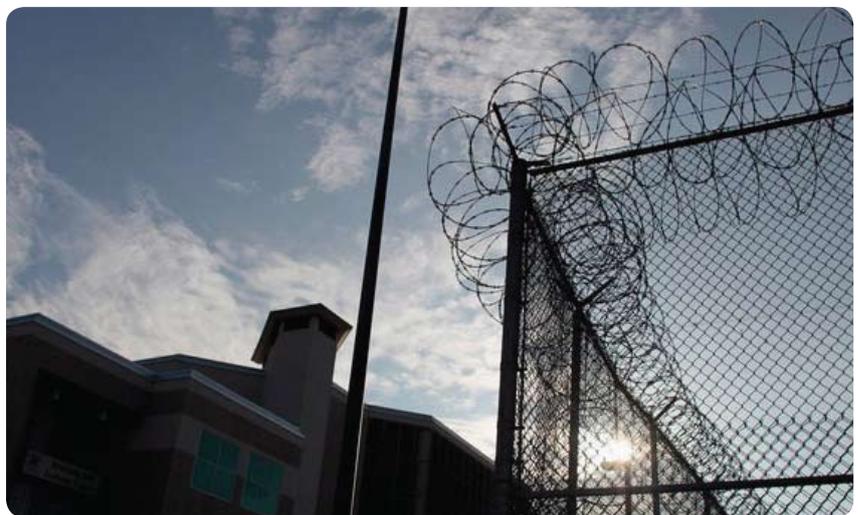
Senator Durbin’s office said the practice can have a severe psychological impact on inmates and that more than half of all suicides in prisons occur in solitary confinement.

In his state of Illinois, 56 per cent of inmates have spent some time in segregated housing.

“The United States holds more prisoners in solitary confinement than any other democratic nation in the world, and the dramatic expansion of solitary confinement is a human rights issue we can’t ignore,” said Durbin.

“We can no longer slam the cell door and turn our backs on the impact our policies have on the mental state of the incarcerated and ultimately on the safety of our nation.” The federal prison system is the largest in the country and includes some 215,000 inmates. News of the review was welcomed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – a strong critic of the nation’s use of solitary confinement.

“We expect that the review will lead the Bureau to significantly curtail its use of this draconian, inhumane and expensive practice,” David Fathi, director of the ACLU’s National Prison Project, said in a statement.



PRISON TRANSFERS

Much of the problem appears to stem from overcrowding in the Irish prison system. Donnellan denied that St Patrick’s Institution in Dublin, which is closing its doors at the end of the year, will become a protection-only prison.

The Inspector of Prisons Annual Report (2012), published in July, recommended the closure of St Patrick’s for health and safety reasons. In his

report, Judge Reilly said that prisoners should be dispersed to other institutions where they could be guaranteed safe and secure custody, while existing staff should also be dispersed elsewhere.

Two wings of St Patrick’s Institution will be designated as part of Mountjoy Prison.

One wing will be solely designated as a protection wing; prisoners will be transferred from Mountjoy.

This relocation of protection prisoners from Mountjoy will also facilitate the completion of the refurbishment works in the prison.

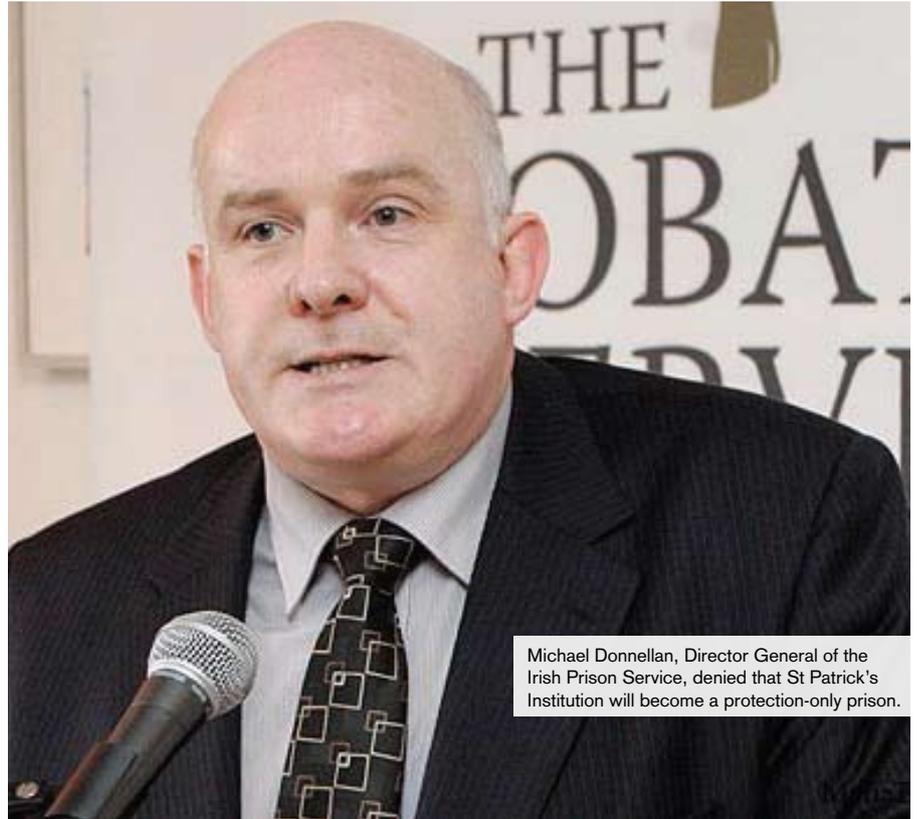
The other wing at St Patrick's will be used to accommodate prisoners from Wheatfield who will be transferred from that prison to free up space there for a young offenders' unit.

Once the necessary legislation providing for the closure of St Patrick's is passed, the intention is that the full prison would become part of Mountjoy Male Prison.

Pending the development of new facilities in Oberstown (near Lusk, Co. Dublin) in 2014, in the interim all 17-year-olds currently serving a sentence in St Patrick's will be transferred to a dedicated unit in Wheatfield Prison.

The 18 to 20-year-old population will also be transferred to Wheatfield.

Some of the St Patrick's buildings will be re-designated as part of Mountjoy Prison.



Michael Donnellan, Director General of the Irish Prison Service, denied that St Patrick's Institution will become a protection-only prison.

OUT-OF-CELL TIME

"This will allow certain cohorts of prisoners to move into these blocks," Donnellan said.

"This may give the prison service an opportunity to house prisoners, previously held on a restricted regime, in a more normal regime with increase out-of-cell time and enhanced access to education, work and training, and to the vital services such as addiction counselling."

The Irish Prison Service is committed to reducing the number of prisoners who are separated from the main prison population or require protection.

Its Incentivised Regimes policy hands out privileges to prisoners according to their level of engagement with services and good behaviour.

"As a result of this policy, the number of prisoners requiring protection or removal from the general population has decreased," said Donnellan. "Prisoners, previously on restricted regimes can now freely associate with others without fear of assault or incident.

"The challenge for the prison service is now to continue to reduce the number of prisoners requiring restricted regimes.

"It is my intention, over the next 12 months, to target this cohort of prisoners, especially those who are locked up for more than 22 hours per day and to increase their out-of-cell time."



Some of the St Patrick's buildings will be re-designated as part of Mountjoy Prison.

INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT

Herrick agreed that incentives and support are needed to encourage prisoners to come off protection.

"It may well be the case that many of the prisoners on protection at the moment – particularly those who identify themselves of being at risk – could be safely accommodated within the general prison population if there were reassurances and support in place.

"A significant number of prisoners ask for protection on committal to the prison

system, perhaps not having been in prison before.

"There is a perception of a threat against their safety, which may not be greater than the reality."

Finding a balance will be difficult. "Nobody is pretending it's not," said Herrick.

"The prison service has committed itself to developing a strategy to deal with the issue of protection in the prison system. There is a willingness to find better solutions to this problem."

PLAIN SAILING WITH NEW SMARTPHONE APP

A REVOLUTIONARY FREE SMARTPHONE APP, DESIGNED TO SAVE LIVES ON THE WATER, WILL NOW ENABLE BOAT AND LEISURE CRAFT OWNERS TO LOG THEIR JOURNEYS DIRECTLY FROM THEIR PHONE. AND IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, THESE DETAILS CAN THEN BE ACCESSED AND MONITORED BY THEIR CHOSEN CONTACTS AND THE IRISH COAST GUARD.

By the end of July, Irish Coast Guard statistics showed a 45 per cent increase in the number of emergency missions bringing the total figure of individual incidents to 1,572. Throughout the history of the Irish Coast Guard the record of annual incidents has never surpassed 2,000 but it is anticipated that this number will be exceeded by as early as the autumn.

To address this issue, the Irish Sailing Association has joined forces with the Irish Coast Guard to develop a unique lifesaving piece of technology. The new 'SafeTrx' App can be downloaded for free to a Smartphone, and users can then enter their boat and contact details before they set sail.

Speaking at the official launch recently held in Cork, the Minister for Agriculture, Marine & Food, Simon Coveney, said that the concept of safety at sea and on Ireland's network of rivers and lakes must become as commonplace as that of safety on our roads.

"We need to create a culture of safety first for those travelling on our waters for either commercial or recreational reasons," noted Minister Coveney.

He added that with loss of life continuing across the maritime spectrum, those who make their living from the sea and those who utilise the sea primarily for leisure purposes must ensure that safety becomes a top priority.

RETURNING TO SAFETY

Also attending the launch, ISA chief executive Harry Hermon remarked: "Last year over 1,000 people were assisted from difficulty by the Coast Guard and the RNLI, with over 160 lives saved. Unfortunately not all seafarers returned safely.

"I believe that ISA SafeTrx, which has been designed by Coast Guard professionals and built right here in Cork,



Pictured in Cork Harbour at the official launch of the SafeTrx App were ISA chief executive Harry Hermon; Minister for Agriculture, Marine & Food, Simon Coveney, and Chris Reynolds, director of the Irish Coast Guard.

will help to reduce the number of fatalities on the water even further. I have no doubt that this will save many lives."

In no fewer than five out of the ten MCIB reports published so far in 2013, it has been recommended that "details of an intended trip be left with a responsible person ashore along with the latest time of return and that the person ashore should

contact the emergency services shortly after the expected time of return has passed".

Hermon noted that the ISA SafeTrx will not only facilitate this recommendation, but will also help the Coast Guard to identify the location of the stricken vessel.

"It will also assess details such as craft description, contact details ashore,

TO USE ISA SAFETRX FOLLOW THESE FOUR EASY STEPS:

1. Download the App for free.
2. Register your boat and emergency contact details.
3. Enter your trip details and estimated time of arrival. Tap 'Set Sail'.
4. Arrive at destination. Tap 'End Trip'.

For more information and to download the app for free visit www.sailing.ie/SafeTrx



previous activity, where the boat was last visible to the network and where headed, persons on board and other information. This will be targeted at reducing the time that seafarers spend in the water waiting for a lifeboat or helicopter,” he added.

PLANNING TRIPS

Chris Reynolds, director of the Irish Coast Guard, commented: “SafeTrx helps take the search out of search and rescue. It encourages all sea users to better plan and execute their trips and gives assurance to friends and partners ashore.”

Available for both Android and Apple iOS devices (iPhone, iPad), the ISA SafeTrx will log position reports every kilometre – or every five minutes if stationary. Should the user fail to return on time their emergency contacts will be automatically alerted via SMS and advised to initiate the appropriate action.

Voyage position reports are displayed on the SafeTrx monitoring console so where an emergency contact calls the Irish Coast Guard concerning an overdue trip, the Coast Guard will have access to the user's location and SafeTrx trip data through a secure SafeTrx server.

The ISA SafeTrx App

periodically sends location data back to the servers, so the Coast Guard's response team can get help directly and quickly. While the App is not intended to be used as a replacement for normally approved safety devices such as marine radios, marine emergency positioning beacons and the automatic identification

system (AIS), it is a resource that in some instances may help to raise an alarm earlier and assist emergency services to locate casualties more accurately.

The majority of small crafts particularly sea kayakers, anglers, jet-ski users, powerboaters and small sailing boats do not carry the AIS tracking device.

www.jmob.ie

GREAT TASTE FOR OVER 175 YEARS

HISTORY IN THE BAKING



**JOHNSTON MOONEY
AND O'BRIEN** HISTORY IN THE BAKING



**JOHNSTON MOONEY
AND O'BRIEN** HISTORY IN THE BAKING

Syrian refugees at a makeshift refugee camp in Arbat, outside Sulaimaniya, Northern Iraq, who are supported by Christian Aid partner REACH. Christian Aid is supporting REACH to provide essential items to 1500 families around Sulaimaniya and Erbil in the north of Iraq. These include hygiene kits containing first aid equipment, soap, shampoo, water purifiers and sanitary products. (Pic courtesy of Sarah Malian, Christian Aid)



GOVERNMENT URGED TO DELIVER ON OVERSEAS AID PROMISES

NEW RESEARCH SHOWS A BIG MAJORITY OF PEOPLE WANTS THE GOVERNMENT TO DELIVER ON ITS AID PROMISES, WHILE TRENDS IN CHARITABLE DONATIONS ALSO CONFIRM THAT PEOPLE IN IRELAND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OVERSEAS AID – EVEN IF THEY FIND IT HARD AT TIMES TO KNOW WHICH NGO TO SUPPORT, WRITES HANS ZOMER, DIRECTOR OF DÓCHAS.

In 1847, during the Irish Famine, a group of Choctaw Indians in the USA collected \$710 – a small fortune for these very poor and marginalised people – and sent it to help starving people in Ireland. In their poverty, the Choctaws reached out to a country in dire need, and people in Ireland remember their act of solidarity to this day.

Now, a century and a half later, Ireland

itself is regarded as an inspiring example of practical and consistent solidarity. Decades of work by Irish missionaries and aid agencies, and the tireless advocacy by people such as Mary Robinson, Bono and Bob Geldof have seen Ireland build up a considerable international reputation as a caring nation.

More recently, the Irish government's aid programme – Irish Aid – has joined the

ranks of the aid donors most admired by the OECD. Ireland, it seems, is good at overseas aid.

REPUTATION ABROAD

The member organisations of Dóchas, the umbrella group of Ireland's development NGOs, argue that Ireland deserves that reputation. They say that Ireland has an international development programme

primarily because it is the right thing to do.

They also point to the Irish Constitution, which affirms Ireland's commitment to the ideal of peace and friendly co-operation among nations, founded on international justice and morality.

Similarly, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade insists that Ireland's development programme is central to its foreign policy efforts to bring about a fairer and more stable world, in which small countries like Ireland can thrive.

Moreover, the wide range of international treaties that Ireland has signed on to include a legal obligation to invest in international co-operation between states, to help fulfil the rights of people everywhere.

IMMENSE PUBLIC SUPPORT

Politicians, however, will be more interested in another important aspect of Irish development co-operation: the immense public support for overseas aid.

A range of opinion polls, such as those undertaken annually by Ipsos MRBI or by Eurobarometer, have found that a very large majority of people – almost four out of every five people – think that “even in an economic downturn, we have an obligation to invest in overseas aid”.

Even when the questions are formulated differently, the result is the same: people in Ireland overwhelmingly

HIGH LEVELS OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR OVERSEAS AID

A survey, undertaken during June 2013, found that 73 per cent of respondents agreed that it was 'important' for Ireland's international reputation that the government delivers on its promise of spending 0.7% of GNI on overseas aid. Nearly three in four people in Ireland agree that the government must keep this promise.

The same poll was conducted by Ipsos MRBI in 2010, 2011, 2012. While support for overseas aid remains high, this year's poll shows a slight decline in support for development co-operation.

The survey found that:

- *The vast majority of Irish people remain committed to overseas aid despite our current circumstances. There is still strong agreement that Ireland have an obligation to invest in overseas aid.*
- *A total of 77% of respondents agree that even in a downturn we had an obligation to invest in overseas aid.*
- *A total of 73% agree that it is important for Ireland's reputation to keep the promise that 0.7 % of national income should be given for overseas aid.*
- *Agreement is especially high amongst young people (aged 15-24; 88%), students (92%), and support is not particularly concentrated regionally.*

The research also found that people vastly over-estimate the percentage of national wealth being spent on overseas aid:

- *A total of 69% think the government spends between 1% and 5% of national income on overseas aid; 8% think that the government spends 21% or more, compared to the real figure of 0.48% of GNI – that is 40 times less.*
- *On average people in Ireland think the government spends 7.8% of national income on overseas aid (over-estimate of the real amount by a factor 16).*
- *On average people believe we should spend 7% of our national income on overseas aid, which is 15 times the amount we currently spend (0.48%).*

These and other findings are available via www.dochas.ie



Syrian refugees attend a Caritas mobile health clinic in Taalabaya, 20 kilometres from the Syrian border. With Trócaire's help, Caritas medical staff have helped over 6,000 Syrian families in Taalabaya since March 2012. Between 50 and 100 new families arrive into the area from Syria daily. (Photo: Eoghan Rice/Trócaire)

support the principle of giving aid to poorer countries.

What's more, people also 'put their money where their mouth is'. Despite the occasional media commentator arguing that 'charity begins at home', people in Ireland continue to show that they support overseas aid: the level of donations to aid agencies remains consistently high – although admittedly not at the same levels as during the height of the Celtic Tiger era.

Dóchas figures show that its member organisations have been affected by changes in people's charitable giving, but that overall, the sector is still very well supported.

The 51 members of Dóchas have a combined turnover of more than €300 million per year, of which some €144 million comes from public donations.

The sector employs some 4,500 people worldwide (850 in Ireland) and a recent study by PMCA Economic Consulting estimated that the Irish development NGO sector is worth some €107 million to the Irish economy, in the shape of taxes paid and services purchased.

WORDS AND DEEDS

Earlier this year, a study by Fundraising Ireland found that 85 per cent of adults claim to have donated money to a specific cause or charity in the preceding three months and almost two-thirds within the month.

These findings are similar to other studies, which also show that, while people continue to give to charities, donations tend to be largely unplanned and predominantly made through ad hoc collections, rather than standing orders.

Marina Power of the University of Limerick has observed that despite the large number of registered charities, Ireland is still in the early stages of developing a culture of philanthropy.

"The non-profit sector in Ireland is generally associated with charity balls, fundraising events or direct mail runs... Charitable giving in Ireland is generally characterised by one-off, responsive, spontaneous cash donations, rather than structured, planned or regular strategic giving," she added.

Research shows that people's concepts of 'charity' work are informed by their positive attitudes towards altruism and trust in non-profit organisations.

THE KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK ANY CHARITY

The members of Dóchas have chosen to work together to maximise their impact, and to develop professional standards for their sector. They share a commitment to quality and public accountability, and they have invested consciously in their ability to learn from their experiences and from other people.

And from that experience, they have distilled a clear sense of what makes a good NGO and what type of NGO work deserves support. And they suggest the following key questions to ask each charity before making a donation:

Can the organisation clearly communicate what it is and what it does?

NGOs should be able to clearly explain their vision, mission and programmes. If not, they may be unclear in designing and delivering those programmes.

Can the organisation tell you the progress it has made (or is making) toward its goal?

Good organisations have clear indicators to measure progress toward the achievement of agreed goals. Such NGOs would welcome the opportunity to share their strategies and successes with you.

Does the organisation's programmes make sense to you?

Any organisation should be able to explain the rationale for its programmes, and the means by which it will work, in the short-term and longer-term, towards positive change.

Does the organisation apply professional standards to its work?

The most effective NGOs have strong internal systems, and apply professional standards and codes of conduct to their work, such as the Dóchas Code on Corporate Governance or the Fundraising Code.

How does the organisation co-ordinate its work with others, and how does it ensure that the beneficiaries have a say in its decision-making?

The ultimate judges of an organisation's effectiveness are the people who are the intended beneficiaries. It is important to ask how an NGO knows those people's real needs and how they relate to other NGOs or government programmes in the countries they operate in.

Does the organisation court media attention through sensationalism?

Telling the truth and defending the dignity of people are important in portraying the realities - positive and negative - in developing countries. Many NGOs have chosen to address this through becoming a signatory to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

More information is available via

http://dochas.ie/Shared/Files/2/Effective_NGOs.pdf

Compared to other nations, trust in charities is consistently high among people in Ireland.

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

At the same time, the public believes that Ireland's NGOs use a large proportion of their income on overhead costs and administration. Surveys show that a large minority of people agree with the sentiment that "charities are established to fulfil the ambitions of their founders rather than to serve the public" – a serious

allegation in the context where charity status is conferred onto organisations on the condition that they serve the public interest.

And these attitudes persist, despite the fact that the amount an organisation spends on administration is no indication of its quality.

The "overhead myth" seems stronger than the argument put forward by donors and NGOs alike, that an organisation that fails to invest in research, needs assessments, evaluation and professional



One year on since the Pakistan floods, the focus by Trócaire is now on rebuilding communities. Over the next 12 months 126,000 people will benefit from Irish donations to help rebuild lives torn apart by the floods. (Pic: Luca Tommasini/Trócaire)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hans Zomer was appointed as the first director of Dóchas (the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations) in October 2002.

Through Dóchas, Irish NGOs work together to improve the impact of their work, and to apply their collective experiences to inform government policy and practice.

Zomer previously worked as desk officer with Concern Worldwide and as country director of EIRENE-Tchad, a medium-sized human rights and rural development organisation based in N'Djamena, Chad.

In this role, he oversaw EIRENE's programmes dealing with social exclusion in one of the poorest countries on earth. EIRENE's programme in Chad focused on building the capacity of local organisations, in particular organisations involved in disability or in advocacy related to the oil exploration in Chad.

Hans Zomer has substantial experience in development-related policy and advocacy work, having worked as policy officer at Brussels-based advocacy networks, such as APRODEV and the NGO-EU Liaison Committee (now called CONCORD), and as a development consultant in Pakistan.

quality control, is unlikely to make much of a positive impact in the long term.

It seems that people in Ireland feel strongly that different standards apply to charities than to for-profit organisations. In contrast, for example, to fast food restaurants and computer manufacturers which spend vast amounts on advertising, salaries and quality control, charities are expected to deliver high quality services at virtually no cost.

The problem with this approach is that this creates what the Stanford Social Innovation Review has called 'The Non-profit Starvation Cycle': the public's unrealistic expectations about how much it costs to run a non-profit put pressure on charities to conform to those expectations and either reduce their spending on 'overheads' or under-report their expenditures.

In turn, this will further fuel the



A Syrian refugee looks at a leaflet with hygiene advice distributed with hygiene kits by Christian Aid partner REACH in Bayjan, outside Sulaimaniya, Northern Iraq. Behind is an aid truck used by REACH, Christian Aid's partner, to distribute hygiene kits. (Pic courtesy of Sarah Malian, Christian Aid)



myth that NGOs can be run on a shoestring and that overhead costs are something to be ashamed of.

In other words, the lack of informed public debate on the role of charities supports poor decision-making by donors, which in turn leads to poor performance by charities. The singular focus on overheads starves charities of the freedom they need to best serve the people and communities they are trying to serve.

CHARITY REGULATOR

It is often difficult for people in Ireland to assess the quality of NGO work, for the simple reason that much of it takes place thousands of miles away, as in the case of Dóchas members.

Likewise in the case of domestically-focused NGOs it benefits poor and marginalised sections of Irish society which are largely invisible to the people making the donations.

However, that's no justification for taking a false indicator of effectiveness (overhead costs) as a proxy.

The Irish NGOs have supported the government's plans to introduce

LIST OF DÓCHAS MEMBERS

As the national umbrella group, Dóchas brings together a wide variety of Irish development NGOs.

- Action from Ireland (Afri)
- ActionAid Ireland
- Africa Centre
- Aidlink
- AIDS Partnership for Africa
- Alan Kerins Projects
- Amnesty International Ireland
- Camara Education
- CBM Ireland
- Centre for Global Education
- Child Aid Ireland – India
- ChildFund Ireland
- Children in Crossfire
- Christian Aid - Ireland
- Comhlámh
- Concern Worldwide
- Development Perspectives
- Foundation Nepal
- Friends of Londiani (Ireland)
- Galway One World Centre
- Gorta
- Habitat for Humanity Ireland
- Haven
- Irish Council for International Students
- Irish Family Planning Association
- Irish League of Credit Unions
- International Development Foundation
- Irish Missionary Union (IMU)
- Irish Red Cross
- Kerry One World Centre
- Misean Cara
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Nurture Africa
- Oxfam Ireland
- Plan International (Ireland)
- Progressio Ireland
- Self Help Africa
- SERVE In Solidarity Ireland
- Sightsavers
- Skillshare International Ireland
- Suas Educational Development
- Tearfund Ireland
- The Hope Foundation
- Trócaire
- UNICEF Ireland
- Vita
- Voluntary Service International
- Voluntary Service Overseas (Ireland)
- Volunteer Missionary Movement
- War on Want NI
- World Vision Ireland
- YMCA Ireland



Children play at the Child Friendly Space funded by Trócaire on the outskirts of Hyderabad, southern Pakistan. It offers a place for children left homeless by last year's floods to play and learn. (Pic: Luca Tommasini/Trócaire)

a charity regulator in Ireland. Dóchas has long called for such an authority, in the hope that the regulator will bring much-needed clarity and transparency to the sector.

The regulator will create a central database of recognised charities, and members of the public will be able to quickly find out which organisations really serve a "charitable purpose", where their funding comes from and who is behind the organisations.

The greatest asset that Ireland's not-for-profit organisations has is the trust placed in them by the public. It is precisely to safeguard this public support that Irish NGOs will continue to invest in the dreaded 'overheads', and strengthen their long-term impact, through greater focus on research, needs assessments, evaluation and professional quality control.

Ireland's NGOs are showing daily that 'non-profit' by no means indicates 'non-professional', and that the support they enjoy is fully deserved.

AN ILLUMINATING DEVICE TO HIT THE ROAD

A DIT PRODUCT DESIGN GRADUATE HAS INVENTED A UNIQUE ROAD TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICE TO MAKE CRASH SITES SAFER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL. HAVING SUCCESSFULLY TRIALLED THE ILLUMINATED BARRIER IN CONSULTATION WITH DUBLIN FIRE BRIGADE, IAN BURNELL NOW HOPES TO ATTRACT SUITABLE INDUSTRY PARTNERS AND BRING HIS PRODUCT TO MARKET. REPORT BY SORCHA CORCORAN.

Once it reaches the market, the Enhanced Emergency Lighting Barrier (EELB) from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) graduate Ian Burnell will improve the safety of emergency services personnel at the scene of an accident or a roadworks incident.

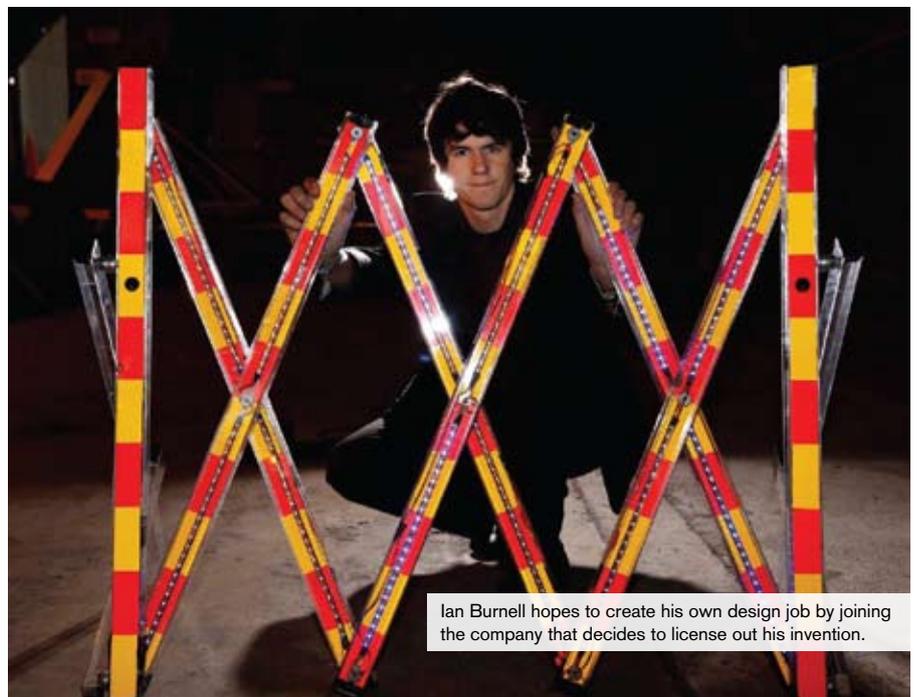
The EELB is viewed as a significant improvement on existing emergency warning systems for road traffic collisions, and a prototype has been developed and successfully trialled by two Dublin Fire Brigade crews to date.

The EELB reached the semi-finals of the 2012 James Dyson International Design Awards, ranking in the top 50 designs from all entries worldwide. Going on to win the Best Undergraduate Award in the joint DIT, IT Tallaght and IT Blanchardstown Inventor Competition 2013, it was recently made available for licensing purposes through DIT Hothouse, the Institute's Technology Transfer Office.

FINAL YEAR PROJECT

"For my final year project in product design I was tasked with designing something that would be ready to go to market. Initially I started looking at road traffic collisions and equipment for stabilising a vehicle after it's crashed, to make sure all movement is taken out when emergency services personnel start extracting victims," Ian Burnell explains.

After doing more research into the market the 24-year-old says he realised there were a lot of products in this area and not much of a gap existed. "Working still within the realms of road traffic collisions, I went to the Dublin Fire Brigade (DFB) with the idea of a new



Ian Burnell hopes to create his own design job by joining the company that decides to license out his invention.

product for use when setting up the 'fend off' – the safe working area after a crash."

The standard way to set up a 'fend-off' is to use the fire truck as a barrier to block oncoming traffic. The cones and lights are usually placed 200 metres away from the truck to divert traffic away from the accident.

FIRE BRIGADE CONNECTION

Burnell's father Greg is a DFB district officer and he helped Ian to get his foot in the door there. "Because of my background Ian wanted to see if he could identify a problem in the emergency services and find a solution for it. He met with two crews [around 18 firefighters] in both Swords and Finglas stations, and did a number of focus groups.

"He came to talk to the guys several times to hear their opinions. Having looked at the reflective sign used to set up the 'fend-off' he reckoned this could be greatly improved. We thought it was a good idea and gave him few pointers – it had to be light, pliable, work as a barrier and be illuminated," recalls Greg Burnell.

"The crews felt Ian took their suggestions on board in the design of the product and they incorporated the prototype into their drills instead of the reflective signs. Overall, they were impressed with how it worked and felt it made the area of the incident much safer," he says.

EASY DEPLOYMENT

As a result of his research Ian Burnell

found that a lot of firefighters he spoke with viewed the 'fend-off' as the most dangerous part of their job. "Particularly in winter on dark roads they often don't feel safe walking towards oncoming traffic with only high-viz vests to make them visible."

He says their feedback showed that they found deployment of the EELB very easy. "They felt safer walking towards oncoming traffic. They also thought the product would be good in cases where there is not sufficient notice for traffic to stay out of the way."

"From the moment of impact there is a 'Golden Hour' to get patients from the scene to hospital; after that their chances of survival are limited. Sometimes it can take the crew a while to get to the scene. The EELB allows them to let traffic know it is dangerous when there isn't enough time to set up a proper 'fend-off'."

The product has a unique retractable design, is lightweight and has a highly reflective surface and embedded LED lights. It is portable and can be quickly deployed in any situation where there is a requirement to direct traffic away from roadworks or the scene of an accident.

"Currently there are rechargeable batteries housed within the barrier itself, but a long-life battery would ideally be incorporated into the design after licensing," says Burnell.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

After Ian Burnell approached DIT Hothouse with his idea, the team there led by Paul Maguire agreed to support him. They have since assisted him in developing it to the point that he is now in a position to attract a suitable industry partner and bring the EELB to market.

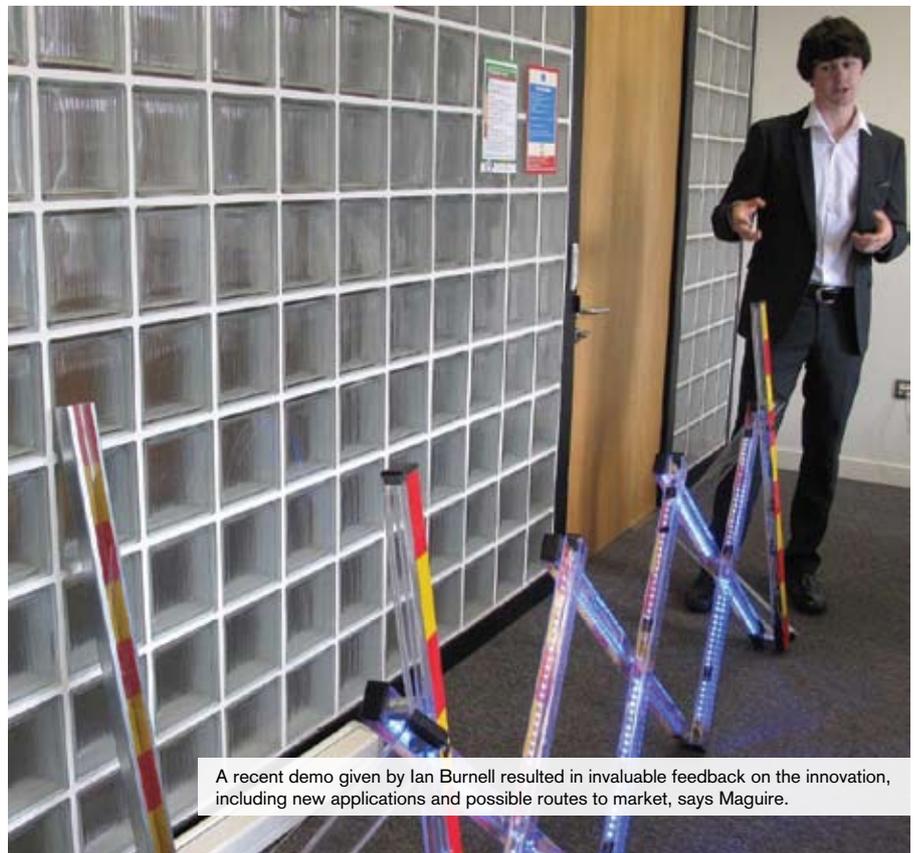
Maguire says this meant DIT Hothouse put in place a commercialisation strategy for the EELB. "DIT Hothouse has lodged a US patent application for the barrier and has secured European design rights for the system providing immediate protection."

This entailed establishing a product development roadmap, identifying and contacting potential partners both in Ireland and overseas; organising product demonstrations and gathering and collating potential stakeholder insights.

"The most recent demo in August went very well. A number of interested people from government organisations, established distributors and potential business partners with a background in



A prototype has been developed and successfully trialled by Dublin Fire Brigade crews to date.



A recent demo given by Ian Burnell resulted in invaluable feedback on the innovation, including new applications and possible routes to market, says Maguire.

the road traffic control sector attended. We received some invaluable feedback on the innovation, including new applications and possible routes to market," says Maguire.

DIT HOTHOUSE SUPPORT

DIT Hothouse has supported the emergency services for a number of years now through technological innovations that aid worker safety and enhance patient care.

As well as building his career in product design, Ian Burnell works part-time as a rock climbing instructor. He hopes to create his own design job by joining the company that decides to license out his invention.

This, he hopes, will help develop it for production and explore its suitability for potential users such as other divisions of the emergency services, the Gardaí, the construction industry, festivals/street parades and public transport.

KILDARE KEEPS CLOSE EYE ON ROAD SAFETY

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS IS MAINTAINED AND CONTINUED IN EVERY CITY AND COUNTY, FROM LOCAL TO NATIONAL LEVEL, IN A BID TO DRIVE DOWN ROAD FATALITIES, WHICH HAVE ESCALATED SINCE 2012, ACCORDING TO KILDARE'S ROAD SAFETY OFFICER DECLAN KEOGH.

There is a huge level of frustration about the latest fatality figures across the country, despite continuing efforts by Kildare County Council and other agencies and stakeholders to push the road safety message far and wide, in an attempt to reduce carnage and serious injuries on the roads.

Nevertheless a minority of people continue to ignore our crucial lifesaving messages. This is the first year in so many that fatality rates are firmly on the increase.

County Kildare achieved a 95 per cent reduction in road fatalities and serious injuries in the period 2007-2012 and it was the third safest county in Ireland. However, this year the county is at the other end of the scale, with at least 13 road fatalities as we move into the final quarter of 2013, as opposed to just one fatality in 2012.

This is a huge blow to the county in general, but it is a far greater loss for those bereaved families left behind. I find it very difficult to understand how there could have been just one road fatality in a 12-month period last year, and in less than 12 months the figure is now up to 13.

CLASS EDUCATION

Road safety education in schools, from pre-school right up to secondary and third level plays a huge part in road safety awareness in county Kildare. In addition to this, my role as the road safety officer is also to raise the profile of Kildare Road Safety at local and major outdoor events; street and town festivals, shopping centres, among sporting groups and also the community and voluntary groups.

During the summer, Kildare County Council in conjunction with Kildare Gardaí introduced a road safety campaign to coincide with this year's Oxegen Festival. The campaign entitled 'Safe, Sober and Sound – That's the Ticket for a Safe



Kildare's road safety officer Declan Keogh pictured with Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan at a recent road safety awareness campaign.

Journey' was based on a fictitious band appearing on the 'road safety stage', but only due to popular demand! This was promoted on social media and youth and regional radio stations across the country.

PLOUGHING AHEAD

Another national event in which I raised the profile of road safety was at the three-day National Ploughing Championships in Stradbally, Co. Laois, close to the Kildare border. The theme of this year's road safety presence at the ploughing was motorcycle safety.

Given the sharp rise in motorcycle fatalities, the ploughing event was an appropriate opportunity to highlight the dangers and risks posed to motorcyclists, and other drivers encountering a motorcyclist.

A crashed motorbike was on display on a raised platform, alongside the 'Half Naked Motorcyclist'. This outlines the difference in injuries sustained in a collision by a motorcyclist or a pillion passenger not wearing the correct and appropriate PPE.

The Kildare Road Safety stand, which was located between the RSA and the Garda stands, attracted huge interest. Every morning, the 'statistics board' was updated at the front of the stand and visitors were shocked at the daily changes in figures among different road users.

Road safety awareness programmes need to continue in every city and county, from local to national level. I am confident we will see a drop in the number of road deaths and a return to the good side of the graphs, if there is such a thing!

MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY COMES ON BOARD

THE REORGANISATION OF MARITIME SAFETY AND MARINE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES IN IRELAND WILL SEE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IRISH MARITIME ADMINISTRATION, WHICH WILL BRING TOGETHER THE IRISH COAST GUARD AND MARINE SURVEY OFFICE. HOWEVER, HAS THE GOVERNMENT'S LATEST STAFF OVERHAUL GONE OVERBOARD?

Cabinet approval has been granted to an action plan by Minister Leo Varadkar to set up a new, over-arching maritime safety section inside the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

The Irish Maritime Administration (IMA) will oversee the Irish Coast Guard (ICG) and the Marine Survey Office (MSO), in a move to improve marine safety and emergency response services, including an overhaul of operations within the Minister's own department.

The ICG is primarily responsible for emergency response to incidents on water, while the MSO monitors safety standards on boats and in ports. Both the Coast Guard and the MSO are already sub-divisions of the Department, and back-office operations will be merged for the two operations.

However, the overhaul to allow for more civil servants involved in policy will have staff implications on the technical side, according to sources. For example, the ICG's radio station staff will be reduced from three-man to two-man watches, as 46 watch officer positions have fallen to 39. Retired staff may have to be hired on an 'ad-hoc' basis, if budgets permit.

A spokesman for Minister Varadkar denied there would be staff shortages and said a departmental review had identified the need for 40 radio officers. There were currently 38 posts at three radio centres and recruitment was being undertaken to fill two remaining vacancies.

CONSULTANCY STUDIES

The reorganisation was undertaken on foot of two 'value-for-money' consultancy studies of the ICG and MSO published last year.



The studies, by Fisher Consultants, recommended a dedicated ICG team to deal with pollution response, and improved support for the 1,000 ICG volunteers in 50 coastal-based rescue units.

The studies highlighted a backlog in enacting maritime transport legislation to fulfil national, EU and international obligations on maritime safety, pollution prevention and control, and identified "significant gaps" in information technology systems in both organisations.

Minister Leo Varadkar said the overhaul will have an "overriding emphasis on safety and will co-ordinate efforts more closely between the Irish Coast Guard and MSO", which are subdivisions within his department.

The Minister had made a commitment to retain all three ICG co-ordination/radio stations at Valentia, Co Kerry, Malin, Co. Donegal and Dublin, but says the new IMA will aim to integrate operations between the three stations.

His department has stated that a new technology enhancement programme is also underway to support the operation and responsiveness of Coast Guard rescue co-ordination centres.

SAFETY STRATEGY

The IMA has also been charged with drafting a new maritime safety strategy,

which will apply to recreational activities, commercial fishing, merchant shipping and passenger ferry movements. In addition, the onus will be on the IMA to improve the state's preparation for major oil pollution incidents, and enhance volunteer training within the ICG.

"My key concern will be to create a culture of safety at sea, building a deeper awareness of what measures we can take to tackle risks together," Minister Varadkar said.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is seeking to clarify reports that there are proposals to cut more than 17 per cent of the Irish Coast Guard staff. Reports claimed that nine of the Coast Guard's 52 full-time staff are to lose their jobs but the department said that there will be "no job losses".

The spokesperson said this level of staffing was identified "as the level necessary to operate a national marine emergency response service on a three-centre interoperable basis".

In a statement issued by the department, it said: "The Minister's position is that this level of staffing in the Coast Guard should be maintained in the context of retirements over the coming years, so that the responsibilities of the emergency response services can be met. There will be no job losses in the Coast Guard."



COAST GUARD CAMPAIGNS LEND HELPING HAND

THE IRISH COAST GUARD LAUNCHED A NUMBER OF SAFETY INITIATIVES DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, WHICH INCLUDED A NEW TV ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN, A COMMUNITY WATER SAFETY PROGRAMME AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF OVER 100,000 LOST CHILD WRISTBANDS TO PARENTS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

For the first time ever a TV advertising campaign was launched during the summer by the Irish Coast Guard, following the 6 and 9 o'clock evening news programmes on RTE.

The campaign featured water and beach users and conveyed the 'six Ts safety checks' to the public for those taking part in water-based activities:

- **Training:** Ensure you have right training for your activity, including first aid.
- **Take Right Equipment:** Always wear a floatation device when on the water.
- **Trip Planning:** Know the risks from start to finish.
- **Tell Someone:** Important to say where you are, who you are with and when you are due back.
- **Talk to the Coast Guard:** Contact 112 if you see someone who may be in trouble on the beach/cliffs/water.
- **Time:** Every second counts in getting help when on the water, and act early if you need help.

The advertisement campaign was well received by the public and featured the Irish Coast Guard's latest helicopter – Sikorsky 92. This is capable of great speeds thereby reducing the critical time

needed to get to a casualty on a river, lake, beach, cliff or at sea.

'GIVE US A HAND'

The Irish Coast Guard also launched a wristband safety campaign during the summer, designed to locate lost children at beaches and near coastlines.

The 'Give Us a Hand' campaign was launched in conjunction with the Garda Community Policing Unit and lifeguards, and over 100,000 free waterproof wristbands were distributed through schools, lifeguard stations and maritime community events around the country.

Parents or guardians could write their phone numbers on the wristband so that lifeguards, emergency services or members of the public could contact the child's parents if the child became lost or separated.

The campaign resulted in a drop in the rate of missing children alerts, of up to 80 per cent noted in some areas. The bands were designed and developed free of charge by Coast Guard volunteers and proved to be a practical, simple way to assist families.

Feedback has been so positive that the Irish Coast Guard hopes to continue the campaign next year.

COMMUNITY WATER SAFETY

As part of another scheme, 50 Coast Guard rescue stations around the country were issued with a community water safety programme.

Targeted towards children the project aimed to make Coast Guard presentations more interactive with the use of replica safety equipment like VHF radios, flares, first aid boxes.

This allowed the children to get hands-on and develop a better understanding of the equipment and its relevance to water safety.

The Irish Coast Guard community water safety programme includes children's lifejackets and shows children and adults alike the importance of having a properly-fitted lifejacket when out on the water.

Coast Guard patrol boats around the country have recorded numerous incidents of small children wearing adult lifejackets; an incorrectly-fitted jacket increases the risk of the jacket becoming completely ineffective if needed.

The programme will be rolled out to community and school groups around the coast and inland waterways, and the development of the programme will continue for 2014.



RTE TO FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERISM IN NEXT SERIES

THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM BEHIND SO MANY OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES IS SCHEDULED TO HIT OUR SCREENS THIS AUTUMN, WHEN THE FOURTH INSTALMENT OF 'IRELAND'S SEARCH AND RESCUE' SIX-PART SERIES IS ROLLED OUT BY RTE.



RTE intends to include the Civil Defence and other voluntary agencies in the next series.

The third series of the popular 'Ireland's Search & Rescue' told the story of search and rescue missions across the country, from Kerry to Donegal, Doolin to Dublin, working with all four Irish Coast Guard helicopter bases in Dublin, Waterford, Shannon and Sligo as well as RNLI stations and mountain rescue teams nationwide.

The six-part series also showed the work of Cork City Fire Brigade and volunteer Coast Guard groups in Doolin, Co Clare and Howth, Co Dublin.

The programme profiled individual groups and showed how many agencies work together in dangerous environments to save lives, in addition to rescue footage.

It also highlighted the important role played by volunteers in search and rescue missions across Ireland, as builders, fisherman, nurses, engineers and doctors give up their spare time to the RNLI, Mountain Rescue Teams, Irish Coast Guard units and other voluntaries and charities.

'Ireland's Search and Rescue' programme, presented by Clare Byrne on RTE, had an average viewership of 342,000 equating to an average audience share of 23 per cent, during its six-week



Chief pilot Captain Dara Fitzpatrick and her Coast Guard crew from the Waterford base, who took part in the first series 'Rescue 115'.

run, which started on 18 November 2012.

Following the success of 'Rescue 115' featuring the Irish Coast Guard base in Waterford and 'Rescue 117' in Shannon – the third instalment was a year-long production, involving over 100 cameras used by rescue teams to capture their work across the country.

The programme's team includes an executive producer, a series producer, an assistant producer and a researcher/project co-ordinator, all working out of RTE's Cork studios.

GROUND-BREAKING SERIES

Executive producer Janet Frawley says the series was ground-breaking at the start, made possible by advances in small discreet, user-friendly cameras, which capture footage unobtrusively while the rescue teams get on with their job.

She said the programme has evolved naturally from the initial focus on the Irish Coast Guard to the other agencies and the volunteer aspect of the services,



RTE's Clare Byrne presented the third series on 'Ireland's Search and Rescue'.

which will be highlighted strongly in the next series in the autumn.

"It is a slice of social history in the making which we will now have in the archives – new camera technology and new Sikorsky helicopters, with greater increase in range, have changed both jobs and work practices," she noted.

The series captures people in real trouble and their time of crisis is not shown without their permission.

"While the public is interested in watching real-life distress stories, it is not a public interest requirement to show

them, so permission is a big issue," said Frawley.

'Ireland's Search and Rescue' is a feature-based and not a news programme. She claimed this is fortunate because the production team can let the dust settle, give people time to recover and consider participating or not.

With very positive feedback from viewers, the third series included the involvement of more agencies and now the plan is to include even more voluntary organisations, such as the Civil Defence, in the four instalment of the programme.

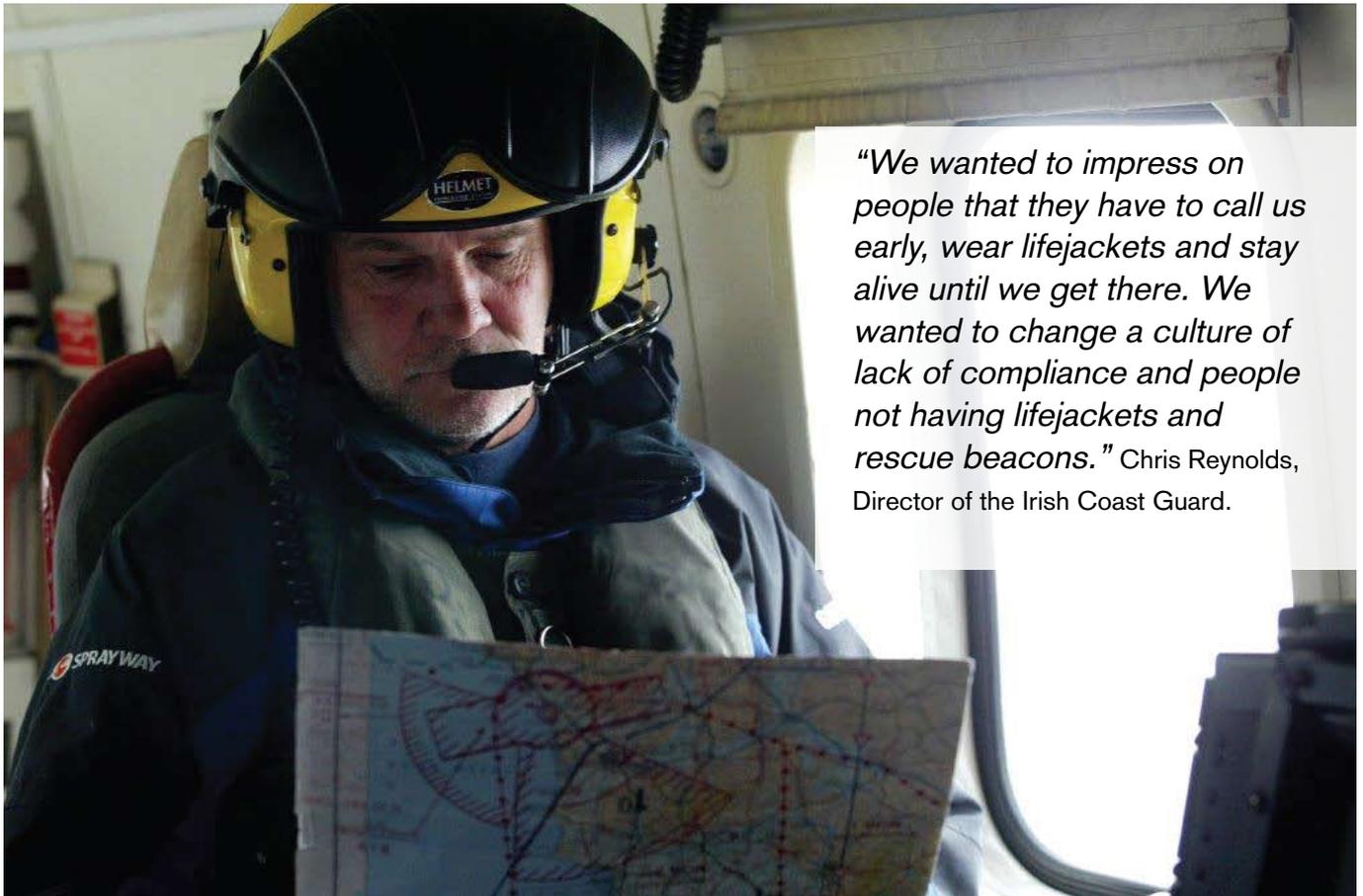


Many volunteers give up their spare time to organisations such as the RNLi.

'IRELAND'S SEARCH AND RESCUE' HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE THIRD SERIES

- EPISODE 1:** Search and rescue mission for the crew of the fishing vessel the 'Tit Bonhomme' in Cork, followed by the multi-agency rescue in Portmarnock, when a local mother accidentally drives her car over a cliff with six children inside.
- EPISODE 2:** Dublin's Coast Guard Helicopter 'Rescue 116' answers a call to a young man who had fallen 60 feet from a cliff in Killiney; a difficult rescue as live Dart cables surround the area. Bonfire night in Cork and Cork City Fire Brigade has one of their longest nights of the year as terrified neighbours reported bonfires burning outside their front doors. A terrified climber is rooted to the spot with vertigo 600m up Donegal's Muckish Mountain.
- EPISODE 3:** A boat bursts into flames in Cork Harbour. Stranded on rocks and hanging over an incoming tide, a Cork teenager needs the help of Crosshaven RNLi. Doolin Coast Guard race to save a climber who has fallen from the sheer heights of its Mirror wall. Dublin-Wicklow Mountain Rescue respond to a hunter who is immobilised on wet ground – hypothermia is the big fear.
- EPISODE 4:** Dual-agency rescue of a sinking trawler, off the coast of Howth Co. Dublin. Cork City Fire Brigade takes no chances when a tumble dryer goes on fire.
- EPISODE 5:** Dual agency rescue when a woman has a serious fall on her way down cliff side in Howth. Donegal Mountain Rescue Team comes to the aid of a couple lost in the fog on Muckish Mountain.
- EPISODE 6:** Hunter stranded on wet and exposed Wicklow Mountains needs the help of Dublin-Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team. Miles out to sea a fisherman has his chest crushed, and Shannon Coastguard Helicopter 'Rescue 116' is his only chance of making it to hospital. A special Christmas rescue in Waterford, as a large cuddly man in red needs something much faster than a reindeer!





“We wanted to impress on people that they have to call us early, wear lifejackets and stay alive until we get there. We wanted to change a culture of lack of compliance and people not having lifejackets and rescue beacons.” Chris Reynolds, Director of the Irish Coast Guard.

PUBLIC MINDSET CHANGES

Chris Reynolds, Director of the Irish Coast Guard, said that from the start, his organisation has been happy to be involved in the programme.

Reynolds had found that some people who went to sea were not fully aware of the Coast Guard service and often they made the call too late into a crisis for assistance.

“We wanted to impress on people that they have to call us early, wear lifejackets and stay alive until we get there. We wanted to change a culture of lack of compliance and people not having lifejackets and rescue beacons.

“You can stay alive in the water for up to an hour and if you are within any distance of the coast, we can get there and you can survive.”

When RTE wanted a second series, the Coast Guard was keen to change location and show a different side of its work.

“In Waterford, people get lost in the Comeragh Mountains, small boats get into difficulty, or surfers and people on the shoreline are standard.

“Shannon was, for example, much

more offshore. It involved foreign fishing vessels, language issues and the ambulance service for the west coast islands.”

CREDIT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Now he said there’s the need to highlight the spirit of volunteerism behind so many of the services. “On the stormiest bleakest night, we ask them to go to sea or search cliffs, and I know no other country with that level of volunteer involvement,” he remarked.

“It is time that volunteers got credit and this is a way that RTE as a state broadcaster can show all the good work that’s going on.” The feedback to and from staff of the Coast Guard about the programmes is positive, he says.

The Coast Guard director agrees with Janet Frawley that the Sunday evening slot of the broadcasts makes it family viewing, adding that this constrains showing some aspects of the work.

“We do some more serious rescues but it’s not suitable for showing at 6.30 pm, because it would be too intense, so it’s preferable to show some of the lighter stuff.”

CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

The RNLI was involved because it had previously featured on some episodes during the first ‘Rescue 117’ series, according to Niamh Stephenson, RNLI’s Public Relations Manager.

“We rely on the generosity of the public. We were rolling out the installation of cameras on lifeboats and helmet cameras for training purposes so we had footage,” she explained.

Stephenson says cameras are now operational at most RNLI stations around the country, and the crew can edit the footage themselves.

She likes the fact that the TV series has a good geographical spread. The animal rescue stories are very popular with viewers.

“The RNLI crews are so modest that they might describe a rescue as very straightforward. But the visual image is great because when you see the footage you see how challenging the conditions can be.”

“The series has been extremely popular and it doesn’t hurt to have been seen on TV when you’re shaking a bucket for donations,” she says.

MAJOR INCREASE IN IRISH LIFEBOAT SUMMER LAUNCHES

RNLI VOLUNTEER LIFEBOAT CREWS IN IRELAND WERE KEPT BUSY THIS SUMMER, WITH THE CHARITY'S LIFEBOATS LAUNCHING 571 TIMES DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST. THE FIGURE REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF 43 PER CENT ON THE PREVIOUS SUMMER.

While many people were enjoying the prolonged sunshine and the hottest summer for a number of years, Irish RNLI lifeboat crews were out helping those in trouble around the Irish coast and on inland waters at Lough Derg, Lough Ree and Lough Erne.

The busiest lifeboat station in Ireland over the summer period (1 June to 31 August) was Dun Laoghaire which was called out 34 times. This was followed by Portrush in Antrim who launched 26 times and Crosshaven in Cork, whose volunteer crew were out 25 times during the summer period.

Some lifeboat stations showed a large increase in their call outs on the same period last year with Skerries, Wicklow, and Fenit lifeboat crews, which launched 17 times each, doubling their launches from last year. Courtown in Wexford went from launching once last summer to 13 times this year.

'OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT'

Gareth Morrison, RNLI Divisional Operations Manager, said: "With more people travelling to the coast over the summer months RNLI volunteer lifeboat crews were busy keeping people safe. The commitment shown by our lifesavers that launched at all hours of the day and night in various conditions was outstanding.

"Not every lifeboat launch ends in a rescue and sadly some of our dedicated volunteer crews dealt with some difficult and challenging callouts. Their professionalism and determination in bringing loved ones home when they get in trouble on the water is to be commended."

RNLI volunteer lifeboat crews in



The busiest lifeboat station in Ireland over the summer period was Dun Laoghaire. (Pic David Branigan/Dun Laoghaire RNLI)

Ireland have been involved in a number of dramatic rescues this summer. In July, 30 people were rescued by Kinsale and Courtmacsherry lifeboat crews when the tall ship Astrid was blown onto rocks and was taking on water off the south coast.

Dun Laoghaire RNLI all-weather lifeboat and Howth RNLI inshore lifeboat rescued six people on Dublin Bay in August after their boat capsized and they were clinging to the upturned hull.

Volunteer lifeboat crew with Tramore RNLI responded when a six-metre half decker boat capsized with four men onboard off the Waterford coast.

One man managed to swim to shore and the remaining three were recovered by the Tramore RNLI inshore lifeboat crew. One of the three was then airlifted off the lifeboat by the Coast Guard helicopter.

SUMMER TRAGEDIES

Sadly the summer also saw some tragedies on Irish waters and the lifeboat

crew at Dunmore East was involved with the Coast Guard helicopter Rescue 117 in bringing home the three brothers who drowned while out were fishing off Dunmore East in June.

Gareth Morrison said that without the hard work and kind generosity of both supporters and fundraisers "we would not be able to equip and train our lifesavers or help so many people in trouble at sea and on inland waters".

RNLI VOLUNTEERS

RNLI volunteers provide a 24-hour search and rescue service around Ireland and the UK. Operating over 230 lifeboat stations with 43 in Ireland, the RNLI is independent of the Coast Guard and the Government and depends on voluntary donations and legacies to maintain its rescue service.

Since the RNLI was founded in 1824 its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 137,000 lives. For more information visit www.rnli.ie

MORE IRISH YOUTHS HOOKED ON DESIGNER DRUGS

A NEW EUROPEAN STUDY HAS REVEALED THAT IRISH YOUTHS ARE THE BIGGEST USERS OF DANGEROUS DESIGNER DRUGS IN THE EU. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IS NOW PLANNING TO TIGHTEN ITS RULES ON THE GROWING PROBLEM OF THESE PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES, WHICH ARE USED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO COCAINE OR ECSTASY.

New psychoactive substances are a growing problem; the number detected in the EU has tripled between 2009 and 2012. So far in 2013, more than one new substance has been reported every week.

The use of such substances is highest among Ireland's 15-24 year-olds; 16.3 per cent of Irish youths have used such substances at least once in their lives, compared to an EU average of five per cent.

The next highest users of designer drugs are Poland, Latvia and the UK at around 10 per cent, according to a 2011 Eurobarometer on 'Youth Attitudes on Drugs'.

A new European Commission proposal will allow the EU to withdraw dangerous designer drugs from the consumer market at short notice. The new proposal will address threats posed by these substances in two ways. Firstly, there will be a faster reaction to the availability of dangerous designer drugs on the market, and secondly, the types of action will be proportionate to the potential harm of a certain substance.

In particularly serious cases it will be possible to withdraw substances immediately from the market for one year. Substances which pose severe risks to consumers' health will be subject to criminal law provisions.

INTERNET AVAILABILITY

The substances are increasingly available over the internet and rapidly spread between EU countries; 80 per cent of new psychoactive substances are now detected in more than one EU country.

Studies have shown that consuming new psychoactive substances can be

fatal. For instance, the substance 5-IT reportedly killed 24 people in four EU countries, in just five months, between April and August 2012. Meanwhile, 4-MA, a substance which imitates amphetamine, was associated with 21 deaths in four EU countries in 2010-2012 alone.

The Commission's latest proposal was presented by EU Justice Commissioner Vice-President Viviane Reding. "Legal highs are a growing problem in Europe and it is young people who are most at risk.

With a borderless internal market, we need common EU rules to tackle this problem," said Reding.

"We propose strong legislation on new psychoactive substances so that the EU can provide a faster and more effective response, including the ability to immediately remove harmful substances from the market on a temporary basis."

Under the rules proposed by the Commission, harmful psychoactive substances will be withdrawn quickly from the market, without jeopardising their various legitimate industrial and commercial uses.

The proposals follow warnings from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and Europol about the scale of the problem; a 2011 report found that the EU's current mechanism for tackling new psychoactive substances needed bolstering.

QUICKER PROCEDURES

The current system of detecting and banning these new drugs was established in 2005. At present it takes a minimum of two years to ban a substance in the EU. In the future, the EU will be able to act within just 10 months. In particularly serious



cases, the procedure will be shorter still as it will also be possible to withdraw substances immediately from the market for one year.

This measure will make sure the substance is no longer available to consumers while a full risk assessment is being carried out. Under the current system, no temporary measures are possible and the Commission needs to wait for a full risk assessment report to be completed before making a proposal to restrict a substance.

It will also provide for a more proportionate system. The new system will allow for a graduated approach where substances posing a moderate risk will be subject to consumer market restrictions and substances posing a high risk to full market restrictions.

The Commission proposals now need to be adopted by the European Parliament and by member states in the Council of the European Union in order to become law.

BOXING CLEVER FOR JACK AND JILL

THE GARDA BOXING CLUB RECENTLY RAISED OVER €4,500 FOR THE JACK AND JILL FOUNDATION, FOLLOWING THEIR COMPREHENSIVE WIN OVER A VISITING TEAM OF NYPD BOXERS TO CASTLEBAR AS PART OF THE GATHERING IN MAYO IN EARLY OCTOBER. DECLAN KEOGH GOT A RINGSIDE SEAT.

As part of The Gathering celebrations in Mayo, 13 members of the New York Police Department (NYPD) were invited to Ireland by Westport Garda Darren Conlon, a leading member of the Garda Boxing Club.

The tournament on 5 October attracted hundreds of people including VIPs and dignitaries to Castlebar's Welcome Inn Hotel to watch both the Gardaí and the NYPD box for charity.

Among them was Garda Deputy Commissioner Noirín O' Sullivan, NYPD Chief of Police Brian McCarthy, MEP Jim Higgins, Mayor of Castlebar Noreen Heston, Mayo Chief Supt Barry O'Brien plus other invited guests.

This is the 26th anniversary since the first event of its kind took place in New York and this is the second time it has been hosted in Ireland by An Garda Síochána.

Praising the event organisers, Deputy Commissioner Noirín O'Sullivan said it was an excellent way to engage with communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

"It was a wonderful and prestigious event and as part of The Gathering it was a great opportunity to bring the event to Castlebar. The welcome that both the Gardaí and NYPD received from the locals was impressive.

It is very important that Gardaí work with our communities and give something back to them. It's all about using sport to engage with the community in an effort to break down the barriers," she said.

The NYPD Chief of Police Brian McCarthy and President of the NYPD Boxing Club Dave Sieve were among the invited representatives who travelled from New York. The NYPD Boxing Club fights for charity all over the world, and according to Sieve, they like to



Westport Garda Darren Conlon, a leading member of the Garda Boxing Club, organised the event.



Garda Deputy Commissioner Noirín O'Sullivan at the ringside.



With 10 bouts in total, the Garda boxers in the red corner defeated the NYPD boxers in the blue corner comprehensively by 9:1.

reciprocate with other boxing clubs in other countries.

He said "It's a good time and a good thing to do right now, people don't appreciate the police or garda enough and society wouldn't function without a state police force. The NYPD are delighted to be here in Ireland and I want to thank Darren Conlon for organising the event and inviting us over."

VOLUNTARY SUPPORT

The planning and organisation of the event was undertaken on a voluntary basis by Garda Darren Conlon with the support of up to 30 Garda colleagues and people.

They raised over €4,000 on the night and this will be added to the massive funds already generated.

Following the boxing tournament,

Garda Conlon described the event as "a great achievement" noting that the €4,500 raised for the Jack and Jill Foundation – to be added to the €150,000 raised in just two years – was "the cherry on the cake".

Mayo Chief Supt Barry O' Brien also acknowledged the immense voluntary work put into this event by Garda Conlon and his colleagues.

"A lot of work went into it, between logistics, getting the NYPD here, transport, accommodation and facilities. Most of the people worked on this voluntarily, and the support of the local businesses was tremendous. It was more of a community event as opposed to a Garda and NYPD event."

Editorial and images courtesy Declan Keogh; www.emergencytimes.ie

FRAMEWORK FOR A HEALTHY IRELAND

A WIDE FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE NATION, ACCORDING TO MINISTER OF STATE KATHLEEN LYNCH, DURING HER KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO A CONFERENCE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY.

The workplace can be a strong contributor to mental wellbeing, giving people the opportunity to feel productive and achieve their potential. Yet it can also be a stressful environment that contributes to the rise of mental health problems and illnesses such as depression and anxiety, this is especially true to those working in our emergency services.

Workplace stress should be everybody's concern and collaboration between staff and management is essential if we are to recognise the stressors in our work environments and overcome them.

Stress is not always harmful but when it is allowed to build up unchecked it can pose a threat to our physical and mental well-being, so we need to recognise when we are stressed, know how to deal with it and, if necessary, know where to seek help.

Research has found that the majority of Irish people would deliberately conceal a mental health problem at work for fear of its negative impact on career prospects and professional relationships.

Last year IBEC launched a 'Line Manager's Guide to Mental Health and Well Being', which points out that early intervention is key and that line managers and colleagues are crucial to promoting a culture that is positive towards mental health.

HEALTHY IRELAND

In March 2013 the Government launched 'Healthy Ireland' – a new government framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland over the coming generation.

'Healthy Ireland' sets out a wide framework of actions that will be undertaken by government departments, public sector organisations, businesses,



Pictured (l-r): Mairéad Bracken, Dept of Psychology, NUI Maynooth, and secretary of CISM Network Ireland; Sharon Gallagher, Dept of Psychology, NUI Maynooth, and co-ordinator of CISM Network Ireland; Lt Col Ollie Barbour, PRO of CISM Network Ireland; Norita Robinson, development manager of IOSH Ireland Branch; Tom Madden, chair of IOSH Healthcare Division; Kathleen Lynch, Minister of State, Department of Health and Department of Justice, Equality & Defence; David Maher, National Ambulance Service CISM Committee, IOSH Healthcare Division; Dr Sinéad McGilloway, Dept of Psychology, NUI Maynooth; Brigitta O'Doherty, Office of Emergency Planning, and chair of CISM Network Ireland; Prof Bernard Mahon, Vice-President for Research, NUI Maynooth; and John Guiney, Irish Prison Service.

communities and individuals to improve health and wellbeing and reduce the risks posed to future generations.

Included in the framework is a requirement that all public sector organisations and workplaces promote and protect the health and wellbeing of their workforce, their clients and the community they serve.

Funding of €7.5 million is now available from the special allocations for mental health to provide psychological and counselling services in primary care, specifically for people with mental health problems who are eligible under the General Medical Services (GMS) scheme.

**This is a synopsis of a keynote conference address given by Kathleen Lynch, Minister of State, Department of Health and Department of Justice, Equality & Defence, at 'Occupational Health and Safety: A Psychological Perspective' jointly organised by the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Network Ireland and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).*

CISM NETWORK IRELAND WORKSHOP

CISM Network Ireland will host a half-day workshop 'Peer Support: Bridging the Gap for Frontline Workers' on Friday 1 November in the John Hume Building, North Campus, NUI Maynooth.

The keynote address will be given by Máire Armstong, chair of the HSE Working Group on the Prevention and Management of Stress and Critical Incident Stress in the Workplace.

Attendance fee is €20 for members of CISM Network Ireland, €30 for non-members; and €20 for students. Visit www.cismnetworkireland.ie for booking information, email info@cismnetworkireland.ie or contact Sharon Gallagher: 087-9369378.



TREATY CITY TO BECOME CULTURE CAPITAL

LIMERICK IS LOOKING FORWARD WITH ANTICIPATION TO ITS REIGN AS IRELAND'S FIRST NATIONAL CITY OF CULTURE IN 2014. THE CITY IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING A PROCESS OF PROFOUND CHANGE AND 2014 WILL BE THE YEAR IN WHICH A NEW SINGLE LOCAL AUTHORITY WILL BE ESTABLISHED.

Culture is at the very core of life in Limerick and so it is little wonder that it has been awarded the first ever designation of National City of Culture in 2014. Limerick will celebrate this prestigious award with a high quality, exciting programme of events and initiatives throughout next year, building on the long established, thriving, vibrant cultural scene already active in Limerick.

The full programme of events for 2014 will be launched in the coming weeks, but already it is shaping up to be a monumental year for Limerick. During its historic designation as National City of Culture, Limerick aims to welcome many new and returning visitors to the city and county by lifting the lid on the rich and diverse culture capacity of Limerick and exhibit to each other and to the wider world the very best the city has to offer, leaving a lasting and revitalised sense of pride in place.

Earlier this year, the Limerick City of Culture team received over 350 project suggestions spanning sport, food, craft, arts, heritage and history, education, community arts, biodiversity and environment. The overwhelming response from local cultural organisations has given a clear picture of what groups on the ground are planning, with everything from plays on the River Shannon to a tea dance on O'Connell Street and lots more in between. Limerick's residents are fully embracing the Treaty City's upcoming year as culture central.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

A number of festivals and events already set to embrace Limerick's year as National City of Culture include the Kate O'Brien Literary Festival in February, *eva* International returns in April and the city's biggest festival Riverfest will also come



on board during the May Bank Holiday weekend.

The Limerick City of Culture team has been working closely with arts and cultural groups across Limerick, discussing ideas and requesting proposals for the City of Culture. Limerick's Cultural Pillar Groups also regularly meet to discuss the project.

The pillars were chosen to represent the six main cultural avenues which will be incorporated during the year and to give representatives from those key areas a forum to develop the extraordinary year ahead. The pillars include Venues and Institutions, Sports, Heritage and History, Food and Craft, Community and Culture, Arts and Artists, Business, Festival and Events and Inclusion and Diversity.

AMBITIOUS PLANS

National City of Culture 2014 is an ambitious plan to establish Limerick as an internationally recognised location for culture next year and beyond. The initiative will seek to bring together the city's artists, arts organisations, local authorities and civic groups through a calendar of

events to showcase all that Limerick has to offer in arts and cultural expression.

The establishment of a new single local authority to govern Limerick in 2014 provides a unique opportunity to lead the economic recovery of the city and to create a new positive image built upon its wealth of culture, sport and heritage.

Limerick welcomes this designation as an exceptional opportunity for the city and county, a chance to use culture as an important catalyst to enhance the image of Limerick.

Limerick was announced as the first National City of Culture for 2014 by Jimmy Deenihan, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht last year.

As part of the initiative, a city in Ireland will be selected and designated as a National City of Culture every two years with the designation itself lasting for one calendar year. Limerick's designation as National City of Culture starts on 1 January 2014.

For more information visit www.limerickcityofculture.ie

LIMERICK HAS MAJOR PLANS IN THE PIPELINE

THE ROLL-OUT OF THE LIMERICK ECONOMIC AND SPATIAL PLAN 2030 IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF THE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE TREATY CITY AND THE WIDER REGION IN RECENT TIMES, DESPITE THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN.

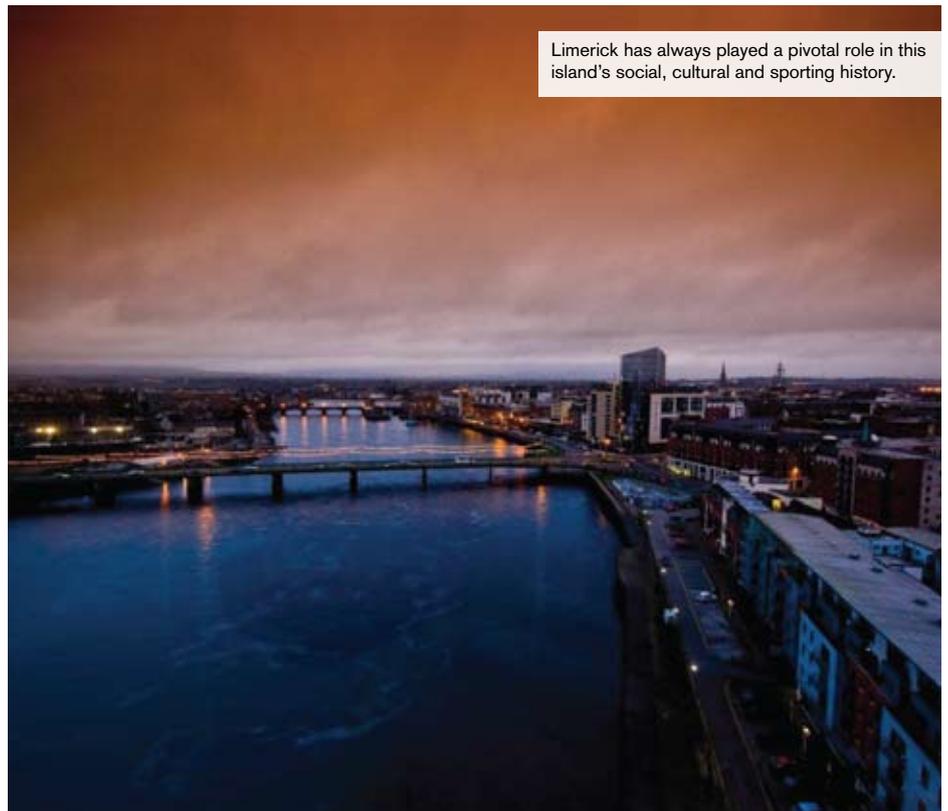
Limerick is a city very much moving forward with one eye on its rich past and another on the future. The Republic of Ireland's third largest city, Limerick has always played a pivotal role in this island's social, cultural and sporting history.

The City is home to the University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College and the Limerick Institute of Technology, Munster Rugby, the Limetree Theatre and University Concert Hall, Lough Gur. It has also produced such cultural icons as actor Richard Harris, opera singer Catherine Hayes, novelist Frank McCourt, broadcaster Terry Wogan, composer Bill Whelan and businessman JP McManus.

The launch of the Limerick Economic and Spatial Plan 2030, the amalgamation of Limerick City and County Councils, the €6 million restoration of King John's Castle, the recent investment announcement by Marks and Spencers and the naming of Limerick as Ireland's first National City of Culture in 2014 are all signs that the coming years will bring about significant and positive change.

Leading the marketing element of the 2030 plan is the recently established Limerick Marketing Company – Ireland's first dedicated marketing company for a city/county - whose primary objective is to promote the city and county as one of Ireland's top destinations for business, tourism and education to national and international audiences.

Limerick welcomed 383,000 overseas leisure and business visitors in 2011, generating estimated revenue of €143 million. However, by 2018, it is hoped that this will double to around 766,000 people, providing a total boost to the local economy of €286 million each year.



Limerick has always played a pivotal role in this island's social, cultural and sporting history.



Artist's impression of the proposed development of Arthur's Quay in Limerick – one of main retail and business districts in the city.

BLUEPRINT FOR DEVELOPMENT

“Limerick City and County Councils, through the launch of Limerick 2030, recognise that a prospering Limerick City is critical to the future prosperity of the county and the wider mid-west region,” explained Conn Murray, Manager and CEO of Limerick City and County Council.

He added that the objectives contained within this plan build on the huge amount of work already undertaken during recent years to transform Limerick into a vibrant 21st century city.

“Like all long-term urban development projects, Limerick 2030 places those who live, work and visit Limerick very much at its heart in terms of how the various strategies will be implemented. The new marketing company will have a pivotal role to play in this process and the re-emergence of Limerick as a leading visitor destination and location for investment,” he noted.

Eoghan Prendergast, who is heading up the new marketing company, said Limerick 2030 is the blueprint by which the future development of Limerick will be guided in the coming years.

“The focus of the company is about getting more people into Limerick. That means more potential investors, tourists and students to work, holiday, live and study here.

This will be achieved through a dynamic ongoing marketing campaign across traditional media, our attendance at national and international trade, travel and business shows, and through smart, digital media place-marketing of Limerick,” according to Prendergast.

AGENCY COLLABORATION

“Our marketing efforts will be conducted in close collaboration with state agencies such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, as well as local and regional development agencies, and the private sector.”

Prendergast said the company will not solely focus on the city, adding: “It will have a single focus to market the city and county as the sum of its parts. I cannot think of another location which has the strength of product - when you combine a modern city, a dynamic young creative city that is so rich in mediaeval and Georgian heritage with such a rich and creative county, we have a very strong product to market.”

“Our marketing efforts will be conducted in close collaboration with state agencies such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, as well as local and regional development agencies, and the private sector” – Eoghan Prendergast, head of Limerick Marketing Company



Marketing the City of Culture 2014 programme will be the first major undertaking by the new office. This ambitious initiative seeks to establish Limerick as an internationally recognised location for culture in 2014 and beyond. Limerick will celebrate this prestigious designation with a high-quality programme of events and initiatives leading into and during the City of Culture 2014.

The completion of the Limerick Tunnel and M7 Nenagh to Limerick Motorway projects, the delivery of quality connectivity to international markets via a resurgent independent Shannon International Airport, and the €1.5 million redevelopment of John's Square's as Limerick's Living Cultural Quarter, have all reinforced Limerick's position as a thriving location.

In addition, the completion of the



Howley's Quay development along the banks of the River Shannon in Limerick City, the delivery of the Limerick Regeneration project, and the long standing tradition of investments by multinationals based in the local area have helped Limerick to set its sights on realising a vision which drives the wider region into the middle of the 21st century and beyond.



Linda Smith, Director of Women's Aid National Freephone Helpline (1800 341 900) pictured with Margaret Martin, Director of Women's Aid.

WOMEN'S AID REPORTS INCREASE IN CHILD ABUSE IN IRELAND

WITH A 55 PER CENT INCREASE IN CHILD ABUSE CASES REPORTED TO WOMEN'S AID LAST YEAR, THE NATIONAL CHARITY BELIEVES THE BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLE OF PROTECTING THE CHILD THROUGH PROTECTING THE NON-ABUSIVE PARENT, USUALLY THE MOTHER, NEEDS TO BE FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGED AND REFLECTED IN ANY CHANGES TO FAMILY LAW OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION.

The Women's Aid National Freephone Helpline and One-to-One Support Services heard 16,200 disclosures of physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse of women last year. The national charity also noted an additional 3,230 disclosures of child abuse.

Research and Women's Aid's own experience shows that domestic violence is a very common context in which child abuse takes place and that the more severe the domestic violence is against the mother, the higher the risk of abuse against the children in the home.

Women's Aid is calling for greater recognition of the links between domestic

violence and child abuse and says the Government can take steps to immediately increase the safety of vulnerable women and children.

The figures from Women's Aid show that threats, abuse, intimidation and violence are a daily reality for thousands of women and children.

Margaret Martin, Women's Aid Director, said that domestic violence is a serious crime against women and children in Irish society but one that is hidden and minimised.

Speaking at the launch of the 2012 Annual Report, she said: "Women told us on 3,230 occasions that their children were being hit, including with household

items, smacked, constantly shouted at, and in some cases, sexually abused.

"Children have witnessed their pets being abused, kicked and thrown against walls. At times, the perpetrator of the abuse has deliberately targeted the children as a way to hurt both them and their mother."

EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

In addition to the disclosures of direct child abuse, in 1,211 calls it was reported that children were bearing witness to the most horrific abuse and violence against their mothers.

Exposure to domestic violence is recognised in the Children First

Guidelines as a form of emotional abuse of children with detrimental effects to their well-being.

“Many children have witnessed their mother being shouted at, threatened, physically assaulted and at times have seen their mother being raped. Where they have not directly seen the abuse occurring they may have overheard abusive incidents, or seen the aftermath of it such as bruises, broken bones, damaged furniture and belongings.”

Women who called the Women’s Aid Helpline in 2012 were worried about protecting their children. “It is heart-breaking to listen to women who are living in a constant state of fear for their children and themselves,” according to the Women’s Aid director.

“As much as they can, women work hard to protect their children and to keep their children’s lives as safe, stable and normal as possible despite the domestic violence at home. Their voices should be heard and respected.”

Women’s Aid believes that custody and access arrangements in Family Law proceedings often disregard the impact of domestic violence on children and as a result risk continuing abuse of the children as well as exposure to abuse of their mother during the hand over period.

“Child contact should not outweigh child protection and safety should be prioritised in all custody and access proceedings. To do anything less is to fail women and children,” noted Martin.

CHILD PROTECTION

Women’s Aid believes that the best practice principle of protecting the child through protecting the non-abusive parent, usually the mother, needs to be further acknowledged and reflected in any changes to Family Law or Domestic Violence Legislation as well as in any Child Protection structures.

Women’s Aid is also calling for the provision of an out-of-hours on call system for emergency barring orders which would provide 24/7 access to legal protection for women and their children when they need it the most.

Women’s Aid also calls on the Government to sign up to Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Domestic Violence (known as the Istanbul Convention) as a sign of its commitment to end violence against women.



HIGHLIGHTS OF WOMEN’S AID ANNUAL REPORT

- *There was a 55% increase in child abuse reports to Women’s Aid in 2012.*
- *A total of 16,200 disclosures of domestic violence against women were made to Women’s Aid Services in 2012.*
- *A total of 3,230 disclosures of emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children were made to the Women’s Aid National Freephone Helpline.*
- *Women’s Aid calls for 24/7 access to legal protection for vulnerable women and children and for the Government to sign up to the Istanbul Convention.*

PRISONER IN THEIR OWN HOME

One in five women in Ireland are abused by a current or former husband, partner or boyfriend, at some stage in their lifetime; the Women’s Aid National Freephone Helpline answered 11,729 calls in 2012.

“In 2012, women disclosed to Women’s Aid that they were kept prisoner in their own homes, spat on, punched, slapped, kicked, held down and strangled and beaten with household items with many women disclosing that they were beaten and raped during pregnancy.

“Women told us that they were constantly verbally abused, belittled, criticised, blamed and stalked and harassed via technology during the relationship and after leaving. Women reported that they had been raped, sexually assaulted and given no option but to comply

“Women’s freedom and options had been curtailed because of sustained financial abuse including being denied household monies, being forced to take out loans in their names only and having their employment jeopardised.”

RECESSION HAMPERS ESCAPE

Martin added: “The ability of some women

to escape domestic violence is being hampered by the recession. Women fear increased impoverishment, losing their home and the effect of poverty on their children.

Women, who do try to leave, often find it harder or impossible to access vital supports such as housing, refuge, welfare and legal representation.

“While many cannot escape the abuse, other women discover that leaving an abusive relationship does not always mean an end to the abuse. In fact, it can, at times, escalate it. In 2012, 49 per cent of the women supported in our ‘One-to-One’ service were experiencing abuse from a former husband, partner or boyfriend.”

For almost 40 years, Women’s Aid has helped countless women and children to go on to lead safe and fulfilling lives.

“When women call the National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900 we listen to them, we offer support, information and encouragement.

We help find them refuge, accompany them to court and help build new lives where they and their children can be safe,” concluded the Director of Women’s Aid.

WOMEN'S AID UK BUILDS LINKS ACROSS THE SECTORS

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PRIORITIES FOR WOMEN'S AID UK IS TO BUILD LINKS WITH PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE. HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER EMERGENCY SERVICES HAVE A KEY ROLE TO PLAY TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ACCORDING TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE POLLY NEATE.

Women's Aid UK has experienced a time of real change and challenge, and leading such a well-respected organisation, which is nearing its 40th anniversary, in a rapidly changing sector was never going to be an easy task.

Now that we have our new strategy in place, as launched at our national conference in July, and a clear vision for the future, I'm really looking forward to the challenges ahead.

Domestic violence is at the root of a number of intractable problems the emergency services come into contact with every day, from A&E staff dealing with the physical injuries caused by domestic violence, to police officers dealing with domestic violence calls.

Domestic abuse also has less obvious impacts on our emergency services – victims of domestic violence are very likely to require emergency healthcare for issues caused indirectly by the emotional or financial abuse they suffer, for example being denied medication. Truancy and childhood anti-social behaviour is a response to abuse in the home for many children.

Joined-up work between the emergency services and organisations like Women's Aid are absolutely vital if we are to ensure survivors are kept safe and domestic violence is not allowed to continue behind closed doors, ruining lives and costing public services money during stringent times.

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

Provision is key and one difficulty faced by organisations is not knowing where

to refer members of the public who disclose that they are being abused. As part of our plan to strengthen links with professionals working with survivors and overall communication with domestic violence services, Women's Aid has recently launched the UK Gold Book Online – a directory of support services updated daily, providing non-specialist organisations with the information they need to refer women locally.

This vital new resource should provide an excellent grounding for emergency service and other organisations seeking to improve their referrals process for the women they come into contact with who require support with abuse.

Furthermore, with the launch of the Women's Aid National Training Centre this year at the Women's Aid National Conference, we are seeking to share good practice to frontline staff and managers directly.

The Training Centre already delivers specialist training designed to support health professionals identify, approach, and support women experiencing abuse, and we also provide bespoke training for other public and emergency service workers who wish to develop their knowledge and understanding in this area.

As one in four women will be affected



by domestic violence in her lifetime, we are also developing training for employers, to support organisations in dealing with domestic violence as an occupational health issue. Managers at every level of the emergency services need to be aware that domestic violence can have a significant impact on employee wellbeing and performance.

FOCUS ON FUNDING

As well as significant absences due to illness or injury, domestic violence can leave women feeling unable to perform their work, or cause significant mental health difficulties. Sensitive managers who are able to identify the warning signs, gently support staff to disclose and help employees access support will not only meet occupational health duties, will have a healthier, safer, and more motivated workforce.

Over the coming months, Women's Aid will be campaigning on a number of issues, supported by the links we are building across the sectors. A particular focus is funding – with welfare changes across the UK cutting into service provision, which is the safety net for women escaping domestic abuse, many in the sector are very concerned that we will not be able to support the women who need us.

Ensuring refuges and outreach services are supported and immune from further cuts is a major task, and it will require a united voice across the sector. Having consulted our members, our policy team is ready to make the arguments to government that cutting vital services now will lead to greater costs, human and financial, in the future.

PRIMARY PERPETRATORS

Secondly, we continue to work to challenge the myths and misconceptions that abound about domestic abuse, for example, the widespread misconception that domestic abuse is a gender-neutral crime.

Unfortunately, we see gendered differences both in perpetrators and victims, and the way they are dealt with by our public services.

One shocking revelation from our national conference was that, despite male perpetrators being much more likely to repeatedly victimise their partners than women, and to commit much more severe abuse, women were three times more likely than men to be arrested when identified by police as the primary perpetrator of domestic violence.

If we are to address domestic violence, problems like these absolutely must be addressed and our emergency services must be equipped with the information they need to respond to domestic violence responsibly.

Overall, the view for the future is

WOMEN'S AID CONFERENCE: PROSECUTIONS REACHED RECORD HIGHS

Prosecutions for domestic and sexual violence reached record highs in 2011/12, according to the findings of the CPS Annual Report into Domestic Violence, which were revealed at the Women's Aid National Conference.

The conference on 11 and 12 July at Warwick University gave an opportunity for Women's Aid members, others in the sector, and related professionals to learn about best practice and network.

The most anticipated plenary of the public day was the second plenary on male victims and domestic violence, including contributions from Simon Borja of the Safer Wales project and Marianne Hester from Bristol University.

Their talks were well matched, highlighting the importance of gender in discussions of domestic violence. Borja's update on the specific needs of male survivors, and the difficulties of perpetrators presenting as victims, were mirrored in Hester's research, which highlighted the asymmetries in reported violence perpetrated by men and women.

The evidence provided in this talk may be of particular interest to those services looking to justify local authority funding for gender-specialist services, as discussed in the Friday morning workshop on navigating the tendering process.

The discussion on young people was picked out as a highlight for many Women's Aid. The presence of domestic violence survivor Sophie on the panel added a depth to the conversation it is difficult to achieve without direct testimony, and really brought to life the points made by Jemma Price from the CRUSH project.

The lack of provision and education for young people, who often fall between the gap in services for children affected by violent parents and those for older women in violent relationships, was well articulated. Thienhuong Nguyen, the Women's Aid Children and Young People's Officer was able to provide some information on the steps being taken to fill this gap.

Further interest was added by 'X Factor' star and Women's Aid Ambassador Jahméne Douglas, who spoke movingly of his experiences of domestic violence as a child. Jahméne told the conference that even though the abuse stops, the experiences do not. He said it is absolutely vital both to ensure survivors have ongoing support and that young people are taught about healthy relationships to prevent abuse in the first place.

The member's only day brought some brilliant conversations about the new Women's Aid strategy, the launch of the new National Training Centre, and some tough discussions about how to survive in a rapidly changing sector.

Stella Creasy MP and Tammy Fevrier from the Social Justice Directorate at the Department for Work and Pensions lead a discussion of the impact of recent policy changes on survivors and services, allowing members to take stock of the challenges ahead.

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challenging, but invigorating – while we face many obstacles, we are determined more than ever to end domestic violence. Having had time to settle into my role

and oversee a change of strategy and of structure, I look forward to working with a host of new partner agencies to help end violence against women and children.

LIFESAVING FOUNDATION TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

CELEBRATING ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, THE LIFESAVING FOUNDATION HAS ROLLED OUT A NEW RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN, IS PLANNING TO INCREASE ITS RANGE OF SERVICES FOR MEMBERS AND IS ALSO LOOKING TO APPOINT A PART-TIME EMPLOYEE.

Like all charities in Ireland, we are struggling to fund ourselves. So, we have decided that rather than shrink our activities we will instead expand them within and outside of Ireland and hold a new membership drive," according to John Connolly, the honorary chief executive officer of the Lifesaving Foundation.

Connolly claimed that while this is financially risky, nonetheless he believes the "current situation has given us the necessary kick up the butt to go to the professional and voluntary emergency services communities and shout about what we do and have the potential to do".

He said that the Foundation also aims to provide financial and technical aid to lifesavers in developing countries. "A five-year review showed that we were in the 'give a man a fish and you feed him for a day' situation rather than the preferred 'teach a man to fish and you feed him for life' option.

"We were also aware that in bringing together some of the world's leading lifesaving experts, we have a drowning prevention obligation to our own communities.

Many drowning incidents apply worldwide to rich and poor alike but national lifesaving organisations naturally tend to focus on their specific aspects of the reasons for such incidents."

The Foundation currently has about 200 members from 10 countries on its books, and according to Connolly, "their educational qualifications range from full university professor to basic schooling, while their occupations range from medical professors to unemployed labourers". However, he claimed that what they all share is an interest in saving lives from drowning and in sharing their experiences.



Ireland Medal recipients and Lifesaving Foundation members Australian Prof John Pearn (2005), John Connolly (2012), and American Prof Linda Quan (2011) with Lifesaving Foundation chairperson Brendan Donohoe.

"With access to world leading research from within its membership and supporters, it therefore has the capacity to adopt a wide multi-faceted view of the leading causes of death by drowning," he added.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The Foundation is now expanding its services to members. The 'Members-Only' section on the website has been upgraded to include papers on drowning research, national and international drowning reports, filmed presentations from the 2011 and 2012 Foundation conferences, and drowning-related film excerpts from news organisations worldwide.

"The Foundation's board recognises that lifesavers are busy people and often don't have the time to trawl through the huge amount of material on the web. To facilitate this new service a part-time position will be created within the Foundation."

An organisation can be represented by a named individual member. An annual membership fee of €100 can be paid online at www.lifesavingfoundation.ie. "We want members to be active rescuers as this will enrich future discussions. Members can play an active or passive role in the charity; standing for election to the Board of Directors or they can access new research in the 'Members-Only' section of the website."

Every year leading members of the drowning research community are invited to Ireland to address the charity's annual conference. "Members are entitled to attend conferences, to meet participants and to receive invitations to the Ireland Medal ceremony," noted Connolly.

The Foundation's 2014 conference will take place in the Bracken Court Hotel, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin (30 September-2 October). The event will focus on the revised edition of 'The Handbook on Drowning', which will be published later this year.

AN IMPROVED SAFETY CULTURE WILL BE THE LIFESAVER

WATER SAFETY AGENCIES ARE NOW CALLING FOR MORE EDUCATION NOT REGULATION AND CITE THE NEED FOR A GREATER SAFETY CULTURE IN IRELAND FOR PEOPLE USING WATER FACILITIES, FOLLOWING THE RECORD NUMBER OF DROWNINGS DURING THE RECENT HEATWAVE. REPORT BY KARINA CORBETT.

While the whole of Ireland recently basked in the kind of heatwave not experienced in almost two decades in July of this year, it was also a summer marked by immense tragedy.

The total of 13 drownings during the entire period was the highest since the heatwave in 1976, according to John Leech, chief executive of Irish Water Safety.

"We actually think we lost more people than in 1976 but we can't be too sure due to the poor records available. I'm in this job 13 years and it's the worst summer I've had in terms of drownings. And every one of them was from swimming, which was quite remarkable."

CINDERALLA OF SAFETY

According to Leech, the Irish media and the Irish public have very little interest in water safety. "That's very unfortunate. We will talk about road safety ad nauseam, even fire safety. But not water safety. It's an area that doesn't get enough resourcing from the Government either, whereas road safety gets a lot of resources.

"In fact, Gay Byrne wouldn't take the job as chairman of the Road Safety Authority until he was assured it would be properly resourced. We are the 'Cinderella' of safety, with road and fire being the two ugly sisters"

Apart from the fact that the country experienced unusually high temperatures, Leech attributes the number of drownings to another factor also.

"During the 1980s and 90s the media made a huge deal every time there was a slurry spill or something that would



"Everyone who drowned was out of their depth and most were not in traditional bathing areas."

affect our water quality. It was always overemphasised to the point that it put people off swimming in open water.

"Therefore, we have a whole two generations who have little or no experience of swimming in open water. They learned to swim in pools but that's different. Many of those who drowned during the heatwave came from that age group."

APPROPRIATE WEATHER

Furthermore, Ireland has experienced many bad summers in the last while so a lot of children would not have had the opportunity to swim in the inland waterways such as canals, lakes and quarries, says Irish Coast Guard operations manager Declan Geoghegan.

"Those kids are teenagers now and would have gone swimming in these kinds of places during the heatwave, having maybe never done so before. We haven't had the appropriate weather for some time so people haven't been using our water facilities that much, especially the inland ones."

The sheer volume of people out enjoying the good weather also played a role. "One day in July there was over 10,000 people on the beach in Ballybunion in Co Kerry," notes Leech.

"If you think about it, there was hundreds and thousands of people out swimming, which was unprecedented. Everyone who drowned was out of their depth and most were not in traditional bathing areas."

VAT EXEMPTION FOR IRELAND'S COMMUNITY RESCUE BOATS

Corrib & Mask Rescue has become the first community rescue lifeboat to avail of VAT exemption under new legislation, in a bid to help to prevent drowning on Ireland's inland waterways.

The VAT exemption order for community rescue lifeboats was introduced under the Value-Added Tax (Refund of Tax; Rescue Boats and Related Equipment) Order 2013.

Launched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny in his home town of Castlebar, Co. Mayo, this initiative means that Community Rescue Boats Ireland (CRBI) will be able to claim back VAT on the purchase of their boats and operational expenses in accordance with the order.

Since 1985 CRBIs at sea have been in a position to claim back this VAT but CRBI's on inland waterways were omitted from the original order.



Some members of Corrib & Mask Rescue pictured with John Leech, CEO, Irish Water Safety, and An Taoiseach Enda Kenny at the launch of the VAT exemption order in the Taoiseach's home town of Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

In a recent statement, Irish Water Safety's CEO John Leech welcomed this development in saving lives on inland waterways by preventing drownings. "We hope that more communities will now be in a better financial position to establish and maintain lifeboats on our lakes so as to promote water safety and effect rescues," he added.

Community Rescue Boats Ireland (CRBI) comprises a nationwide group of independent voluntary lifeboats, which have been trained and administrated by Irish Water Safety since 1985.

Some are declared as available assets to the Coast Guard, responding to emergencies in their area of responsibility on a 24/7/365 basis. These crews have traditionally been set up following drowning tragedies in their communities.



The total of 13 drownings during the entire period was the highest since the heatwave in 1976, according to John Leech, chief executive of Irish Water Safety.

says the group will reconvene in the near future.

"We will look at the summer's incidents to see what we should put in place coming into 2014. We started visiting schools this year to talk about water safety.

We didn't get to as many as we would have liked, but we are putting plans in place to keep this going."

The Irish Coast Guard also rolled out its first-ever TV advertising campaign in June this year and that's also set to continue. The 'Stay Safe on the Water' campaign targeted families, leisure users and the fishing industry during the busy summer months. The Coast Guard was motivated to launch its first TV water safety campaign following the success of the Road Safety Authority's TV campaigns.

OVERHAUL OF OPERATIONS

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Leo Varadkar recently announced an action plan to improve maritime safety and marine emergency response services, including an overhaul of operations within the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

"The last few weeks have reminded us in the most tragic terms that water is an important but potentially lethal environment," said the Minister after the Cabinet approved the Action Plan

"The new Irish Maritime Administration will further focus the Department and its agencies on marine safety and protecting lives at sea, whether that's for leisure, fishing at sea or shipping," added Minister Varadkar.

PRIMARY AQUATIC LESSONS

So, what can be done to stop such a scale of tragedy happening again? "It can be prevented and it won't even cost a lot," says the Irish Water Safety chief. "The Department of Education recognises our Primary Aquatics Water Safety programme – commonly known as PAWS.

"Under this initiative, three modules are completed with the teacher in the classroom. We do in-service training with them over the summer. The website www.AquaAttack.ie is an interactive site to help children understand all the risks involved with water. There's a further eight classes in the pool where they learn to swim and basic life-saving techniques.

"We would like to see PAWS being made mandatory; that's not going to break the bank at all. Out of over 3,000 primary schools only 500 have signed up to it. It takes very little of the kids' time, yet it's so important. It's all about education and if we can educate our children it will bring down the number of drownings. But it will take time."

MARINE WORKING GROUP

The Marine Safety Working Group, which promotes water safety and comprises members including the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, the Irish Coast Guard and Irish Water Safety, meets four times a year. Geoghegan

CRBI BOATS ARE BASED AT:

- *Ballinskelligs, Co Kerry*
- Ballybunion, Co Kerry*
- Ballyheigue Co Kerry*
- Banna, Co Kerry*
- Bantry, Co Cork*
- Bunmahon Co Waterford*
- Cahore, Co Wexford*
- Carna, Co Galway*
- Corrib/Mask Lakes, Co Galway.*
- Derrynane, Co Kerry*
- Kilkee, Co Clare*
- Limerick City (River Shannon)*
- Schull, Co Cork*
- Tramore, Co Waterford*
- Waterford City River Rescue*

The following communities have operated rescue/recovery craft. Their inclusion does not indicate whether a boat or organisation will be found suitable for CRBI status in the future.

- *Abbeyfeale, Co Limerick*
- Blackwater Search & Rescue – River Blackwater, Fermoy*
- Blessington Reservoir, Co Wicklow*

- Bunratty Search and Rescue, Co Clare*
- Cahir (River Suir), Co Tipperary*
- Carrick-on-Suir River, Co Waterford*
- Cork River Rescue*
- Dublin City Fire Brigade, River Liffey*
- Dundalk, Co Louth*
- Foynes, Co Limerick*
- Foxford & District Search and Rescue Unit, Co Mayo*
- Killarney Water Rescue & Recovery*
- Lahinch, Co Clare*
- Lanesborough, Lough Ree, Co Longford*
- Lough Finn, Co Donegal*
- Lough Ree, Co Westmeath*
- Lough Ramor Rescue Boat*
- Mallow River Rescue – River Blackwater*
- Meath River Rescue*
- Mountshannon, Lough Derg, Co Clare*
- New Ross, Co Wexford*
- Portumna, Lough Derg, Co Galway*
- River Boyne Fisherman's Search & Rescue Group, Co Louth*
- River Foyle, Co Derry*
- River Moy Search & Rescue*
- River Slaney, Co Wexford*
- Shannon Airport, Co Clare*
- Waterford City Rescue*



Operations manager Declan Geoghegan says the Irish Coast Guard aims to promote a safety culture among people using water facilities.

INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION

Irish Water Safety's CEO John Leech says his agency would welcome greater inter-departmental and inter-agency communication and would like to see everyone working together more.

"We are a poor maritime nation. We just don't get it. There is so much water even inside our country, yet we are not very well educated about it and we don't appreciate it as much as other countries. "Water safety is far more complex than road or fire safety; there are many different types of water for instance. And then the weather and the tides are constantly changing, making it such a hazardous environment. So, we would like to see more public awareness around the area."

People themselves can also play a part to ensure that tragedy does not strike so drastically again, Leech stresses. "They must take personal responsibility for their own safety of course. They need to be educated about the type of aquatic activity they want to do before they go out and do it. It can't be a case of DIY surfing and sailing. They firstly need to learn."

EDUCATION NOT REGULATION

"So, again I would emphasise it's about education. More education is what we want, not regulation. Education is what will save lives."

Geoghegan agrees. "People need to follow simple rules. It's about things like not going out alone, understanding cold water, swimming parallel to the shoreline, knowing about tides and currents. It is our intention to promote a safety culture among people using water facilities."

EMERGENCY EXERCISE GIVES GALWAY FUEL FOR THOUGHT

A RECENT MULTI-AGENCY TRAINING EXERCISE AT THE TOPAZ TERMINAL IN GALWAY HARBOUR HAS IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF LEARNING POINTS, WRITES PAUL DUFFY, SENIOR ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, GALWAY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE. HE SAYS THE POST-EXERCISE REPORT WILL NOW HELP TO FURTHER ENHANCE THEIR RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY INCIDENTS IN GALWAY HARBOUR IN THE FUTURE.

The TOPAZ Galway Terminal stores up to 40,000 tonnes of hydrocarbon product and is sited within Galway Harbour and within 800 metres of the city centre. The site consists of four large storage tanks (the largest a 13m high and 40m diameter unleaded gasoline tank) and five smaller day tanks, one containing ethanol.

Commissioned after the UK Buncefield incident in 2005, the TOPAZ facility has considerable on-site fixed firefighting systems. An on-site 2.2 million litre water storage tank feeds twin 14,000 litres per minute fire pumps (one electric and one diesel).

The pumps feed separate foam and water ring mains which supply tank foam top pourers and tank water drenchers respectively. The tank bunds are protected by a combination of medium expansion foam pourers and low expansion fixed monitors.

The road tanker loading gantry is provided with a foam deluge system connected to a heat detection system. There are also a number of on-site mobile foam cannons. The on-site systems have been designed to facilitate fire service connection where necessary. External to the terminal, the harbour also has developed a 300mm sea water main which can deliver up to 12,000 litres per minute.

ACCIDENT REGULATIONS

The TOPAZ Terminal is an upper tier site under the Control of Major Accident Hazard Involving Dangerous Substances (COMAHDS) Regulations 2006. Therefore, it requires an internal emergency plan of the site operator and an external emergency plan of the



TOPAZ Terminal at Galway Harbour.

principal response agencies, based on the National Framework for Major Emergency Management issued by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM).

On-site fixed fire systems are designed to deal with most credible scenarios for this type of high risk site. The external emergency plan provides guidance on managing the external effects of a major incident.

Technical guidance in relation to external firefighting in terms of a large explosion or fire onsite, by the fire service is contained in the Galway Fire and Rescue Service – Major Incident Plan for Galway Harbour.

MAJOR PRACTICAL EXERCISE

On 2 May 2013 a large-scale practical exercise took place in Galway Harbour, based on a major incident at the TOPAZ Terminal. It was an opportunity to

practice an inter-agency response to a major incident involving TOPAZ, Galway Harbour Company, Galway Fire and Rescue Service, Galway City Council, An Garda Síochána, the HSE, West Region Fire Control and Civil Defence.

Objectives of the exercise:

- Practice the TOPAZ Internal Emergency Plan.
- Practice the Galway Fire and Rescue Service Major Incident Plan (MIP).
- Practice the External Emergency Plan (EEP) and activate the On-Site Co-ordination Group and Centre (OSCG & OSCC).
- Practice a full evacuation of the Enterprise Park area of Galway Harbour as per the Galway Harbour Emergency Plan (GALFIRE).

The initial scenario entailed smoke issuing from the roof breather vents on Tank 2,

resulting in a shut down and evacuation of the site. The terminal supervisor operated the fixed fire fighting systems for a pre-determined Tank 2 fire scenario. This essentially resulted in the foaming of Tank 2 (foam isolated for the exercise) and protective cooling water drenchers on surrounding Tanks 1, 3 and 4.

The fire service was called as a precaution with an initial pre-determined attendance of two Class B pumps and a foam unit. The supervisor's actions were recorded in the agreed TOPAZ /GFRS Emergency Response Plan document.

On arrival the initial fire incident commander assessed the situation and as flames were now reported from Tank 2 it was concluded that the tank top foam pourers were, for some reason, ineffective.

EXTERNAL EMERGENCY PLAN

A major incident was declared which resulted in the following pre-determined actions:

- Activation of the external evacuation siren, resulting in an SMS evacuation message sent to all occupants of the Enterprise Park by Galway Harbour Company. This message required an acknowledgement from each occupant company.
- Activation of the external emergency plan by phone to the Gardaí via the 999/112 ECAS system.
- Mobilisation of full pre-determined attendance of the fire service which consisted of:
 - Five Class B pumps from the city and surrounding county retained stations (Athenry, Loughrea and Tuam).
 - A foam tanker (GY11H1) containing 9,000 litres of foam concentrate and high capacity foam cannons and ground monitors.
 - An incident command unit (GY11C1).
 - Three 4x4 jeeps and a high volume equipment trailer.
 - A total of 39 personnel.
- Implementation of a cordon by the Gardaí.

Some fire assets responded using alternate access routes to Galway Harbour which have been identified by Galway Harbour Company and Galway City Council. On activation of the external emergency plan the on-site co-ordination group was mobilised by the SAADIAN message system, while the on-site co-ordination centre was activated and set up at a hotel on the perimeter of the harbour.

As this was classed as a hazardous materials incident Galway City Council is deemed to be the lead agency and its controller of operations was nominated as the on-site co-ordinator. The activities at the OSCC were supervised by Reidy Brophy Consultants Ltd, engaged to prepare the post-exercise report.

The Incident Command Point was set up at the terminal control room. This was a Level 3 incident under the National Incident Command System and the incident commander was the rostered senior fire officer. The command organisation also included an operations commander, command support, three operational



Initial co-ordination at the Incident Command Point.



Planning the external foam attack at the Incident Command Unit.



Sector 2 – Tank cooling.

sectors (one foam, two cooling) and three functional sectors (two pump houses and logistics).

EXTERNAL FIRE ATTACK

The initial fire service priority was to monitor the tank on fire and continue to cool surrounding exposures. It was anticipated that at some point either a tank vapour space explosion or tank roof destruction would occur potentially allowing the fire service to mount an external foam attack.

Having assessed weather conditions in consultation with Met Eireann, the fire service made down for an external foam attack using four high capacity foam cannons connected to the on-site foam main using high volume equipment. This gave a total flow rate of 15,000 litres per minute of foam solution.

In order to practice logistical elements it was assumed that foam concentrate was not available through the foam main and foam IBCs were ferried to the site from the harbour foam reserve at the harbour warehouse.

An external attack of this magnitude requires the diversion of water away from the tank drenchers.

In order to maintain tank cooling during the tank foam attack, the fire service made down ground monitors fed from the external sea-water main and on-site static water tank in order to cool tanks as follows:

- One 2700 lpm and one 1200 ground monitor to cool Tank 1 (kerosene) and Tank 3 (Diesel)
- One 2700 lpm ground monitor to cool Tank 4 (diesel)
- Two 1200 lpm ground monitors to cool Tank 8 (gasoline) and Tank 9 (ethanol)

When all equipment was in position and correctly ranged, the incident commander ordered the activation of the external sea water pump and the cooling of tanks by the fire service. Once this was successful on-site tank drenchers were switched off and the foam attack commenced.

For a short period only, 24,000 lpm of foam solution and cooling water was delivered to the site. Foam cannon and ground monitor elevation was restricted to minimise any loss from the site containment bund.

AFRAID PRINCIPLE

The tactical plan was formed using the AFRAID principle

- **A**ssess the situation and scenario
- **F**ixed systems – confirm operating and effective
- **R**einforce fixed systems if necessary
- **A**ssess the likely escalation of the situation
- **I**mplement plan for escalation
- **D**ynamic risk assessment

Generic effects and consequence models were also used to assess safe operating zones. This is particularly important in determining the tactical plan given the explosion and thermal radiation risks associated with this type of incident.

ON-SITE CO-ORDINATION

During the exercise the fire incident commander continually updated the on-site co-ordination group using a TETRA radio link. The regional fire control centre also monitored and recorded TETRA traffic in addition to normal fire service communications.



Sector 3 – Foaming Tank 2.



Sector 1 – Connecting to the static water tank.



The on-site co-ordination centre (OSCC) for the exercise.

Key areas considered at the OSCC:

- Media liaison including actual updates to a local radio station and via social media.
- The extent of the site cordon with the implementation of an actual cordon around the Harbour for a short period of time by An Garda Síochána. During this phase, traffic was monitored by liaising with Galway City Council's Traffic Control Centre.
- Evacuation including liaison with Iarnród Éireann in relation to stopping rail traffic.
- Weather forecast
- Sourcing of additional foam stocks should they be necessary.
- Oil pollution arrangements with Irish Coast Guard.
- Air exclusion zones.
- Welfare and the potential mobilisation of additional Civil Defence personnel.

At the conclusion of the exercise a simulated press conference was held with members of the OSCG fielding questions from an audience of exercise observers acting as media personnel.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The exercise was an opportunity for the Fire Service, Gardai, Galway Harbour Company, Civil Defence and TOPAZ to put into practice the training that has been

conducted over the last number of years and it was satisfying that all elements worked correctly.

For the OSCG it was an opportunity to build on the previous table top exercise conducted in January 2013 and to manage a live scenario.

From the harbour company's

perspective it was the first opportunity to practice a total harbour evacuation and a live cordon.

A number of learning points were identified in the post-exercise report by Reidy Brophy Ltd., which will help to further enhance the response to incidents in Galway Harbour in the future.



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This four-year honours degree programme is a recognised qualification for primary teaching. The course comprises theoretical education, pedagogy of curricular areas, and teaching practice in primary schools.

B.ED in Education and Psychology: (MI008)

This four-year honours degree programme is a joint degree in Primary Teaching and Psychology (B.Ed.) Graduates of this programme will be eligible to practise as primary school teachers and also have the option of pursuing postgraduate studies in Psychology. The course would be particularly suitable for, though not confined to, students who wish to specialise subsequently in the field of Educational Psychology.

Postgraduate Programmes:

Mary Immaculate College also offers a wide range of postgraduate qualifications up to and including Masters and Doctoral degrees in Arts and Education.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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T: (353) 061 204300 F: (353) 061 313632 W: www.mic.ul.ie

DESIGNATED DEFIBS WILL FIT THE BILL

WITH OVER 5,000 SUDDEN CARDIAC DEATHS IN IRELAND EACH YEAR, MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE INCLUDING NEW LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT LIFESAVING DEFIBRILLATORS BECOME COMMONPLACE ACROSS THE COUNTRY, CLAIMS DECLAN O'MAHONEY, CEO OF HEARTSINE TECHNOLOGIES.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest can happen to anyone at any time. High profile cases of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in recent years such as that of Sopranos James Gandolfini or footballer Fabrice Muamba have increased awareness of the condition which claims the lives of over 5,000 people every year in Ireland.

In June this year news emerged that a Senator's Bill had been introduced which aims to ensure the widespread availability of defibrillators in public spaces in Ireland.

The announcement was welcomed across the country as easy access to these defibrillators can mean the difference between life and death for the SCA victim.

Almost 80 per cent of SCAs occur away from a healthcare or medical setting; for example, in the workplace, at school, sports clubs, entertainment venues or community halls.

LEGAL REQUIREMENT

The principle of this Bill would make it a legal requirement to have Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) installed in these 'designated' public places, just as it is a legal requirement for them to have a fire extinguisher present.

There are approximately 5,000 sudden cardiac deaths in Ireland each year, an average of 14 every day, many of whom could survive should access to a defibrillator be available.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is not the same as a heart attack. During a heart attack, part of the heart's blood supply is blocked, whereas when a SCA occurs, blood stops flowing around the body completely and the heart stops beating unexpectedly.

The definitive treatment for SCA is



Turn on the device



Apply the pads

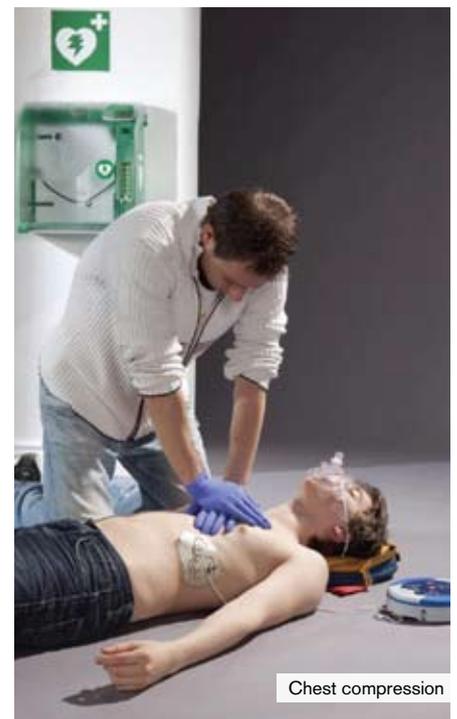
an electrical shock, otherwise known as a defibrillation, that 'shocks' the heart into the normal rhythm. The chances of survival decrease by 10 per cent for every minute that this shock is delayed, so immediate access to a defibrillator is crucial.

With Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) alone, survival rates after a Sudden Cardiac Arrest are less than five per cent. But when you combine CPR with the use of a defibrillator, then survival rates increase dramatically to over 70 per cent, which is extremely encouraging.

BELFAST BORN AND BRED

Not many people know this, but Belfast is actually the birthplace of the portable defibrillator.

Working at the Royal Victoria Hospital in the 1960s, in a team brought together by clinician Dr Frank Pantridge, the late Prof John Anderson led the work to



Chest compression

develop technology that would not restrict the use of defibrillators to hospitals.

Right up until his death in 2012, Prof Anderson continued his work as chief technology officer at HeartSine in the development of defibrillator technology, striving to make the devices light, portable and easy for the first responder to use. Today, that is what they are.

Modern AEDs are programmed to diagnose the heart rhythm and instantly determine if a shock is need. They are extremely safe and should be used by first responders until professional medical help arrives.

HeartSine devices will talk first responders through the entire 'save' process step by step. This means they can be used by anyone at any time, with little or even no previous first aid experience.

NO LIMITS TO DEMOGRAPHICS

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is not something that is limited to any one demographic. It kills people every single day, regardless of their gender, their age or their fitness level.

People have a misconception that cardiac arrest only happens to older, unfit, males, but that is far from the truth. Just look at the high profile case of Fabrice Muamba, the former Bolton Wanderers football star who suffered cardiac arrest on the pitch in front of thousands of spectators. He was saved by a defibrillator.

Had an AED not been readily available, he would probably not have been so lucky.

Fabrice Muamba is an inspiration and is working extremely hard to raise an awareness of SCA and the need for accessible defibrillators.

DEFIBRILLATORS WORLDWIDE

Whilst there is no legal requirement in Ireland or the UK yet, some countries already have legislation in which public buildings, including workplaces and schools, must have defibrillators on site and ready to use.

For example, fifty states in America have enacted various laws stating that areas of public gathering must have an AED available.

This means that should someone suffer SCA at work or in school or at a concert, their chances of survival are automatically increased simply by the presence of an AED.

Whereas in Ireland, where defibrillators are still few and far between, the chances of survival for an SCA victim could be as little as 5% as first responders are forced to rely on CPR alone.

The stark reality is that without defibrillator legislation in Ireland, we have very little protection against SCA and perhaps will see higher levels of SCA deaths, which could sadly have been prevented. Purchasing a defibrillator is an extremely small price to pay if it is going to save a life.

THE WARNING SIGNS

Because SCA can happen to anyone at any time, there really are not any long-term warning signs that people can be aware of. SCA symptoms are immediate and severe. Patients will collapse, stop breathing and lose consciousness instantly.

If this happens to a colleague, friend, or fellow shopper in the supermarket, first responders should stay calm and act quickly by taking the following steps:

- Phone the emergency services;
- Perform CPR as quickly as possible, pushing hard and fast on the person's chest at around 100-120 compressions a minute;
- Instruct someone to find the nearest AED;
- Turn on the device and follow the instructions until professional help arrives.

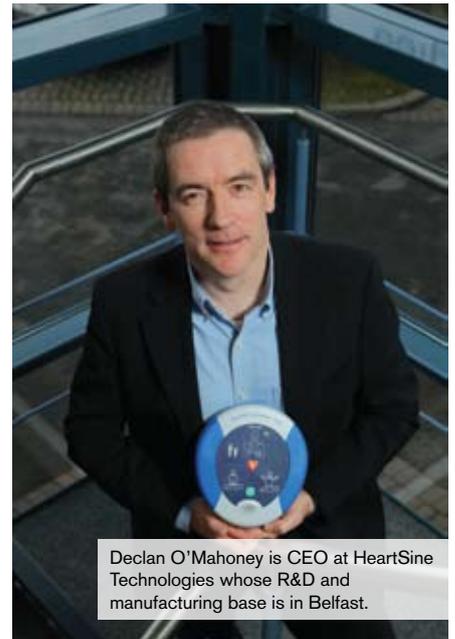
SCA acts devastatingly fast, therefore you, as a first responder, need to also act fast.

It is extremely rewarding to know that HeartSine defibrillators are saving lives right across the world every single day. Receiving an email saying a HeartSine device has saved a young girl, or that a wife still has her husband because a HeartSine device was present, is the most gratifying aspect of my job.

I am extremely proud of the customer base HeartSine has accumulated and believe it reflects the ease of use and high levels of quality of HeartSine defibrillators.

INCREASING AWARENESS

Awareness of SCA is increasing, in part due to the untimely and unfortunate death of many well-known celebrities and sports stars.



Yet, despite the fact more people die from SCA than from a fire in Ireland each year, a lot still needs to be done before we see AEDs as commonplace as fire extinguishers across the country.

Today, more and more schools and sporting clubs are raising their own vital funds to purchase a defibrillator and there have been various campaigns calling on government ministers to make this a matter of urgency.

However, I am delighted that the Health Minister, James Reilly, has accepted the principle of the 'Availability of Defibrillators Bill'. I hope this could lead to an increase in the availability of lifesaving AEDs in Ireland and prevent a significant number of unnecessary cardiac related deaths in Ireland each year.

HEARTSINE DEVICES

With headquarters in Belfast and the USA, HeartSine Technologies is the only company to manufacture defibrillators in Ireland and the UK. Their devices, which are manufactured in Belfast, are produced in more than 26 different languages and used in over 40 countries.

Their innovative defibrillators are the devices of choice at the European Parliament Buildings in Brussels, on board Lufthansa and American Airlines aircraft and even at the White House!

For more information visit www.heartsine.com and questions about defibrillators can also be answered on Facebook and Twitter www.facebook.com/heartsine www.twitter.com/heartsine

BRAIN TRAINING SOFTWARE FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS

SCIENTIFIC BRAIN TRAINING PRO, THE REVOLUTIONARY SOFTWARE NOW AVAILABLE IN IRELAND TO REMEDIATE AND REHABILITATE DISORDERS SUCH AS TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, REPRESENTS A MORE HOLISTIC AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO THE CONVENTIONAL FORMS OF TREATMENT. REPORT BY KARINA CORBETT.

Brought to the Irish market by Galway-based Brain Care Ireland, Scientific Brain Training PRO can also be used in the treatment of conditions such as depression, stroke, Alzheimer's, schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder.

Developed by neuroscientists, clinicians and researchers, the technology is already available in the US, Brazil, Australia, Israel, Korea, Russia and Japan.

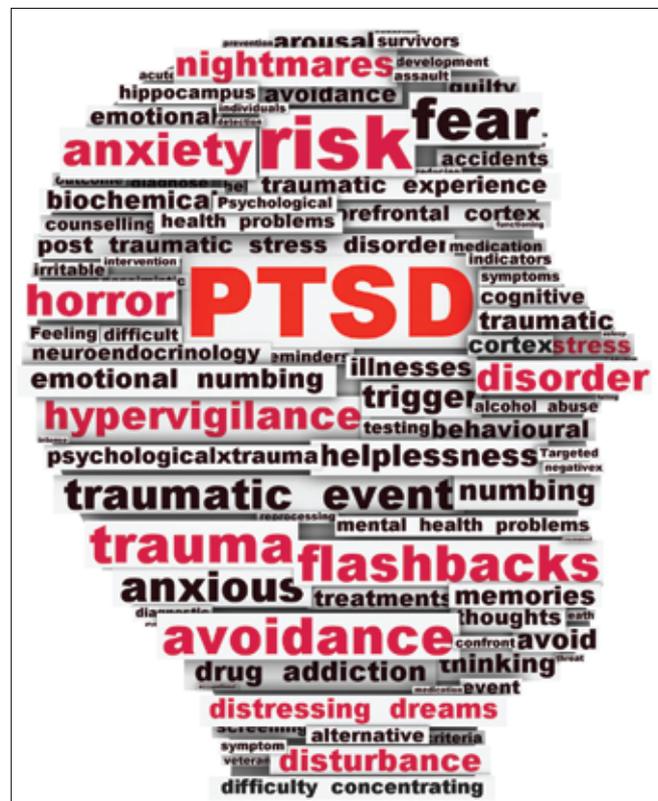
Scientific Brain Training PRO facilitates the effective treatment of a variety of conditions through fun and interactive games specially designed for targeted stimulation of key cognitive functions. Global research has shown that engaging in these regular brain training exercises can effect positive changes in the brain, helping to improve disorder impairments.

According to James Lee, scientific director of Brain Care Ireland, which works out of the Research and Innovation Centre at NUI Galway, modern internet-based technologies such as Scientific Brain Training PRO provide medical practitioners with an effective alternative to residential or pharmaceutical interventions with patients.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

With this software they can provide affordable, personalised cognitive therapy programmes, at a distance, to hundreds of patients at the same time, thereby maximising time management and patient communication irrespective.

"There is huge potential here for the healthcare system in Ireland to take a cost-effective patient centric fresh approach to managing these disorders



and move to a more holistic and modern system of treatments. We're trying to look for drugs to overcome these disorders but a lot of them come with major side effects. With this type of software there are none."

The programmes are available to healthcare specialists such as neurologists, neurosurgeons, neuropsychologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational, speech and language therapists, along with designated segmented markets such as army, police, ambulance, fire brigade retirees and new recruits. "In fact, a section of the EMS in Ireland is already trialling the software," says Lee.

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

The methodology behind Scientific Brain Training PRO relates to the concepts of brain plasticity and neurogenesis, notes the scientific director. Brain plasticity – or neuroplasticity – refers to changes in neural pathways and synapses, which are due to changes in behaviour, environment and neural processes, as well as changes resulting from bodily injury. Brain plasticity has replaced the previously held

belief that the brain is a physiologically static organ, and it explores how and in what ways the brain changes throughout life. Up until about 40 years ago, experts believed that changes in the brain were only possible during infancy and childhood, but research has demonstrated that the brain is capable of altering existing pathways and even creating new ones.

Meanwhile, neurogenesis means the birth of neurons and is the process by which neurons are generated. Neurogenesis is responsible for populating the growing brain and new neurons are continually born throughout adulthood.

"Neurogenesis happens throughout life" explains Lee. "If these new cells are not engaged they die. Our programmes engage these new cells via scientific games, resulting in these new cells communicating together and creating new brain tissue where information can be stored and used, thereby compensating for dead or dying cells affected by brain disorders. And with regular exercise new brain cells can be forced to generate new pathways."

REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

The programmes are designed to target the parts that have been affected by the injury or disorder. So, in the case of traumatic brain injury, the Rehabilitation Programme would be used. Suitable for patients of all ages, the programme is an open way of using software exercises for treating this condition with thousands of unique cognitive tasks.

With over 28 exercises in nine modules, they are all delivered through engaging interactive games and target different areas that might be affected by the patient's injury. For example in the 'visual memory' module the patient has to memorise several figures of various shapes and colors and then recognise them among slightly different ones.

This exercise demands attention to detail and the use of discrimination and differentiation for shapes and therefore helps train user's visual short-term memory. The 'processing speed' module includes a task involving three types of stimuli – a red circle, a black cross, and a letter.

They appear one after the other at different spots, anywhere on the screen and the aim is to determine quickly whether the red circle appears above or below the black cross. The exercise trains the patient's sustained attention



James Lee, scientific director of Brain Care Ireland, says the software offers an "effective alternative" to conventional forms of treatment.

as performance and vigilance have to be maintained over a long period of time. Visual and spatial skills are also trained.

PSYCHIATRY PROGRAMME

The Cognitive Remediation in Psychiatry Programme, used for post-traumatic stress disorder, consists of a series of 21 exercises covering areas such as working memory, selective attention/vigilance and visual learning.

Again, each module targets something affected by the patient's condition.

For instance, the 'reasoning and problem solving' module is a new twist on the old cross-word puzzle. The user is given a list of nine words. Only six of

them can be used to fill the empty squares and connect with each other to form a six-point star.

The exercise aims to train the patient's capacity for logical reasoning as in order to determine which six words to choose from the list of nine, a number of logical combinations have to be tried to find which positions of letters are common to two or three words.

EARLY DETECTION

"Today diagnosis of central nervous system disorders can be slow and delayed. We at Brain Care Ireland are dedicated to early detection of cognitive impairments at the MCI [mild cognitive impairment] stage.

"To do this we are offering a free cognitive screening test called Memtrax, designed by Dr

Wes Ashford of Stanford University, to interested healthcare so as they can screen patients and where a cognitive problem or impairments presents the therapist can choose between four remediation and rehabilitation programmes to intervene it.

"The segmented markets – army, police, ambulance, fire brigade retirees and new recruits – can monitor cognition on an ongoing basis to chart brain function, so in addition to interventions they have a database that can pinpoint as to whether one unit has a greater propensity to cognitive decline and investigate."

Scientific Brain Training
PRO™
Professional Cognitive Therapy Solutions

BrainCare
Ireland

For further information visit www.braincare.ie

25% OF HEART ATTACKS AND STROKES ARE PREVENTABLE

ONE IN FOUR DEATHS FROM CORONARY HEART DISEASE OR STROKE COULD BE PREVENTED EACH YEAR, ACCORDING TO NEW EVIDENCE FROM THE HEALTH RESEARCH BOARD CENTRE FOR DIET AND HEALTH.

The new study gives food for thought and suggests that such an outcome requires everyone in Ireland to cut their salt, trans-fat and saturated fat intake and eat three more portions of fruit and vegetables per day.

UCC's Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, Ivan Perry, head of the HRB Centre for Diet and Health, points to significant opportunities for government and industry through the introduction of effective, evidence-based food policies. This includes making fruit and vegetables more affordable and working with the food industry to reduce salt in processed foods.

"The aim of this study was to estimate the potential reduction in CHD and stroke deaths achievable by specific and achievable decreases in consumption of salt, trans-fat and saturated fat intake and increases in consumption of fruit and vegetables in the Irish population.

"We looked at two scenarios using the validated IMPACT food policy model. One we termed conservative scenario and the other a substantial, but politically feasible option."

LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL

In 2011, dietary fat constituted 37 per cent of the food energy intake for 18-to-64 year-olds in Ireland, with 63 per cent of the population exceeding the recommended upper limit of 35 per cent food energy from fat.

According to Prof Perry, such gaps in current food policy choices and the achievable dietary standards indicate the need for a paradigm shift in the current public health food policy interventions.

"We took leadership in the tobacco control with a comprehensive nationwide

smoke free policy in 2004. Similar leadership is critical for legislating dietary food policies both at national and EU level.

"The WHO estimates that 80 per cent of premature CHD and stroke deaths can be prevented and that even small reductions in incidence and mortality will lead to large population health gains and reductions in direct and indirect health costs."

In Ireland alone CHD deaths fell by 50 per cent between 1985 and 2006 as a result of population health measures in relation to smoking, blood pressure and cholesterol combined with improvements in treatment.

VALUABLE EVIDENCE

"Our study provides valuable evidence on the impact of population level changes in dietary intake. Achieving a modest improvement could save 395 lives each year. Doing nothing or simply monitoring the situation could result in dire public health consequences for the Irish Population, both in the short and the long term," concludes Prof Perry.

The work of the HRB Centre for Diet and Health is co-ordinated by Prof Ivan Perry, UCC's Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. The centre involves co-principal investigators from UCC, UCD, the Institute of Public Health in Ireland,

Teagasc, and University of Ulster.

The group is actively engaged in collaborative research activities relating to health and diet, in particular the prevention and management of obesity and diabetes.

The Health Research Board aims to improve people's health, patient care and health service delivery through excellent research and by the applying new knowledge to policy and healthcare practice. The HRB's Centre for Diet and Health was established in 2008, with funding from the Health Research Board and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.



Everyone should eat three more portions of fruit and vegetables per day, according to Prof Ivan Perry pictured here in the English Market in Cork City.

MIGRAINE IS MORE THAN JUST A HEADACHE

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT IN IRELAND UP TO HALF A MILLION PEOPLE SUFFER FROM MIGRAINE FOR WHOM AN ATTACK CAN BE UTTERLY DEBILITATING. THE MIGRAINE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS GENERALLY HOLD THE VIEW THAT MOST MIGRAINE CAN BE MANAGED AT GP LEVEL, WHILE HELP IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM SPECIALIST REFERRAL CLINICS IN DUBLIN, CORK AND GALWAY.

Migraine is by far the most common neurological condition in the developed world, and in Ireland approximately half a million people suffer from the condition for whom an attack can be utterly debilitating.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) ranks migraine within the top 20 leading causes of disability worldwide. The WHO classifies severe attacks as among the most disabling illnesses, comparable to dementia, quadriplegia and active psychosis.

Given the nature of an attack this is perhaps unsurprising. Nausea, vomiting, hypersensitivity to light, noise and smells, and a severe, throbbing one-sided headache are among some of the most common symptoms.

In severe cases of migraine, people can experience one-sided paralysis and even loss of consciousness. Attacks can last from four to 72 hours untreated.

Migraine attacks are episodic, so while some people experience only one or two attacks a year; others suffer on a weekly or even daily basis to the extent that their quality of life is substantially reduced.

CAUSES OF MIGRAINE

Migraine is a primary headache, that is, it is a medical condition or disorder in its own right and not caused by other underlying conditions or illnesses.

However, the exact cause of migraine remains unknown. On average people wait six years from first attack to diagnosis and it remains undiagnosed and undertreated in at least 50 per cent of patients.

An attack can be 'triggered' by a combination of factors which are specific to the individual but most commonly include stress, food and alcohol (dehydration), hormonal changes, an excess or lack of sleep, weather factors, changes of routine, poor posture, and flicker from televisions, computer screens and certain types of lighting.

Migraine is three times more common in women than men. This is largely due to the hormonal changes through a woman's life from puberty to menopause.

HEADACHE DIARY

There is no test for migraine – rather an extended consultation that considers family history and pattern of



Keeping a headache diary can be an invaluable tool in assisting diagnosis.

PERSONAL INSOLVENCY – NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO ACT

NEW LEGISLATION IS MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR PROFESSIONALS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE TO ADDRESS PERSONAL INSOLVENCY ISSUES, WRITES BRIAN NEVIN, DIRECTOR OF PERSONAL INSOLVENCY AT ACCOUNTING FIRM HUGHES BLAKE. FOR THOSE WHO ARE INSOLVENT HE ADVISES THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO SEIZE THE MOMENT AND BEGIN TAKING ACTION.



In the past few years, many people have found that their carefully made investment decisions and retirement plans have been victim to the economic downturn. The financial health of professionals and business people across the country has suffered due to over-exposure to the property market, typically buy-to-lets and overseas residences.

Up until now, the only desirable option for those who had more debt than they were able to service was to independently secure arrangements with their lenders, and these were generally short-term, interest-only arrangements which did not address the fundamental problem.

However, at present, we are seeing a major shift take place in the attitude of the banks towards debt resolution. This has been driven by the passing of the Personal Insolvency Act 2012, and also by the Central Bank initiative on mortgages and buy-to-let loans, as well as plans to address unsustainable SME property-related loans.

Financial institutions are organising, from the perspectives of staffing, systems and decision-making, to agree sustainable individual personal debt solutions. The focus is now on taking measures to solve problems and restore order to the personal finances of the large number of people who have been rendered insolvent by the recession and the reduction in property values.

When order can be restored to the personal finances of the individual, they are freed to become economically active once again. It is a fresh start.

THREE WELCOME CHANGES

The Act includes three very welcome changes which pertain to personal

insolvency in Ireland. These are the establishment of the Insolvency Service of Ireland, reforming the current bankruptcy legislation and introducing three new debt settlement mechanisms.

The Insolvency Service of Ireland will administer the debt settlement mechanisms and will maintain a register of applicants.

Reforms to the bankruptcy legislation include automatic discharge from bankruptcy after three years and petitions presented for bankruptcy will now not be heard until one of the three settlement mechanisms has been attempted. The creation of solutions other than negotiating with your lender directly and, failing that, entering bankruptcy, is the great benefit of the Act and should serve to reduce the enormous pressure that has weighed on those in financial difficulty until now.

Two of the settlement mechanisms – the Debt Relief Notice (DRN) and the Debt Settlement Arrangement (DSA) – relate to unsecured debt such as credit card debt. The third mechanism, called the Personal Insolvency Arrangement (PIA), is arguably the centrepiece of the Act and covers both unsecured and secured debt, which is debt backed by collateral such as a mortgage.

The PIA will be particularly useful in multi-lender situations, where an individual owes money to several lending institutions.

This is the mechanism that many professionals and business people have been awaiting in order to restore order to their personal finances. A limit of €3 million has been introduced for the secured element of an individual's debt (although this can be increased with the consent of all secured creditors) and the arrangement will last for up to six years (with a possible



extension to seven years).

APPROVED PIPS

In order to enter a PIA, approval is needed from 65 per cent of the individual's creditors in total, with the added hurdle of approval by 50 per cent of secured creditors and 50 per cent of unsecured creditors.

The application for a PIA must be made through a Personal Insolvency Practitioner (PIP), a professional who will have been approved and registered by the Insolvency Service of Ireland.

Under the legislation, the disposal of an individual's Principal Private Residence (PPR) is excluded from the three arrangements outlined above. There is recognition that the family home should not normally be considered part of the settlement process, as this would cause a great deal of disruption for families.

The PPR may form part of an arrangement however if the individual agrees to the disposal or if the PIP is of the view that the PPR is inappropriate having considered the individual's circumstances. The individual must get independent legal advice in this situation.

During the Act's final passage through the various houses of government, a section on pensions was also introduced

into the legislation. If a debtor has an interest in or an entitlement under a relevant pension arrangement, that interest/entitlement will not be treated as an asset of the debtor, subject to certain exceptions.

These exceptions include the individual not being entitled to draw down benefits before, during or within six months following the maximum period of the relevant debt settlement mechanism; and, a claw back period of three years in the event of a court deeming excessive pension contributions being made.

STRONG UPTAKE EXPECTED

The uptake on the new mechanisms is expected to be strong. Alan Shatter TD, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, has tentatively estimated that there will be 15,000 applications in the first 12 months for PIAs and DSAs.

However, a recent Red Sea/Stubbs Gazette opinion poll stated that the Minister's estimate is conservative and there could be as many as 21,000 applications in the first year.

An additional large number of people will commence direct discussions with their secured lenders with the aim of reaching

consensual agreements outside of the formal processes mentioned above.

This solution will be particularly attractive for those dealing with just one lending institution, where there is a strong possibility that the bank will come to such an agreement with the insolvent individual.

In any circumstance, the new

legislation has opened up a new landscape for individuals to address personal insolvency.

Secured creditors are more willing today to make settlements than they have been in years. For those who are insolvent, now is the time to seize the moment and begin taking action.

Johnson & Johnson



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ARMY RESERVES JUDGEMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES

MAJOR CHANGES TO THE FUTURE STRUCTURES AND BASING OF ARMY RESERVES IN NORTHERN IRELAND, IN LINE WITH ITS CONCEPT FOR THE FUTURE ARMY OF 2020, WILL MEAN SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN TERMS OF BOTH NUMBERS AND LINKAGES WITH REGULAR UNITS, AS WELL AS IN RATIONALISATION OF BASES ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM.

This announcement by the government has an impact for Northern Ireland on the training and use of reservists who, over the past number of years, have made major contributions to operations overseas and at home, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Cyprus and the London Olympics.

Whilst there will be cuts elsewhere, the numbers in Northern Ireland are to remain static, in real terms it's a small increase in the overall percentage of reservists from NI who will be part of the new force structure.

The new plan does not alter the overall number or diversity of the main units, however, adjustments at sub-unit level will mean some reserves relocating from four of their current bases.

Colonel Nick Tougher, Northern Ireland's senior reserves officer, believes the operational success and high standards have been recognised in the review. "Over the past number of years the men and women in the NI reserves, whilst representing only about four per cent of the total UK reserves strength, have consistently provided around 20 per cent of all reservists on difficult and dangerous overseas deployments.

WHOLE FORCE CONCEPT

The aim is to deliver a 'whole force concept' by 2020 – embracing a mixture of regulars, reservists, civil servants and contractors balanced to provide the most flexible and cost-effective capability depending on the task, threat and readiness.

Training and deployments inevitably place a burden on employers and in N Ireland there is a strong network of companies and firms supporting the reservists.



Army reservist soldier (front) pictured during training session by a regular soldier at the TA Recruit Centre in Ballykinler, Northern Ireland.

The chief executive of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association in NI, Johnny Rollins, said the ongoing support from employers across Northern Ireland is critical. "We know that in tough times many employers face extra burden in releasing key members of their workforce both for military training and deployments.

"These needs are not only understood and respected and we are hoping the changes will allow us to give greater predictability. As well as this we are in constant dialogue with employers and organisations representing employers to better exploit those areas that mutually benefit firms, defence and the individuals."

The senior army officer in Northern Ireland, Brigadier Rob Thomson, is under no illusion about both challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the integrated force, and specifically, the reserve component in Northern Ireland.

"We see the Reserves delivering much more in the future, providing general military and specialist capabilities not only as individuals but also as formed groups. Naturally and rightly, this means changes

and improvements to both individual and collective training. It also means that we will improve the equipment available to the Reserve".

RESERVE OPERATIONS

"When fully integrated, the Army Reserve can absolutely expect to be deployed on operations, possibly for up to six months every five years – any deployment will, of course, depend on the operational demand. This increased demand will be matched by greater predictability and stability regarding training and deployments for both our people and their employers."

There are currently 2,000 men and women in the Army Reserves in Northern Ireland across a variety of trades including infantry, logistics support, medical, signals, field engineering, yeomanry, artillery and general support.

Northern Ireland has its own Recruits Training Centre at Ballykinler where men and women undergo a range of training packages before specialist training for the cap badges and units they will join.

AGENCIES FLYING HIGH FOR ARMED FORCES DAY

THE SUCCESS OF ARMED FORCES DAY 2013 WAS DUE IN NO SMALL PART TO THE GREAT LEVEL OF PLANNING AND COMPLETE BUY-IN FROM THE EMERGENCY SERVICES, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WHO ALL WORKED TOGETHER TO PRODUCE AN EXCEPTIONAL EVENT, WRITES LT COL HUW MORGAN, 38 (IRISH) BRIGADE, NORTHERN IRELAND.

The first display of the Red Arrows in Ireland this season was the big attraction at Armed Forces Day 2013, which drew over 100,000 people to Carrickfergus, Co Antrim, to witness a thrilling display of formation flying and individual brilliance.

Armed Forces Day has evolved enormously over the last four years and doubled in size each year.

Over 100,000 people attended this year; this provides unique challenges for the organisers in terms of producing risk assessments, safety plans, evacuation plans and multi-agency communications arrangements.

The inclusion of aerial displays required recovery plans in case of the ditching of a fast jet in Belfast Lough. Therefore, a mix of PSNI RIBs and divers, a HM Coastguard patrol vessel and RNLI lifeboats were provided for displays on the day by the Red Arrows and the Typhoon.

With the main event as the first display, the rest of the day could have been a bit of an anti-climax, but the range of ground and musical displays, marching bands and military stands and children's activities, meant that there was a huge amount to see.

The Drums and Pipes of the Irish Guards travelled to Field Firing in Otterburn via Northern Ireland to lead the parade. A mix of Chelsea pensioners, regulars, reserves, veterans and cadet marching contingents filed through the historic garrison town intermingled with military and civilian bands.

COMMAND SUPPORT UNITS

What was unique for the event was the grouping of the command support unit from the fire service, the mobile police station, ambulance and coastguard command vehicles to effectively co-ordinate the event. Getting the emergency



services and the military to communicate effectively over the same network is not without its challenges!

Carrickfergus Borough Council has developed Armed Forces Day into an extremely popular event. The council's events team worked closely with the roads authorities and the PSNI to ensure smooth access to the town. The provision of Park & Ride facilities and Translink of additional buses and trains from Belfast to cope with the demand meant no traffic jams in the town.

All the free activities generated huge demand; whether it was archery, laser

clay pigeon, abseiling off Carrickfergus Castle, children's assault courses, flight simulators, climbing on board the police helicopter or into the back of an armoured Land Rover, sitting in the turret of a Scimitar or going on board 'HMS Example'.

Musical displays were provided by the Irish Guards, Band of the Royal Irish and the Band Caubeen. Meanwhile, the PSNI Dog Display in the arena amazed and amused the audience, while the Wild Geese Parachute Display Team dropped in as the finale – unfortunately during the biggest squall of the day!

NORTHERN IRELAND BIDS FAREWELL TO 2013 WORLD GAMES

THE 2013 WORLD POLICE AND FIRE GAMES TOOK PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN AUGUST. THE 10-DAY EVENT WAS DESCRIBED AS “THE BEST GAMES EVER” BY MIKE GRAHAM, WPFGE FEDERATION PRESIDENT, AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY IN BELFAST.

In the 28 years that this international multi-sport event had been running, Mike Graham, WPFGE Federation President, described as “exemplary” the organisation and professionalism of the WPFGE delivery team.

“The warmth and welcome of the many thousand volunteers has been outstanding, the support of the local people has been second to none and even the weather has been fabulous. The WPFGE Federation is absolutely delighted with what has been the pinnacle of our Games to date and we are indebted to Belfast and Northern Ireland for making it happen.”

The closing ceremony was the final element of the two-week festival of 56 sports which took place in 41 venues across Northern Ireland. Almost 7,000 competitors from 67 countries participated.

TRIBUTES TO VOLUNTEERS

Compered by Pete Snodden, the closing ceremony included music from the Open Arts Choir, the PSNI Pipe Band and the Northern Virginia Firefighters Emerald Society Pipe Band (representing Fairfax 2015).

A special tribute was paid to the 3,500 volunteers known as the ‘spirit of the games’ for their friendly and enthusiastic contribution. The formalities included a parade of flags from the participating countries, the handing over of the WPFGE Flag to the next host city Fairfax and the final journey of the Flame of Hope carried by Special Olympians and handed over to Jerome Williams for Fairfax 2015.

Referring to the event as “an overwhelming success” John Tully, chief executive of 2013 WPFGE, said that the



PSNI Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie and 2013 WPFGE Patron Dame Mary Peters light the cauldron at the opening ceremony on 1 August.



At the closing ceremony on 10 August the WPFGE ‘Flame of Hope’ is passed from Supt Noel Mullan to Jerome Williams from Fairfax, New Zealand – the next city to host the Games in 2015. Also pictured is Special Olympian Donna Anderson.

reality of what was achieved far exceeded their expectations. "Huge gratitude must go to the commitment of the WPFPG delivery team who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes; the passion and dedication of the volunteers and the people of Northern Ireland who have welcomed our visitors and embraced the Games," he added.

Deputy Chief Constable and Chair of the 2013 WPFPG Board, Judith Gillespie added that the event was a prime example of why Northern Ireland is renowned for its warm and friendly welcome and the opportunity to meet and greet so many local, national and international colleagues and visitors has been just fantastic.

"Competitors came from 67 countries, near and far across the globe to take part in one of the biggest sporting events ever held in Northern Ireland, in the spirit of competition and friendship.

"Our aim was to make them the friendliest Games ever and I have seen evidence of this every day, with competitors from all countries mingling in a carnival atmosphere, and our Games volunteers giving enthusiastic support whenever and wherever needed.

TEAM NORTHERN IRELAND

"I feel very proud, of all of our serving and retired colleagues as they stood shoulder to shoulder with fire service and prison service colleagues in Team Northern Ireland. But I am also extremely proud to have been part of this wonderful event that has brought such colour, vibrancy and enjoyment to so many and which I hope will leave a lasting legacy for Northern Ireland for many years to come."

Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure Carál Ní Chuilín said: "This was a collective effort, but that should not take away from the tremendous individual endeavours which have made the Games a success. This has been evident in the build-up and throughout from the organisers to the volunteers to personnel representing the services; from the sporting officials to the backroom staff who helped deliver the competition."

Mary Peters, Patron of WPFPG 2013, said, "I could never have imagined back in 2007 when we won the bid in Adelaide just how successful these Games would be. My greatest hope is that the wonderful athletes from all over the world who we have watched and cheered on will prove inspirational to our young people



Firefighters compete in The Muster Event.



The 'Ultimate Fire Fighter' challenge.

and encourage them to get involved in sport."

Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, described the benefits for Belfast as enormous. "The success of these Games has been particularly significant for Belfast as the host city," he said.

"This was an amazing opportunity to showcase our world class facilities and venues. We rolled out the welcome mat and, having spoken to so many visitors

here for the Games, I am confident that they will now spread the word about what we have to offer and the good experiences they have enjoyed. This was a win-win for everyone. Everyone enjoyed one big party!"

For further information
 Web: www.2013wpfg.com
 Twitter: [www.twitter.com/2013wpfg](https://twitter.com/2013wpfg)
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/2013wpfg

AMBITION TO CO-LOCATE WITH COUNTER TERROR EXPO EVENT

A major annual event for NHS ambulance services, their suppliers and partner agencies, now added to the UK Defence & Security portfolio of Clarion Events, will be co-located alongside its Counter Terror Expo and Forensics Europe Expo next April.

The addition of AMBITION to the Counter Terror Expo (29-30 April 2014) will provide a dedicated crisis response management element to the existing event, which held its fifth edition in April 2013 welcoming nearly 10,000 attendees. The two events will provide one umbrella event for organisations involved in the emergency response, crisis management, resilience and pre-hospital care sector.

Founder of the NHS ambulance services event Carl Rees says: "AMBITION has been built around excellent content that allows professionals of all levels to learn something new and develop their knowledge and capabilities and provide excellent networking opportunities with other multiagency partners. This results in an exhibition that presents new products and technology in exciting ways that emphasise their benefits to patients as much as their efficiencies to managers."

Philip Hunter, Event Director at Clarion Events says: "AMBITION and the pre-hospital care market provide a great fit with our other

events and clients and there are many crossovers in terms of content areas. This is why we felt we had a lot to offer to take AMBITION to the next level and we are looking forward to building a first rate show for the emergency response, crisis management, resilience and pre-hospital care sectors."

"For exhibitors, AMBITION is all about bringing ambulance service suppliers closer to the people who buy their products in more meaningful ways than before. However, there are very limited opportunities to bring suppliers and buyers together in a way that genuinely helps both parties. AMBITION's new position, dates and co-location will do exactly this."

For details visit www.ambition-2014.com



STUDY TO HELP CRIME VICTIMS IS A UK POLICING FIRST

Results from the first study of its kind in the UK, to improve the experience for victims when dealing with police officers, have shown victims were happier with the service they received.

The trial was set up to test the benefits for victims when officers had undergone specialist communications training, which emphasised the need to listen to, and empathise with, victims of crime.

Researchers at the College of Policing worked with nearly 600 officers from Greater Manchester Police to carry out the study. Known as a 'randomised controlled trial', the research compared results for one group of officers who were randomly selected to receive specialist communications training, with another group who did not.

The training involved techniques aimed at building rapport between officers and victims.

This included teaching officers to think about words and phrases that may create barriers to victims; explaining the available options to the victim; using phrases to focus on what the police can do for the victim and ensuring that officers check they have done all they can for a victim before

leaving the incident.

College of Policing Head of Research Analysis and Information Rachel Tuffin said: "We knew from research in Australia and the US that police officers could change attitudes, by making sure the public felt fairly treated and involved in decisions.

"When Greater Manchester Police asked us to help with training to improve victim satisfaction, we spotted a great opportunity to carry out the first UK trial of this type on police training, and the first internationally to focus on victims."

Greater Manchester Police Assistant Chief Constable Garry Shewan, said: "Policing in the UK is done with the support and consent of the public. We are very aware that the manner in which officers and staff speak to and deal with victims of crime and members of our communities can have a lasting impact.

"The College of Policing worked with us to evaluate the effectiveness of that training and it has made a difference in changing officer attitudes and behaviour as well as victim perceptions of reassurance."

A&E £500M STICKING PLASTER IGNORES REAL NHS PRIVATISATION CRISIS

David Cameron's £500 million 'sticking plaster bailout' for struggling A&E departments will do nothing to reverse the crisis of his government's making, according to Unite – the largest trade union in Britain and Ireland, with 1.4 million members working across all sectors of the economy.

Unite warned that unless this government does a policy U-turn and ditches the controversial Health and Social Care Act the future of universal, free at the point of use healthcare in England hangs in the balance.

Soon, £20 billion of NHS contracts will be in private hands, and with GP-led Clinical Commissioning Groups now forced to put NHS services out to competitive tender joined-up working between different services will be much

harder to achieve.

Rachael Maskell, Unite head of health, said: "David Cameron has the gall to speak about GP practitioners working more closely with hospitals and community services while his Health and Social Care Act has ripped the heart out of the once integrated health service.

"The £500 million pound sticking plaster will do nothing to turn back the clock on the damage this government is inflicting on the NHS and A&E, with waiting lists hitting their highest levels in nine years a temporary fix is not enough.

"This is an NHS emergency of the government's own making. The NHS 111 non-emergency hotline debacle shows that cut price competitive tendering leads to complete meltdown."

BRIGADE VISITS PREVENTS 5,000 FIRES IN LONDON

New research undertaken by the London Fire Brigade shows that vulnerable people are 18 times less likely to have a fire if they receive a home fire safety visit from firefighters.

The study, the first of its kind in London, looked at the 400,000 visits attended over the last six years and estimated that their impact had prevented around 5,000 fires from starting in people's homes.

During the free home fire safety visit, firefighters offer potentially lifesaving information on how to prevent fires, and fit free smoke alarms where needed. The majority of home fires are caused by cooking, cigarettes and candles, so safety advice focuses on those issues, as well information on how to escape should a fire break out.

LFB released a 'fire risk profile' and said that those identified are usually affected by several of these 'risk factors' such as disability, visual and/or hearing impairments, mental health problems, old age and living alone.

The report supports the Brigade's targeted approach of using lifestyle profiling, alongside local knowledge and fire data to reach vulnerable people. Chair of London Fire Authority's Strategy Committee, Cllr Sarah Hayward said: "This new research is evidence that the Brigade's home fire safety visits is preventing thousands of fires and saving lives, particularly amongst some of the capital's most vulnerable people.

"Joining forces with local councils and other partners has enabled the Brigade to reach those most at risk. Londoners need to look out for friends and neighbours by following some simple fire safety advice."

The London Fire Brigade recently increased its target for the number of visits to 219,000 homes by March 2016, with 80 per cent of those visits being to the homes of vulnerable people. Prevention work across the Brigade has seen the number of fires it attends reduced by half in the last ten years.

DIRECT ENTRY SCHEMES INTO POLICE FORCE INTRODUCED NEXT YEAR

Controversial proposals for direct entry into the police service at inspector, superintendent and chief constable levels have been given the green light to proceed, the government has confirmed.

Minister for Policing and Justice Damian Green said he remained "committed to implementing fast-track and direct entry schemes to attract the best talent" following a consultation exercise carried out earlier this year. He said the schemes will be rolled out in 2014.

Green accepted that that "a proportion" of the responses to the consultation had been opposed to the principle of the proposals. He said the government's approach would bring in gifted candidates from outside policing.

In the consultation response, the government suggested there should be 80 places available annually at the rank of inspector and 20 at superintendent ranks. Green said that police and crime commissioners (PCCs) should be able to select their chief constables from senior ranks in other countries as well as from the UK. The College of Policing is to take the lead in designing and implementing the scheme.

"The College of Policing has the remit to set standards to support the professional development of officers and staff and the necessary skills to implement the schemes."

However, these proposals spell the end of policing as a "career for life" and will see more people using the experience to further their ambitions in other fields, it has been claimed.

LONDON FIRE BRIGADE HAS ALARMING NEWS FOR CHILDREN

Following national media coverage about children sleeping through the sound of smoke alarms the London Fire Brigade is teaching children about the dangers of fire.

The preliminary research project, by the University of Strathclyde and a fire officer from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue service, saw over 200 tests involving the sounding of smoke alarms conducted on 34 children. It found that three out of four children tested slept through the alarm.

London Fire Brigade Group Manager Mark Hazelton said: "It's a fact that smoke alarms save lives and we'd hate to think that people would see this study and think that

smoke alarms aren't important. They're essential as they provide a vital early warning and extra time to escape if there is a fire."

The Brigade recommends a minimum of one working smoke alarm fitted on every level of each home, and if a fire breaks out you should get out, stay out and call 999.

LFB provides lifesaving fire safety advice to around 100,000 children in 2,000 primary schools across London every year, in a bid to make them understand the dangers of fire and how to stay safe. They are also encouraged to share this message with their families, are taught the importance of smoke alarms and what to do if it goes off.

YOUR SMART 'EMERGENCY PAL' COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!

Emergency PAL is a new medical smart card with an embedded NFC chip and a QR code, which can immediately transmit all emergency medical details of a patient to first medical responders and paramedics on the scene, making treatment much easier, faster and potentially saving a life.

The new product could help to save the lives of any of the millions of people who find themselves in emergency situations every year. Ian Cunningham, founder of Emergency PAL says, "In the months of April, May and June this year, more than 5.5 million people were admitted to A&E departments all over the country because they found themselves in emergency circumstances."

He added that in many cases the patient cannot respond when asked about their symptoms, medical history or current medication. "We hope our Emergency PAL card will make the job of medical first responders much easier by offering them essential medical history such as allergies, previous medical treatment and current medication data by using their card with any mobile phone."

The smarter card relays information in numerous ways to ensure the information is passed along, as quickly and efficiently as possible.

"The Emergency PAL smarter card is equipped with a QR

code, an embedded NFC chip as well as an interactive text service, all of which are compatible with all kinds of mobile phones. The last thing any paramedic needs is to arrive on the scene only to discover the phones are incompatible. By utilising a variety of different ways to relay information, this is avoided entirely and information will reliably be transmitted," notes Cunningham.

The service works 24/7, 365 days a year, and the card can be used in the case of any accidents or emergencies, helping all of the emergency services to identify a patient and get them the appropriate care on the scene.



PRISON WORKERS WELCOME PLANS TO STUB OUT SMOKING BY 2015

The prison officers' union POA has welcomed plans by the prison service to make prisons in England and Wales smoke-free workplaces by 2015.

Inmates are currently allowed to smoke in their cells but a ban would prohibit this and extend to all parts of a prison, including exercise yards. POA began campaigning for a smoking ban in all UK prisons in 2007.

It had expressed concerns about staff and prisoners being 'forced to suffer the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.' A ban on smoking in workplaces and enclosed public spaces came into effect in England in July 2007 following similar

legislation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The bans did not apply to prisoners as their cells were defined as 'domestic premises,' although non-smoking prisoners could not be made to share a cell with a smoker. Peter McParlin, national chair of the POA, described it as a "health and safety issue" for members.

"Smoking is banned in workplaces throughout the UK and prisons cannot be exempt from this ban. The necessary resources will need to be put in place to ensure that the ban is implemented safely and that the health benefits are explained to prisoners," he noted.

QUEEN'S AMBULANCE MEDAL FOR NARU'S HEAD OF EDUCATION

David Bull, head of education at the National Ambulance Resilience Unit (NARU) was awarded the Queen's Ambulance Service Medal for Distinguished Service in Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

The Queen's Ambulance Service Medal (QAM) honours a very small, select group of ambulance personnel who have shown exceptional devotion to duty, outstanding ability, merit and conduct in their roles within NHS Ambulance Services.

Introduced last year it was warmly welcomed by ambulance services because it finally ensures that the dedication of ambulance staff now has the same level of Royal recognition as other members of the emergency services.

David Bull received his QAM for his, "tireless dedication to driving national ambulance education forward by demonstrating initiative, innovation, determination, confidence and leadership". He is now entitled to place the letters QAM after his name.

Keith Prior, NARU national director, said Bull works extremely hard for NARU, "doing a first-rate job leading our education provision which has developed an extremely strong reputation for excellence during his time in charge."

The National Ambulance Resilience Unit (NARU) works on behalf of all NHS Ambulance Trusts in England to ensure they are properly trained, equipped and prepared to deal with incidents and challenges that present a significant risk to public health.

NARU is responsible for the effective national coordination and implementation of the pre-hospital health response to government policies to improve civil contingencies and national resilience across England.



TOUGH NEW PENALTIES FOR NON-EMERGENCY LIFT RESCUES

Councils and businesses in London will face tough new penalties if they persistently call 999 to deal with non-emergency lift call outs, London Fire Brigade has warned.

Under the new rules, the Brigade will recover £290 plus VAT from the owners of buildings for attending non-emergency lift call-outs. The charge is applied from the third occasion firefighters are called to the same building in a 12-month period.

Since November 2009 firefighters have attended around 7,400 fewer lift releases a year, equivalent to £2 million of the LFB's time and resources. But new figures show that last year fire crews in London attended a total of 6,430 lift rescues – around 17 each day!

The Brigade wants to be called when there is a genuine

emergency but less than one per cent, just 57 of the nearly 6,500 lift rescues last year, were medical cases. Chairman of London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, James Cleverly, said: "We hope this tough new charging scheme will send a clear message to building owners that this is not acceptable. As well as being costly for the fire service, being trapped in a lift can be frightening and uncomfortable which is why we're calling on building owners to take responsibility and sort their shoddy lifts out."

The cost recovery programme has been introduced to ensure that building and lift owners maintain their lifts properly. LFB says that when people are shut in lifts and their health is not at risk, lift engineers should be called rather than the Brigade, ensuring that firefighters are free to attend real emergencies and carry out important fire safety work.

SCOTLAND YARD HAS DESIGNS ON NEW MET HQ

The design for the Metropolitan Police's new headquarters in London has been revealed with hopes that building work will be complete by 2015.

The newly redesigned Scotland Yard will be located within the building, which is situated along Victoria Embankment.

The Met will work with the architects to develop the designs (pictured above) further before submitting a planning application next year. It is envisaged the work will be completed sometime next year.

The winning design is based around the new

headquarters being more open and accessible, with a new public entrance pavilion, extensions to the current building and the creation of public open spaces.

The famous revolving sign will be retained as well as the Eternal Flame and Roll of Honour, which are currently located at New Scotland Yard in Victoria. The move forms part of the force's strategy to update its underused and outdated estate.

These changes will help the Met to achieve its target saving of £500 million per year by 2015/16.

LOCATION MOVE IS WINNER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW 2013

The move by the Emergency Services Show to the NEC in Birmingham this year resulted in an increase in exhibitors and visitors, making the event the biggest and best to date.

Exhibitors reported brisk traffic and strong interest from across all the emergency services throughout both days of the show, while visitors enjoyed the diversity of exhibitors, demonstrations, training and networking opportunities across all blue light services.

Taking place on 25 and 26 September, the show hosted 449 exhibitors and had a total of 5,553 visitors over two days (six per cent increase on 2012).

Jon Hall, Chief Fire Officer, Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service, said the event was a great platform to have a good look at innovation and networking with like-minded people. "It was a great success in terms of the location, accessibility and numbers of exhibitors and visitors," he added.

Show visitor Amy Smith, senior emergency planning officer at Leeds City Council, said the event showcases a vast range of cutting-edge products and services that can increase our resilience to emergencies.

Samantha Amena, marketing associate at Physio Control, added that Physio's

learning booth had been packed throughout and they had lots of interest in their CPR Challenge.

"The Emergency Services Show is our number one priority event in the emergency services calendar every year. This has been a great year for us and even better than last year," noted Oliver North, managing director, North Fire.

The Emergency Services Show returns to the NEC in Birmingham from 24-25 September 2014.

For more feedback visit the Twitter Stream at [@emergencyukshow](https://twitter.com/emergencyukshow) or www.emergencyuk.com



NORTHERN IRELAND HAS ONLY 'HALF' THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF A&E CONSULTANTS

A senior A&E consultant has said that hospitals in Northern Ireland are operating with only half the required number of emergency consultants.

Dr Sean McGovern said there are currently 56 A&E consultants working across NI's nine emergency departments. "That is probably, in rough terms, half the number that we require," he added. A UK-wide survey of A&E consultants found six in ten thought their jobs were unsustainable due to staff shortages and work-load pressure.

The research was carried out by the College of Emergency Medicine, which surveyed just over 1,000 UK consultants. Their responses suggested that excessive pressure on A&E consultants has the potential to put patients at risk.

Dr McGovern is the clinical director of emergency medicine at the Ulster Hospital and is also vice-chair of the College of Emergency Medicine in Northern Ireland. He told BBC Radio Ulster that A&E departments in Northern Ireland

were currently safe but "struggling" to provide the level of service required.

He said they were trying to provide emergency care 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with 56 A&E consultants. He added that "to put it in broad context," that figure was just over half the number of politicians currently employed at the Northern Ireland Assembly, which has 108 MLAs.

"Obviously, people are struggling at this moment in time to have a safe system of care.

That is evidenced by the need for locums on a consistent basis. Over the next 12 months or so there needs to be change. We're heading into a difficult winter situation and we need to look at changes in the whole system of emergency care."

Dr McGovern said the UK-wide survey had pointed to consultants' fears of an increased demand on A&E services and fewer doctors opting to specialise in emergency medicine.

ROYAL NAVY SEARCH AND RESCUE HAS STORIES TO TELL

This year the Royal Navy helicopter's search and rescue service celebrates its 60th anniversary of saving lives at sea and on land, and is now on the look-out for stories to include in a special archive to celebrate the diamond milestone.

An appeal is being made to former Royal Navy search and rescue crew members in Northern Ireland, as well as those who have been rescued by one of the senior service helicopters, to come forward with their stories.

These tales will help form the back bone of a year-long project to bring together all aspects of the service within an archive, preserving the history for years to come.

Over the six decades, Royal Navy search and rescue has operated out of a total of eight bases, six of them now either decommissioned or no longer in the hands of the navy. One was at the Northern Ireland base RNAS Eglinton, known as HMS Gannet near Derry.

The Royal Navy rescue helicopters continue to serve the people of Northern Ireland as part of HMS Gannet's area of coverage. Were you rescued in the last 60 years

by one of the Royal Navy's helicopters? Do you know someone who was and who may like to tell their story? Or, alternatively, are you a former crew member of one of the Royal Navy search and rescue squadrons with tales to tell?

Email your story to navycu-771sar60@mod.uk including name and contact details, as well as time of service or rescue. For more information visit www.royalnavy.mod.uk/News-and-Events/Special-Events/SAR-60.



MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS ADMIT THEIR RECRUITMENT FEARS

Mountain rescue teams in Cumbria say they are struggling to recruit members, and of the 12 groups in the county, a number of them have expressed worry that they cannot attract new volunteers.

With pressures on the teams increasing, in the first six months of 2003 they responded to 188 incidents. But from January to June this year the figure had risen to 236 – an increase of 26 per cent. Twelve people have died on the fells this year.

A spokesman for Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team in the western lakes said: "Over the last 10 years the call-outs for

the team have significantly risen and nobody is getting any younger.

"In the very near future team members are going to start to retire and there is a lot of experience that we don't want to lose, so we are trying to recruit to get younger blood in to ensure the skills and experience of the older generation is passed down."

One team member who took part in his final rescue operation just last year was the oldest active rescuer in Cumbria, aged 85, when he retired!

ZERO TOLERANCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST AMBULANCE STAFF

The Welsh Ambulance Service has joined forces with local health boards, police and the Crown Prosecution Service to launch a fresh crackdown on verbal and physical abuse of all NHS staff in Wales.

Partners have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which outlines protocols on referring cases to the police, gathering evidence and giving statements. It also gives support for victims when their case gets to court.

Judith Hardisty, Director of Workforce and Organisational Development in the Welsh Ambulance Service, said: "Our staff should be able to work without fear of violence, abuse or harassment from any member of the

public. They are there to help the community's emergency medical needs, and do not need to be obstructed in their duty by unwarranted attacks.

"Violence not only puts our crews and call takers at risk, but prevents them from doing their job - caring for others. We condemn acts of violence and aggression against our staff and other NHS employees while they are on duty."

In 2012-13, more than 260 incidents of violence and aggression against ambulance staff were officially recorded by the Trust.

The Trust takes a zero-tolerance approach on violence and aggression towards staff, and has been instrumental in a series of successful prosecutions.

CREDIT COACHING IS THE RIGHT CALL TO MAKE!

Credit control is often considered a dirty word in business and tends to be one of the roles most business owners prefer to stay away from. While every business recognises the importance of credit control, most will have debts lying around for far too long.

At best these balances are costing the business money at worst it can result in cash flow problems that can jeopardise the entire business.

For many small businesses having a resource dedicated to the collection of outstanding accounts is simply too expensive and the problem with including credit control as part of one persons job is that they simply don't have the time to make the necessary calls to make the

money flow.

Offering solutions to these problems is the Credit Coach Declan Flood, who is offering a professional credit management service for a fraction of the cost of doing it yourself. In addition you have the peace of mind knowing that your customers will be dealt with professionally and effectively without the hassle of having to do it yourself.

In simple terms the Credit Coach will make the calls to your customers and provide you with a daily activity report to ensure you stay in control. If you have heard Declan address the issue of credit, you will know his approach to customer service and how excellence in credit can have a positive effect on the whole business.



Declan Flood, Credit Coach.

The Credit Coaches will help you source a package that is tailored specifically to meet your requirements and budget. For further information contact Mary Aylward on 01-659 9466 or Declan Flood on 087-2447052.



- ✓ Is Cash Flow a problem?
- ✓ Have you debts that are getting older?
- ✓ Is a growing Debtors Ledger a source of worry for you?

Not any more...

There is a professional, effective, customer friendly credit control service available that is tailor made to suit your business and get you cash flowing in faster than ever before.

To see if a cost effective outsourced credit control service using only trained, experienced and customer focused credit controllers could be the answer for your business...

For more info: Call [Mary Aylward](#) or [Declan Flood](#), The Credit Coach on 01 659 9466 – to find out how easy it is to turn your debtors into cash.

stress free

cost effective



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professional



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WORLD CONFERENCE TO TAKE MEDICINE TO THE EXTREMES

A world conference, taking place at Harvard Medical School in Boston from 28 to 31 October, will deliver an insight in the field of remote medicine including pre-hospital medicine, expedition medicine, disaster medicine and other 'extreme' medicine fields.

The four-day conference and series of workshops follows the inaugural European event of the World Extreme Medicine Conference and Expo series at the Royal Society of Medicine in central London on 15-18 April 2012.

Following its success, the first North American event takes place in October 2013, in association with Harvard Medical School and the Harvard-Affiliated Fellowship in Disaster Medicine and Emergency Management.

Developed specifically with physicians, fellows and residents in mind, the World Extreme Medicine Conference and Expo will also be of interest nurses, EMTs

and paramedics, as well as for medical students – all with discounted rates.



For further information visit

<http://boston.extrememedicineexpo.com/>

EU COMMITTED TO UNIVERSAL ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY

The EU is one of the most prominent international players and lead donors in the abolitionist cause worldwide, and the fight against the death penalty is at the heart of its human rights policy.

It remains a personal priority for Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission.

The EU uses all tools available in order to promote its abolitionist policy, according to the relevant EU guidelines. In the course of 2012 and during the first half of 2013, the EU has issued 54 statements/declarations, thus mapping the capital punishment situation worldwide.

The Foreign Affairs Council of 22 April approved the revised and updated text of the EU Guidelines on Death Penalty, the first ever Human Rights text of its kind adopted in 1998 and subsequently revised twice (2001 and 2008).

The new text is a consolidation of the EU's experience in

its leading role worldwide towards the abolition of the death penalty. As was the case in the past, the EU Guidelines will continue to provide the basis for the EU's action in the field.

In 2012, the EU led an intensive lobbying campaign for the UN General Assembly resolution on a 'Moratorium on the use of the death penalty'. The UN General Assembly on 21 December 2012 adopted the resolution with 111 votes in favour whereas the number of co-sponsors rose to a record number of 91.

As well as leading contributions to the efforts of civil society organisations aimed at the abolition of the death penalty, the EU is the first regional body to have adopted rules prohibiting trade in goods used for capital punishment (or torture and ill-treatment), as well as on the supply of technical assistance related to such goods.

For more info: http://eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/adp/index_en.htm

UNIFIED EMERGENCY SERVICES HOTLINE SET UP ACROSS RUSSIA

A 24-hour-hotline that will combine Russia's emergency services will be operational in nine regions and all major cities by the end of 2013.

The freephone number '112' combines those of the fire service, 01, the police, 02, ambulances, 03. However, all of the separate numbers will continue to work during the transition period, according to Emergency Situations Minister Vladimir Puchkov.

The hotline will be available from landlines as well as mobile telephones. The new service has already been piloted successfully in the Republic of Tatarstan and the Kursk Region, Puchkov said.

In March 2013 the Federal Target Program approved the creation of the 112 emergency number.

It is expected that by 2017 the system will work in 67 regions, for which 40 billion rubles (\$1.2 billion) will be allocated from the budget.

Telecom operators can also give information about the location of their subscribers to the emergency services, in accordance with legislation that was submitted to the State Duma in mid-July.

The new system allows the emergency services to reduce their response time and select the most suitable means of providing assistance.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

EMERGENCY LINE '999' IS BACK ON TRACK IN KENYAN CAPITAL

Police in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi say the emergency number '999' has been restored to help curb rising crime in the country.

In Nairobi, 22 lines have been allocated and police announced are all working round-the-clock. "The lines are back," Nairobi Police chief Benson Kibui said, and cautioned users against calling the lines when they do not have emergencies to report.

"There are those who have been calling when they have totally nothing to report, they just engage the lines."

The restoration follows public outcry and a High Court order in a case filed by civil society activist Okiya Omtatah in July. The toll free emergency line stopped working sometimes in 1998.

Omtatah had argued in court that Kenya was experiencing high crime levels due to the lack of the toll free '999' emergency line. "We will respond as soon as possible when called for emergencies, the public should not worry anymore," Kibui said.



'ROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS' PILOTS FOR CHARITY IN 2014

Two pilots plan to fly 'Round the World in 80 days' next year in a single engine to raise in the region of €390,000 for 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.flyrtw80.com

HOPES OF A CURE FOR HIV CONTINUE TO GROW

In the past few years, the hopes of finding a cure for HIV have been growing within the scientific community. Some of the world's leading experts in the field discussed the medical possibilities for a HIV cure at a recent conference in Sweden.

Reports came from the USA about a baby with HIV who was put on very early intensive antiviral medication. As a result, the virus stopped replicating and the baby was declared effectively healthy.

Following transplantation of immune cells from a healthy donor into an HIV-positive man in Berlin, traces of the virus disappeared in blood. Cases such as these have raised scientists' hopes of a cure for HIV.

The two-day conference entitled 'Towards a Cure for HIV: From Pathogenesis to Eradication' took place on 5-6 September in Stockholm. Researchers are now examining two strategies for curing HIV. One is to activate the virus to expose it to antiviral drugs. The other is to strengthen the patient's own immune system so that it can attack the virus in the reservoirs itself. This can be done with "therapeutic vaccines", vaccines given to already infected individuals.

The current trend in treatment methods is also towards intervening with medication as soon as possible after primary infection in order to prevent the reservoirs forming in the first place. A new study suggests that this line of attack might work.



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 number – 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.



DEADLY DELAYS HITTING TUBERCULOSIS DRUGS IN INDIA

The Indian government must urgently address the persistent issues and almost routine delays of procuring drugs to treat tuberculosis, according to the international medical humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders.

"As a country with such a high burden of tuberculosis, Médecins Sans Frontières is deeply disturbed that India is experiencing stock-outs of critically needed drugs to treat children and those with drug-resistant TB," said Leena Menghaney, India Manager of MSF's Access Campaign. "In this instance, it's a stock-out that can cost people's lives and the government must act urgently to fix the problems."

Under India's public TB treatment programme, the central government is responsible for buying drugs and distributing them to the states which then provide treatment. However, due to delays in the procurement process India is experiencing shortages across the country of both paediatric TB drugs and those used to treat drug-resistant.

"A continuous, sustainable supply of quality-assured medicines is vital for TB patients to have even half a chance of being cured," Dr Mansoor said.

"As a doctor, I know the disease, I know how to manage it, but I feel powerless because we don't have the medicines to treat," noted Dr Homa Mansoor, TB Medical Referent for Médecins Sans Frontières in India.

The stock-outs in India are occurring as the World Health Organization late last week issued interim guidelines on bedaquiline, the first new drug to treat TB in 50 years, approved by the US Food and Drug Administration at the end of 2012.

Médecins Sans Frontières has welcomed the release of the guidelines.

But it has said use of the new drug needs to be regulated and controlled, and studies must be undertaken to find combinations with the new drugs in shorter, more effective and less toxic treatment regimens.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

ROBO-PETS MAY IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THOSE WITH DEMENTIA

Robotic animals can help to improve the quality of life for people with dementia, according to new research, which found that interacting with a therapeutic robot companion made people with mid- to late-stage dementia less anxious.

The pilot study, a collaboration led by Professor Wendy Moyle from Griffith University, Australia and involving Northumbria University's Professor Glenda Cook and researchers from institutions in Germany, investigated the effect of interacting with PARO - a robotic harp seal - compared with participation in a reading group. The study built on Prof Cook's previous ethnographic work carried out in care homes in North East England.

PARO is fitted with artificial intelligence software and tactile sensors that allow it to respond to touch and sound. It can show emotions such as surprise, happiness and anger, can learn its own name and learns to respond to words that its owner uses frequently.

Eighteen participants, living in a residential aged care facility in Queensland, Australia, took part in activities with PARO for five weeks and also participated in a control reading group activity for the same period.

Following both trial periods the impact was assessed, using recognised clinical dementia measurements, for how the activities had influenced the participants' quality of life, tendency to wander, level of apathy, levels of depression and anxiety ratings.

The findings indicated that the robots had a positive, clinically meaningful influence on quality of life, increased levels of pleasure and also reduced displays of anxiety. Research has already shown that interaction with animals can have a beneficial effect on older adults, increasing their social behaviour and verbal interaction and decreasing feelings of loneliness.

However, the presence of animals in residential care home settings can place residents at risk of infection or injury and create additional duties for nursing staff.

This latest study suggests that PARO companions elicit a similar response and could potentially be used in residential settings to help reduce some of the symptoms - such as agitation, aggression, isolation and loneliness - of dementia.



Prof Glenda Cook with the robot 'PARO'.

NEW OUTLOOK FOR MEDICA 2013

MEDICA Congress – the world-leading medical marketing, information and communication platform – which runs from 20 to 23 November - is taking on a new outlook.

For MEDICA 2013 the focus of the congress will be the responsibility of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. The Messe Düsseldorf Group now has experience lasting 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





INTERNATIONAL NEWS

PLAN YOUR CONTRIBUTION FOR 'EUROPEAN 112 DAY' IN 2014

To address the growing number of false calls to the emergency services, the European Emergency Number Association (EENA) has recommended that the next 'European 112 Day' on 11 February 2014 be organised around the topic 'Meet your call-taker!'

The EENA estimates that call-takers and dispatchers answer around 320 million emergency calls all over the EU annually. However, in many countries false calls represent more than 50 per cent of these calls.

In this context, making the public and especially children aware of when to dial 112 and the fact that false calls can put lives in danger is crucial, according to the EENA.



INTERNATIONAL DNA USERS' CONFERENCE FOR INVESTIGATIVE OFFICERS

The 7th International DNA Users' Conference on 6-8 November at INTERPOL's General Secretariat in Lyon, France conference will bring together police officers, law enforcement representatives, policy makers and DNA experts from INTERPOL member countries to discuss the applications of DNA in criminal investigations.

This year's agenda will include topics ranging from new DNA technologies to enhance police operations, including a session on Rapid DNA technology; DNA in national police strategies; DNA databases, legislation and international exchange, to missing persons' investigations and disaster victim identification. For further details log into <http://www.interpol.int/>



CHINESE TAKE AWAY INTERPOL PROPOSALS ON SECURITY MEASURES

China's Ministry of Public Security has met with INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble at the agency's General Secretariat HQ to discuss security measures aimed at enhancing international cooperation against transnational crime.

The visit by the Director General of the International Co-operation Department, Chinese Ministry of Public Security provided an opportunity to review key transnational organised crime issues such as human trafficking, drugs trafficking and illegal football gambling.

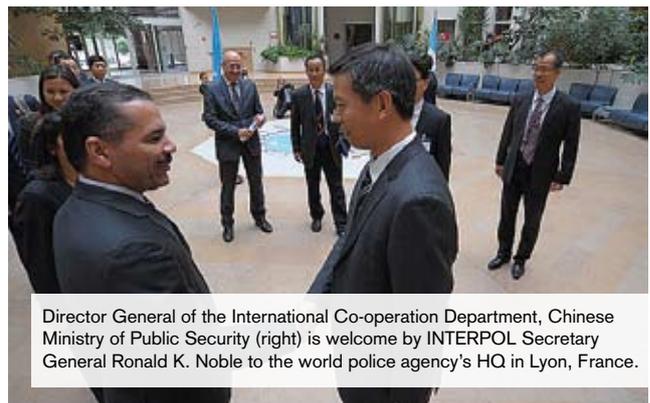
"China's authorities recognise INTERPOL's essential role in fighting transnational crime in all its forms, through effective cooperation between police forces worldwide. We therefore look forward to developing our relationship with INTERPOL and its member countries even further in combating all forms of international crime," said Jingrong Liao, Director General.

INTERPOL's Secretary General Noble pointed to China's support of a number of projects targeting Asian organised crime networks, in particular the SOGA operations combating illegal football gambling. Between 2007 and 2010 the three operations led to nearly 7,000 arrests, the seizure of more than \$26 million in cash and the closure of illegal gambling dens handling bets worth more than \$2

billion.

In September, global efforts to combat trafficking in illicit goods took a significant step forward when China hosted its first INTERPOL training session against illicit trade. The seminar followed the success of Operation Hurricane, the first ever INTERPOL-led operation targeting illicit trade in Asia.

Interventions across China resulted in several organised crime networks being broken up, the closure of nearly 80 sites producing fake goods and the seizure of counterfeits worth millions of dollars.



Director General of the International Co-operation Department, Chinese Ministry of Public Security (right) is welcome by INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble to the world police agency's HQ in Lyon, France.

EUROPEAN EMERGENCY CONFERENCE 2014 IN POLE POSITION!

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN EMERGENCY NUMBER ASSOCIATION NEXT YEAR IN WARSAW ON 2-4 APRIL BRINGS TOGETHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS EMERGENCY SERVICES, PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL OVER EUROPE AND BEYOND (MIDDLE-EAST, ASIA, SOUTH AMERICA AND NORTH AMERICA) TO SHOWCASE BEST PRACTICES.

The three-day EENA Conference 2014 in Poland's capital city will again aim to foster the sharing of best practices between the relevant stakeholders.

As part of the conference this year's EU Emergency Services Workshop is developed around the concept of change, be it related to governance, or to introducing new developments like cloud-based services. It will also include updates and debates on several important topics such spectrum, eCall and caller location.

Over 60 leading experts and practitioners will address policy and regulatory matters as well as operational and technical issues during the plenary and parallel tracks.

EMERGENCY SERVICES REWARDED

The 112 Awards Ceremony, which takes place in conjunction with the EU workshop, will be presented across a number of categories, to recognise and reward emergency services and citizens for their outstanding achievements in improving and promoting the European emergency number 112.

Ireland came out tops two years ago in the 'Outstanding Call-Taker' category when Will Carolan from the HSE National Ambulance Service, received the 'Outstanding Call-Taker' award in the Latvian capital of Riga.

The selection procedure consists of two stages. During the first stage, proposals from all over Europe falling into the seven different categories are assessed against rigorous criteria by a panel of five independent juries, experts in the emergency services field.

Two applications in each category are preselected and the final selection is performed through direct vote by the members of the 112 Emergency Services Staff Network.

For further details email [Lavinia Cinca](mailto:Lavinia.Cinca@eena.org) on lc@eena.org

112 AWARD CATEGORIES

Awards are presented in the following categories:

- **Outstanding Education on 112:** Rewards organisation(s) or institution(s) that have demonstrated clear results in raising awareness on '112' as the emergency number that can be used all over the EU
- **Outstanding Call-Taker:** Recognises a call-taker/dispatcher who has contributed to save a life or several lives by handling a particularly tricky call to 112.
- **Outstanding Emergency Service Integration:** Rewards initiatives that have contributed to a better collaboration and integration between different emergency services such as EMS, Rescue and Police. This award could be awarded for the quality of physical or virtual integration
- **Outstanding Rescue:** Recognises a call taker / dispatcher and professional rescuers who have contributed to save a life or several lives by an emergency rescue involving a call to 112 and an outstanding response from the emergency services. Ideally this case would show the courage of first-responders as well as the quality of the call-taking.
- **Outstanding PSAP Initiative:** Rewards an initiative from PSAPs that have contributed to save more lives and to improve citizens' safety. Applicants should demonstrate that this initiative is unique and has a strong added value for the future of 112.
- **Outstanding Emergency Call Centre:** Rewards an emergency call centre that has achieved clear results for citizens' safety.
- **Outstanding Political Initiative:** Recognises politician(s) who have contributed to a better promotion and/or functioning of 112.
- **Outstanding National 112 System:** Rewards national organisation(s) or institution(s) that have implemented an efficient 112 system, considering technical and operational results. Applicants are expected to provide figures showing the impact on citizens' safety.
- **Outstanding Citizen and Rescue:** Recognises individual(s) who have contributed to save a life or several lives by calling 112 or making sure that 112 was called or/and an emergency rescue involving a call to 112 and an outstanding response from the emergency services.