

Emergency

I Services Ireland

CYBER CRIME

ON THE INCREASE

***CIVIL DEFENCE JOIN GARDAI
ON SEARCH EXERCISE***

***NEW APP FOR CHILD
RESCUE ALERTS***

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85 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Women's Aid claims that Ireland's domestic violence legislation is in need of major reform, and is calling for a 24/7 on-call system for emergency barring orders, so that women can access legal protection when they need it the most.

87 ROAD SAFETY

A new appeals mechanism for inconsistent speed limits, the removal of misleading 80km/h speed limits on narrow country roads, and the end of 'silly signs' in inappropriate locations, are the main recommendations of a working group set up by the Transport Minister.

91 GANGLAND VIOLENCE

Gardaí should join forces with other agencies and public bodies in setting up a national initiative to tackle gang violence, according to one youth worker. But he says the fact that it doesn't seem to be a big priority with the Government is the major problem.

99 DEFIBRILLATOR MAINTENANCE

The Irish Medicines Board is advising sports and community clubs throughout the country to perform safety and maintenance checks on their automated external defibrillators (AEDs) during the winter, as lower temperatures and freezing conditions can affect performance.

105 EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

The European Emergency Number Association's annual conference in Warsaw on 2-4 April will bring together emergency services, public authorities and industry representatives from Europe, Middle-East, Asia, South America and North America to showcase best practices.

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107 SECURITY INDUSTRY

The '2013 Courage Award' – one of nine security industry awards presented by the Irish Security Industry Association – was in remembrance of Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe, who was murdered in the line of duty in January 2013.

111 IRISH WATER SAFETY

A number of Gardaí were among the 22 rescuers to be honoured at the 2013 Irish Water Safety National Awards Ceremony for their actions, which saved 36 lives in near-death dramatic incidents around the country.

119 HEALTHCARE REFORMS

Substantial health reforms are underway in the Irish healthcare system, according to the Secretary General of the Department of Health. Dr Ambrose McLoughlin says that a system founded on universal access, based on health needs with a universal health insurance-based model is where we are heading.

121 MEDICAL RESEARCH

There is a lack of an overall strategic co-ordination of funding for medical research in Ireland, according to the findings from the first major study into the health research environment, undertaken by the Medical Research Charities Group.

123 WILDFIRE PROJECTS

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and the Northumberland National Park have started work on a project to help reduce the risk of wildfires in the UK's northern county.

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GARDAÍ ARE FIRST TO TAP INTO TWITTER EMERGENCY ALERTS SERVICE

The Gardaí are among the first agencies to sign up for Twitter emergency alerts service, recently extended to Ireland and Britain.

Users will receive SMS or 'push' notification on their phone when their account posts a tweet marked as an 'alert'.

Twitter Alerts, which was launched initially in the United States, Japan and Korea in September 2013, is a feature that is designed to bring important and accurate information to Twitter users from emergency services, government organisations and charities during situations such as natural disasters or when other communications services are not available.

Those who sign up to receive alerts from certain Twitter accounts will receive a notification to their phone when the account posts a tweet marked as an alert.

Those notifications will come via SMS and push notifications for iOS and Android smartphones. On a user's Twitter timeline, alerts are highlighted with an orange bell to make sure they stand out.

Among those accounts that are eligible to sign up to issue alerts are those from police and public safety agencies, city governments, national agencies and NGOs.

Other accounts that have signed up for the service are the London Fire Brigade, the Mayor of London's Office, Britain's Foreign Office and the Environment



Agency.

Twitter introduced the alerts programme after the power of the microblogging service was demonstrated when those stranded by Hurricane Sandy in the US in 2012 turned to the social network for help.

Official agencies, such as the New York City Fire Department, also used the microblogging platform to communicate with residents during the storm.

In 2012, Twitter unveiled Lifeline in Japan, which allowed residents to find helpful accounts during times of natural disaster and trouble.

Since its launch a few months ago, Twitter Alerts has been used to alert citizens in the US to the effects of the recent government shutdown in Washington, tornado warnings in New Jersey and alerts about abducted children.

'BE WINTER-READY' INFORMATION CAMPAIGN HITS THE ROAD

The Government's 'Be Winter-Ready' 2013-2014 Information Campaign launch coincided with a meeting of the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning winter-preparedness issues.

Representatives from the various departments and agencies tasked with emergency response attended the launch at the National Emergency Co-ordination Centre (NECC) in Dublin.

Advice is available through www.winterready.ie, Government Departments, An Garda Síochána, the HSE, local authorities and the transport providers.

The main objectives of the

'Be Winter-Ready' campaign are:

- To provide practical advice on how best to prepare for the coming winter.
- To ensure the public are aware of where advice and help can be found, if needed.
- To reassure the public that preparations are being made to ensure that there will be a co-ordinated response to severe weather events.

A twitter account [@emergencyIE](https://twitter.com/emergencyIE) has been launched and the Office of Emergency Planning is tweeting during the winter period to augment the 'Be Winter Ready' campaign. The public are encouraged to join in the conversation a [#bewinterready](https://twitter.com/hashtag/bewinterready).

BE WINTER-READY



Advice to the public is available via Aertel page 592.

LIFESAVING FOUNDATION CONFERENCE (30 SEPT-2 OCT)

The 2014 Lifesaving Foundation Drowning Prevention and Rescue Conference will take place in Bracken Court Hotel, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin from 30 September to 2 October.

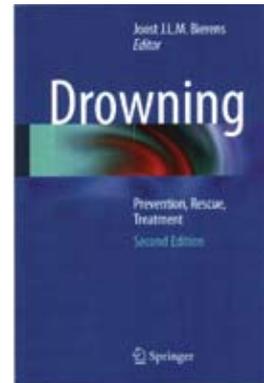
General details are available on the Foundation's website www.lifesavingfoundation.ie. The key topic will address the 'Handbook on Drowning (Second Edition)' which is due for publication early in 2014. The handbook contains over 1200 pages of specific detail on all aspects of drowning prevention, rescue and treatment; authored by over 200 world experts.

Lifesaving Foundation Honorary CEO John Connolly said that a hard copy of the handbook costs over €200, adding that some papers can be quite technical.

"Working with the editor we aim to have a group of experts present the key points in plain language understandable by the general rescue community," he

told *'Emergency Services Ireland'*.

Speakers will include Handbook Editor Dr Joost Bierens MD, PhD (Netherlands), Professor Stephen Langendorfer PhD (USA), Professor John Pearn MD, PhD (Australia), Professor Emeritus Robert Stallman PhD (Norway), Professor Michael Tipton PhD (United Kingdom), Professor Richard Franklin PhD (Australia), Dr. David Szpilman MD (Brazil), Dr. Kevin Moran PhD (New Zealand), Dr. Ana Catarina Queiroga PhD (Portugal) and Dr. Paddy Morgan MD (United Kingdom).



IRELAND TO GET DELIVERY OF INDIVIDUAL POST CODES 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. An 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 this country will be the first in the world to have a unique postcode for each individual address.

Communications Minister Pat Rabbitte said: "This will benefit the emergency services 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. (Pic: Breakingnews.ie)



NEW HSE-APPROVED ID CARD COULD SAVE LIVES AND MONEY

A new identification card will arm medical teams with information about their emergency patients instantly, thereby reducing the healthcare spend and improving the country's healthcare services.

The company behind the product has received HSE approval as a business idea, and says the MediLife ID will reduce medical misdiagnosis and error.

Currently, EMTs do not have medical history or details at hand when dealing with a patient. Using new technologies, doctors can keep personal medical records up-to-date for their patients – and at hand for any medical team to view them.

Doctors will be aware of a patient's critical medical information which they can read online, upon their

arrival at the hospital.

Although the HSE has signed off on the plan and 3,200 emergency services staff will receive training on using the information, the card is a product being sold by a privately-owned company.

If enough members of the public sign up to the service, the firm has estimated significant savings for the HSE.

As diagnostic information is readily available – without the need for tests – significant savings would be made.

The card could also tackle some medical negligence cases. Currently, some 4,000 adverse incidents are recorded in Irish hospitals each month with some going on to be dealt with by the State Claims Agency.

FURTHER INVESTMENT IN NEW FLEET OF GARDA CARS

With €5 million already spent on a new fleet of vehicles for the Gardaí for the last two months of 2013, another €4 million will be invested in the first half of this year.

The fleet of 305 new vehicles (275 provided by Hyundai and 30 provided by Ford). These are in addition to 133 new Garda vehicles already made available in 2013. Justice Minister Alan Shatter said this most recent investment brings to €18 million the total amount spent on the Garda fleet from 2012 to 2014.

“It represents a very considerable financial investment in Garda transport, particularly at a time when the level of funding available across the public sector is severely limited. A great deal of work has taken place to ensure that these vehicles could be made available quickly and that the tender process was completed without delay,” he said.

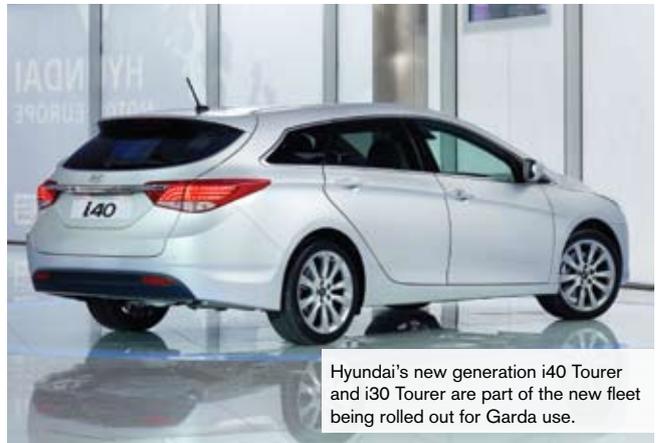
“It is a clear indication of my commitment to ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, An Garda Síochána are provided with sufficient resources to enable them to deliver an effective and efficient policing service,” added Minister Shatter.

Department of Justice figures have shown that Garda vehicle numbers dropped from 2,814 in 2009 to 2,474 in 2012. However, 133 new vehicles were added to the fleet in 2013.

The Department of Justice said all the new vehicles would be cars and “in line with the current Garda operational requirements”. Garda cars have to be retired

once they reach 300,000km for safety reasons.

The car investment is on top of promises to re-open Garda recruitment with student officers entering the Garda College in Templemore for the first time since recruitment was frozen in 2009.



Hyundai's new generation i40 Tourer and i30 Tourer are part of the new fleet being rolled out for Garda use.

RED CROSS FIRST AID APP SCOOPS 2013 EIRCOM SPIDER AWARD

The Irish Red Cross First Aid App is the winner of the Mobile App category at the 2013 eircom Spider Awards in the Convention Centre.

Since its launch in September, the app has been downloaded more than 13,500 times and was also short-listed for a mobile marketing award. Optimised for both smartphones and tablets the app is free to download from the Apple App Store and from Google Play. Once downloaded, no internet connection is needed, making it quick and simple to access emergency first aid tips as you need them.

The aim of the app is to bridge the gap between people who have first aid training and people who do not, thereby giving them the confidence to take action and help others during a crisis.

Irish Red Cross Head of Communications Ronan Ryan, said: “The app aims to get that message out there and make first aid more accessible to the general public.”

It features easy-to-follow tips for more than 20 common first aid scenarios including how to treat burns, breaks, strains and sprains and what to do if an infant is choking. It also features advice on how to prepare for emergency situations including floods, fires

and water safety.

Red Cross studies show that most accidents requiring first aid, such as falls, cuts, burns and suffocation, happen in places where people feel secure – especially the home.

Having the First Aid App on their smartphone or tablet means people can instantly access the information they need to react correctly.



RTE's Neil Delamere; Lavinia Baciu, Digital Marketing Executive, Irish Red Cross; and Tony Lawlor, National Director of Units, Irish Red Cross.

SECOND-HAND LAPTOPS NEEDED FOR IRISH SCHOOLS

Irish charity Camara Ireland has issued an appeal to all organisations and individuals to donate their end-of-life laptops for re-use in Irish schools.

There has been a surge in demand for Camara's educational technology packages and the charity has not yet sourced enough used laptops to meet this demand.

"I urge people to consider Camara for reuse of their laptops," said Ciaran Cannon TD, Minister for Training and Skills and a supporter of Camara Ireland. "The package they provide makes an important impact in our schools, helping to provide young people with vital access to technology."

The social enterprise, founded in 2010, provides reused laptops and teacher training to disadvantaged Irish schools at 25 per cent of the price of a new laptop. Camara Ireland has supplied over 900 computers to schools this year, training nearly 400 educators in the process.

On receipt of his school's recent delivery, Damien Fallon, Principal of Killavullen National School in Cork, commented, "The laptops have landed! They're perfect. Thank you. You really are changing the world, click by click."



*To donate computers to Camara visit www.camara.org or call 01-6522673.

CRIME VICTIMS HELPLINE REPORT 11.5% INCREASE IN CONTACTS

The National Crime Victims Helpline has reported an 11.5 per cent increase in incoming contacts for 2012, with a total of 3,628 during the period.

The gender breakdown of callers was 70 per cent female and 30 per cent male. Just as in 2011 physical assault was the category of crime leading to the most calls – at 25 per cent.

Sexual violence and property crime (burglary and robbery) were the next highest categories at 23 per cent each and 10 per cent of calls related to harassment. Just under 50 per cent of calls to the helpline are from people living in Dublin.

Maeve Ryan, helpline co-ordinator said their service is clearly very important for large numbers of people, adding: "The 11 per cent increase in calls is more than likely emerging for two reasons, greater awareness of our service and greater need."

She claimed that the main reasons why people call the helpline are for emotional support; information; issues around Garda investigations and fear, which developed as a result of the crime.

**The National Helpline number is Freephone 116 006 and 085-1337711 for texts.*

UK & IRISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONFERENCE

The UK & Irish Mountain Rescue Conference on 12-14 September, taking place in Aviemore in the Highlands of Scotland, will be organised by Scottish Mountain Rescue.

A series of conference workshops will be rolled out as follows:

1. **Mountain Technical:** Subjects on land from 4x4 driving/recovery to mountain biking.
2. **Water Rescue:** Technical water-related issues, such as canyon rescue and searching water margins.
3. **Medical:** This includes casualty management and the latest thinking on treating the hypothermic casualty.
4. **Human Factors:** A range of topics from developing rescue leaders to best practice in rescue trauma counselling.

5. **Search:** Search management skills and tools. Updates via www.facebook.com/MrGathering2014 Twitter @MRGathering2014 or for further queries email mrgathering@mountainrescuescotland.org

Mountain Rescue UK & Ireland Conference 2014



HEALTHY SMILES ALL AROUND WITH DECARE DENTAL

DeCare Dental is Ireland's only dedicated dental insurer and has been insuring Irish smiles since 2004, offering a great range of plans for individual and corporate customers.

The Healthy Smiles range of plans from DeCare offers on an annual basis dental exams, dental cleanings, emergency treatment and significant contributions towards procedures such as fillings, extractions, root canal, dentures, crowns & orthodontics, depending on the level of cover that is chosen.

With annual prices starting at €108.60 for adults and from €74.64 for children for Healthy Smiles Level 1 Plan, DeCare's plans offer great choice and value, backed up by a friendly and dedicated customer service experience.

In addition, young people aged 18 or under can avail of a half price offer until 28 February, with prices starting from just €37.32 per year for 'Healthy Smiles Level 1'.

For more details visit www.decaredental.ie or call 1890 130 017.



Former Irish and Munster rugby player Alan Quinlan, DeCare Dental Brand Ambassador, with Arona Romeri (5) with at the launch of DeCare's 'Healthy Smiles' range of plans.

OPPORTUNITY FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Medical students from NUI Galway will have new opportunities to spend two months in a developing country this summer, with funding made available by The Hospital Saturday Fund.

The School of Medicine, working with the Galway University Foundation, will invite fourth year students of medicine to apply for funding for the medical electives (a period of supervised learning, chosen by the student).

Senior Lecturer in Social and Preventative Medicine Dr Diarmuid O'Donovan said that these electives help to improve the ability of students to manage patients from diverse backgrounds and to better understand global health.

"Many electives are based in low-resource tropical settings where the organisation and provision of healthcare, and the social, cultural, economic and political environments are very different from what students have experienced in their home institutions."

Paul Jackson, CEO of the Hospital Saturday Fund (HSF), who visited NUI Galway to meet

some of the staff and students of the medical school, said the Medical Electives Programme is an opportunity for students to extend their knowledge and skills in diverse overseas locations.

NUI Galway's School of Medicine is also exploring the possibility of student exchanges with medical schools in developing countries. Students planning to travel are offered training by the School of Medicine, in conjunction with the International Office and the Community Knowledge Initiative programme.

Training covers broad areas such as personal health advice, travel safety and security, cultural awareness and stress management.



Seated (l-r): Paul Jackson, CEO and Sharon Phelan of the Hospital Saturday Fund, and Dr Diarmuid O'Donovan, NUI Galway with medical students (standing l-r): Esraa Hegazy, Susan Morrison and Suzanne Smyth.

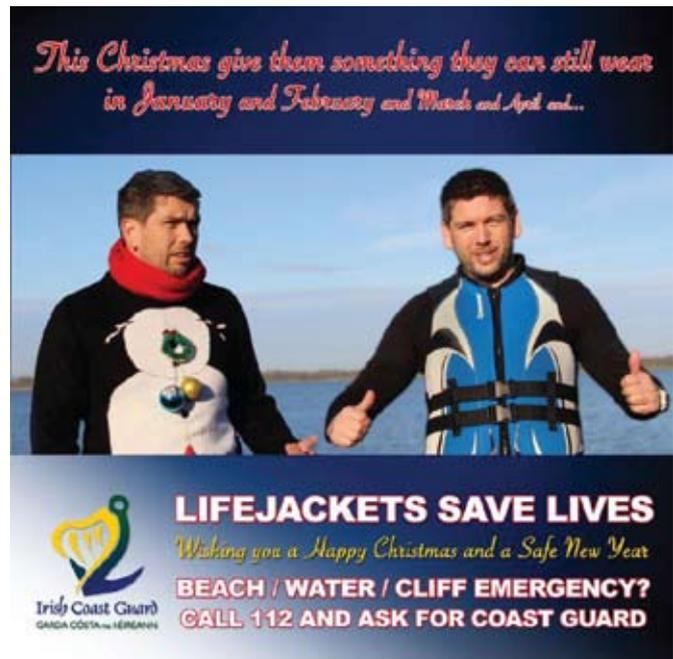
COAST GUARD LIFEJACKET CAMPAIGN

In anticipation of another summer scorchers this year, the Irish Coast Guard launched its latest lifejacket campaign during the Christmas period.

The lifejacket comes in two variations – it could be a compact horseshoe lifejacket suitable for fishing enthusiasts, and those who love water sports such as paddle boarding.

The great weather last summer saw people head in their thousands to the water to enjoy the long hot summer days. Even when the temperature dipped with the help of wetsuits, water sports enthusiasts continued to enjoy the rivers, lakes and seas around the country. The country has never experienced so many different water sports from kite surfing to sea angling to sailing, all enjoying the good weather.

Unfortunately with this came tragedy with a significant increase in the number of accidents on the water, beaches and cliffs around the country, giving the emergency services one of the busiest periods for call-outs since records first began.



NAVAL BEST PRACTICE NETS PUBLIC SECTOR ENERGY AWARD

The Naval Service scooped the Public Sector category award at the SEAI's Sustainable Energy Awards 2013.

The award was in recognition of saving €5 million in energy costs and reducing its energy consumption.

With approximately 90 per cent of its energy use due to ship movements, the Naval Service must balance energy use with legal and operations requirements. So, therefore, it has made significant savings of €5 million

while more than 20,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide have been made over the past five years.

According to the judging panel, the project highlighted that savings can be achieved in difficult operational areas, as well as in buildings and facilities.

The judges were impressed with the overall strategy and programme of activities, which they said were "driven by the ISO 50001 standard".

MIGRAINE ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The Migraine Association of Ireland's new website has been described as a dependable source of information for migraine sufferers, their families, friends and employers.

The CEO of the Migraine Association of Ireland Patrick Little, said: "Many people are unaware that migraine is a chronic and disabling condition. The World Health Organisation lists migraine as the seventh ranking cause of all disease associated disability worldwide."

Sections on the new website www.migraine.ie are designed specifically for children and teenagers, and it is also intended as a diagnostic resource for health professionals.

Enda Connolly, CEO of the Health Research Board, and Eibhlin Mulroe, CEO of IPPOSI (Irish Platform for Patients' Organisations, Science & Industry) and member of the Irish Brain Council, both emphasised the necessity of the patient's voice being heard, with Eibhlin Mulroe stating that patient involvement in research is also of key importance.



Pictured at the launch of the MAI's new website (l-r): Audrey Craven, MAI founder; Enda Connolly, CEO of the Health Research Board; Kathleen Lynch, Minister for Disability, Older People, Equality and Mental Health; Eibhlin Mulroe, CEO of IPPOSI and member of the Irish Brain Council; and Patrick Little, CEO of the MAI.

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS NEW TYPE OF RECESSION DEPRESSION

A new study from St Patrick’s Mental Health Services highlights a new depression specifically related to the economic downturn, and it also points out that this type of ‘Celtic Tiger’ patient is more likely to make a full recovery.

The study titled ‘Mauling of the Celtic Tiger’ looked at 137 patients admitted with first-episode depression to St Patrick’s Mental Health Services and followed-up from admission over 24 months.

The group was divided into ‘Celtic Tiger’ (patients with first episode depression secondary to the economic recession) and non-Celtic Tiger control patients (other first-episode depressed patients). Both groups were compared in terms of clinical characteristics at baseline and outcome over follow-up.

Dr Thekiso Thekiso, one of the report’s authors of the study says: “We are seeing an increase in patients suffering from depressive symptoms arising directly out of a collapse in their finances which is causing domestic and personal stress.

“What is clear is that these people, who are presenting with different symptoms to the ‘classical’ depressed patient, may not ever have been referred to the mental health services were it not for the collapse.”

Dr Thekiso continued, “The new breed of Celtic Tiger depressive are often great entrepreneurs who have an internal

locus of control, which means they tend to blame themselves for their problems whereby somebody with an external locus of control would blame the economic collapse.”

Dr Noel Kennedy, Consultant Psychiatrist at St Patrick’s and co-author says: “We know that many people who die by suicide end their lives because they feel so hugely responsible for the situation they find themselves in.

This study highlights the positive outcome for those who seek help and allows us to emphasise that recovery is possible.”

**Don’t Wait to Enjoy Life Again Campaign www.stpatricks.ie/dontwait*



IRELAND’S €3M EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR TYPHOON HAIYAN

Following the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, an additional €1.6 million in aid from the Government now brings the total funds committed by Ireland to more than €3 million.

This funding will support relief efforts and emergency services such as emergency shelter, food, water and health for the 13 million people who have been affected by the tropical storm.

This is in addition to €1 million funding and €500,000 worth of emergency supplies airlifted to the Philippines that are currently being distributed to victims of the typhoon.

Two members of Ireland’s Rapid Response Corps were deployed to the Philippines to assist UN relief teams. Further deployments and additional airlifts are anticipated. Up to 200 tarpaulins, 85 family tents, 10,000 blankets and other basic food and hygiene necessities have been made available from Irish Aid stocks.

The funding will be channelled through Irish Aid’s



partner NGOs in addition to tents, blankets and other basic necessities which have been distributed from Irish Aid’s emergency stock, pre-positioned in Dubai, through NGO partner Plan Ireland.

Needs assessment surveys being carried out by the UN, Red Cross and other NGOs will identify the most affected areas and funding to these areas will be distributed accordingly.

HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION CONFERENCE

The first conference of the West/North West Hospitals Group, which took place in Galway towards end of November, featured presentations from leading national and international health care experts.

The conference was held in partnership with NUI Galway and hosted more than 140 healthcare leaders from around the country and international guests.



Tony McNamara, CEO, Cork University Hospitals Group; Eilish Hardiman, CEO, Children's Hospital Group; and Bill Maher, CEO, West/North West Hospitals Group at the "Partnership and Innovation" Conference in NUI Galway. (Pic: Joe Travers)

WHITE PAPER ON DEFENCE TO BE ENFORCED IN 2014

A number of significant reforms made within the Defence Forces, in addition to the ongoing level of operations both at home and overseas, were outlined by Defence Minister Alan Shatter as 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," noted the Minister.

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 currently contributes 570 PDF personnel to 14 different missions throughout the world; the largest deployment (361) is 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. (Pic: Military.ie)



RECOGNITION BY EUROPEAN HEALTH-FITNESS ASSOCIATION WORKS OUT

The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs Ireland) has been formally recognised by the European Health & Fitness Association to quality assure exercise professionals and training providers in Ireland, regarding industry occupational standards.

As a result, all exercise professionals registered with REPs Ireland will now have direct recognition by the European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPs), which will ensure mobility of employment across the EU.

This is an addition to current access to other national registers worldwide that REPs Ireland registered professionals are entitled to as a result of REPs Ireland being a full member of the International Confederation of Registers of Exercise Professionals (ICREPs).

Mark McManus, REPs Ireland registrar, said it's an important step in the development of the Irish national register of exercise professionals. "Since the launch of REPs Ireland five years ago, great progress has been made in the development of Irish quality assurance procedures based around the EHFA occupational standards."

As a result of this recognition of REPs Ireland by EHFA, all exercise professionals and approved education providers will now be listed on the EREPs website and public register. REPs Ireland can now offer their members and approved education providers, access to European and worldwide employment and business opportunities.

**For more information email info@repsireland.ie or call 021-4856460.*

NEW WEBSITE OFFERS TOTAL SOLUTION

Successful management of quality, environment, energy, safety and health (QUENSH) are prerequisites for business excellence. To remain competitive, organisations must make the most of their resources, whilst minimising risk and meeting legal obligations.

Where sufficient expertise is not available within an organisation, companies may struggle to reduce production costs, maximise profit and still meet environmental, energy, quality and safety and health demands.

To overcome this lack of expertise, support services are often contracted from external consultants, trainers, services and product suppliers. That's where www.quenshsolutions.ie has an important part to play.

[Quenshsolutions.ie](http://www.quenshsolutions.ie) is a searchable resource which provides quick and easy access to a range of individuals and organisations that offer technical expertise, specialist advice and solutions across the quality, environment, energy, safety and health sectors.

Organisations and individuals providing these specialist services can profile themselves when

registering on quenshsolutions.ie under headings including 'company profile', 'areas of expertise', 'client list' and 'professional memberships'.

Training providers can access their target market by displaying their courses on www.quenshsolutions.ie dedicated training page.

A unique function on the website allows users to notify multiple potential suppliers of their QUENSH needs with just the click of mouse. Alternatively, using innovative software, quenshsolutions.ie can perform this entire task on your behalf.

Recruiters using the website streamline the recruitment process for quality, environmental, energy, safety and health professionals by targeting professionals working in the areas relevant to their requirements. There is nothing like it in the marketplace but there is a definite need.

The new website has been designed to provide the ultimate user-friendly experience to the QUENSH industry across all platforms.

Check us out at www.quenshsolutions.ie and for further information contact us at info@quenshsolutions.ie

NEW INSIGHTS INTO SUICIDE AND ASSOCIATED RISK FACTORS

Recent research from the National Suicide Research Foundation shows that there are several ways in which the economic recession has had an impact on increasing suicide and self-harm rates in Ireland," according to Prof Ella Arensman, Director of Research.

Addressing the Foundation's first information evening, held in Cork City, "For people with existing mental health difficulties, job loss and financial adversity increased the risk of self-harm and suicide. Other consequences of the recession include reduced options for treatment by mental health services and discontinuation of treatment, because people could not afford to pay for this anymore."

Since 2007, in line with the recession there has been 14.6 per cent increase in Ireland. At a more local level, a quick review of statistics from the Suicide Support and Information System (SSIS) in Cork City and County reveals that of the 307 cases of suicide between September 2008 and June 2012 – 80.1% were men, 33.1% were unemployed at time of death and over 4% had worked in construction/production sector.

A number of calls to action were highlighted by Prof Arensman, such as improved access to healthcare services for people who have engaged in self-harm, people at high risk of suicide and people with multiple mental health problems,

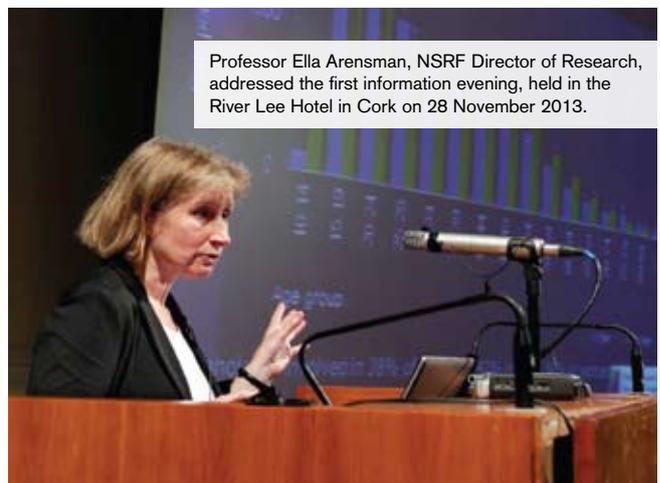
"The association between the impact of the recession and suicide underlines that suicide prevention programmes should be prioritised during times of

economic recession

National strategies to increase awareness of the risks involved in alcohol misuse should be intensified, starting at pre-adolescent age.

Pro-active facilitation of bereavement support would be the recommended approach for services working with families bereaved by suicide," she added.

During a discussion and Q&A session, Professor Arensman highlighted the issue of training of emergency department staff: "Considering that less than 10 per cent of those working in Emergency Departments have training in suicide and self-harm awareness, this should be an immediate priority action, to improve suicide and self-harm prevention training."



Professor Ella Arensman, NSRF Director of Research, addressed the first information evening, held in the River Lee Hotel in Cork on 28 November 2013.

'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, ON 14-15 JANUARY AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN LONDON.



Trauma Innovation 2014' is the only dedicated international forum to focus on connecting innovators, suppliers and end users from the military, humanitarian and emergency medical healthcare sectors.

Taking place in Central London, the forum is now in its fourth year, and aims to promote awareness and active dialogue about the latest cutting-edge equipment, techniques, technology and training.

Organised by Clarion Defence & Security – organisers of DSEI, the World Leading Defence and Security Event, Counter Terror Expo, and Forensics Europe Expo – the two-day forum will connect over 70 international exhibitors with in excess of 2,000 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

KEY THEMES OF TRAUMA INNOVATION 2014

- Sharing lessons learnt from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Evolving points of conflict.
- 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.

show that 84 per cent of attendees rated their experience as 'Good, Very Good, or Excellent', 79 per cent said the speakers 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 'most attend' event for all military, humanitarian and emergency medical healthcare professionals.

For further information visit
www.traumainnovation.com

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

**TRAUMA
INNOVATION**
MILITARY - HUMANITARIAN - EMERGENCY
14 - 15 JANUARY 2014
CENTRAL LONDON
www.traumainnovation.com



CONFERENCE TO RESPOND TO COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS

'EMERGENCY SERVICES IRELAND' IS MEDIA PARTNER OF THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS ON 1 MARCH. RESPOND 2014 WILL BE SUPPORTED BY THE PRE-HOSPITAL EMERGENCY CARE COUNCIL IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE, WICKLOW CARDIAC FIRST RESPONDERS, THE IRISH HEART FOUNDATION AND UCD'S CENTRE FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SCIENCE.

Respond 2014 will showcase the best of Community First Responder (CFR) activity in Ireland and to provide evidence-based scientific updates in best practice for first responders.

As one of the longest-established CFR schemes, Wicklow Cardiac First Responders have been contacted by new groups around the country seeking advice and support as they establish new schemes.

John Fitzgerald of Wicklow Cardiac First Responders, who is helping to organise the event on Saturday 1 March 2014 in the Tullamore Court Hotel, Offaly, said that as the number of such schemes grows, the need for a national approach has become apparent.

"The Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC), the National Ambulance Service (NAS), UCD's Centre for Emergency Medical Science and the Irish Heart Foundation have been hugely supportive of CFR activity to date. However, it is now time for CFR networks to bring all their accumulated experience together as new schemes strive to get off the ground.

"CFRs from around the country put a lot of time and effort into launching and running schemes, and we feel that if all this energy is channelled in the same direction, it will be very powerful," he added.

NATIONWIDE NETWORKING

'Respond 2014' is aimed at all types

of community first responders. The conference organisers wish to network as many groups from around the country as possible in advance and to invite them all to participate and shape this conference.

The conference will be open to any group providing CFR cover, such as PAD schemes, NAS-linked schemes, fire services, Gardaí, voluntary ambulance organisations and workplace schemes. In addition to an opportunity for networking and sharing experiences, 'Respond 2014' will feature notable international experts in the field of resuscitation.

"We have an excellent line-up of speakers who will provide a variety of updates which will appeal to experienced and novice first responders alike," noted Dr David Menzies, chairman of 'Respond 2014'.

Two keynote speakers will be Dr Cathal O'Donnell, Medical Director of the National Ambulance Service, and Professor Bryan McNally of Emory University, Atlanta and Principle Investigator of the CARES programme. Both medics have huge experience in the area of first response, both as responders and as EMS directors.

Dr O'Donnell will outline the national ambulance service perspective on 'Improving Cardiac Arrest Outcomes' while Prof Bryan McNally's keynote presentation will focus on 'Cardiac Arrest Registries to Improve Results'.

A unique aspect will be a series of workshops, allowing new and established schemes to ensure that their skills and

TOPICS ON THE AGENDA

Current CFR Models in Ireland

- *NAS-linked schemes
- *PAD schemes
- *Law enforcement schemes
- *Workplace schemes
- *Fire service schemes

Future of Cardiac First Responders Ireland

- *CPR for everybody
- *A national database
- *Legislative approach

Workshops

- *Starting and running a CFR scheme
- *AED and kit selection
- *CPR Academy
- *Training and maintaining skills
- *Social media
- *Debate on defibrillator bill

equipment meet current best practice.

Both Dr Menzies and John Fitzgerald said that the event is targeting all community first responders from all over Ireland, adding that they would welcome contact from all groups prior to the event.

Respond 

The National First Responder Conference 2014

*For further information email info@cfr.ie; web: www.cfr.ie or tweet [@Respond2014](https://twitter.com/Respond2014)

'AMBITION 2014' AT THE FRONTLINE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

'EMERGENCY SERVICES IRELAND' IS THE MEDIA PARTNER OF AMBITION 2014 – THE DEDICATED UK AMBULANCE AND PRE-HOSPITAL CARE EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE – WHICH TAKES PLACE AT OLYMPIA, LONDON ON 29-30 APRIL.

Now in its fourth year, Ambition is the only show with the full support of all NHS ambulance services. Therefore, it will have the guaranteed attendance of a broad range of frontline staff and senior managers from across the emergency services sector.

Ambition is fully supported by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) which will host its various national director group meetings during the show. The AACE includes NHS Ambulance Chief Executives, Chairs, Heads of Procurement, Directors of Clinical Care, Directors of Operations, Directors of Finance, the HART Vehicle & Equipment Group and many more.

'Ambition 2014' will focus on delivering excellence in pre-hospital care, resilience and interoperability by bringing the emergency response sector together.

You should consider 'Ambition 2014': If you are responsible for the procurement or use any of the following products and services:

Casualty Providers, CBRNe Equipment & Services, Communications Equipment & Services, Fuel Providers, IT Solutions - Software / Database / Information Management Systems, Mass Casualty and Triage Equipment, Medical Gases, Medical Products & Equipment including Defibrillation, Monitoring & Ventilation Equipment, Mortuary Equipment including Bodybags, Shrouds, ID Bracelets, Personal Protective Equipment (body armour, stab vests, helmets), Professional & Consultancy Services, Shelters / Decontamination equipment, Stretchers and Evacuation Chairs, Training & Education Products & Services, USAR/ Extrication Equipment, Vehicles, Vehicle Leasing, Coachbuilders and Vehicle Access.



Headline sponsor Excelebrate Technology is also joined by a host of leading industry representatives, including Ambulance Radio Programme, BMW Group, East of England Ambulance Service, Openhouse Products Ltd, ORH Ltd, Rescue & Medical UK, Respirex International Limited, Simulaids Ltd, SpecialWear (UK) LTD, Stryker, Total Post Services and Zeal Solutions.

'Ambition 2014' will be co-located with 'Counter Terror Expo' and 'Forensics Europe Expo', so that the emergency response sector will benefit from thousands of pre-existing visitors from the emergency services, police,

law enforcement, and military sectors providing a wide scope for networking, sharing best practice and education in one central London venue.



INTERNATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM AND SECURITY EXPO

'EMERGENCY SERVICES IRELAND' HAS TEAMED UP AS MEDIA PARTNER WITH COUNTER TERROR EXPO, WHICH IS TAKING PLACE ON 29-30 APRIL IN OLYMPIA, LONDON. THE EVENT HAS GROWN YEAR-ON-YEAR TO BECOME THE LARGEST INTERNATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM AND SECURITY EVENT OF ITS KIND.

Counter Terror Expo 2014 will connect over 9,500 delegates from the entire security sector within government, military, law enforcement, emergency services, the private sector and the security services with over 400 exhibitors, 350 VIP and international delegations who are expected to attend.

The event will showcase the most comprehensive display of technology, equipment and services designed to protect nations, borders, crowded places, critical national infrastructure, companies, assets and individuals from the threat of terrorist attack.

Key audience groups who attendees will get to meet and network with include border control, emergency services, intelligence agencies, MOD/military, police, security companies, transport security and security services.

Last year, the Counter Terror Expo organisers, Clarion Events, introduced new feature zones to the exhibition in order to highlight the best products, systems and solutions available to meet emerging threats in specific areas of the counter terrorism and security arena.

GETTING IN THE ZONE

Counter Terror Expo 2014 is adding four new zones to reflect rising threats, including:

***Border Security Zone and Access Control Zone** will feature the very latest developments, from new physical infrastructure components to the most advanced biometric, screening and scanning technologies.

***Integrated Security in Action** will feature the latest range of CCTV, access control, perimeter protection and control room security technology as well as providing



an interactive educational and technology showcase demonstrating integrated security platforms in action.

***Secure Communications and Cyber Terrorism Zone** will showcase the latest technology that has been adopted by Homeland Security and Law Enforcement teams to ensure the integration of cyber terrorism prevention activities in response to the increasing threat to nations, organisations and the public.

***Small Arms Zone** will showcase the latest prototypes of the weapons being developed by international suppliers as well as the small arms tactics and techniques that are being adopted to help fight terrorism.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

The event will also include a free workshop programme, with sessions focussing on new products, innovations, standards and industry engagement.

The IEDD (Improved Explosive Device Disposal) Demo Area will include five new scenarios touching upon civilian and field based operations, CBRN, and a 'Vehicle Bourne IED' car clearance. These scenarios will link in police and military teams, both pre and during the operation, and then post-operations forensic analysis.

CTX will also hold an extensive multi-stream conference which will feature key speakers within counter terrorism, law enforcement and corporate security.

The event will be co-located with 'Forensics Europe Expo' and 'Ambition' the dedicated UK ambulance and pre-hospital care exhibition and conference. CTX 2014 visitors can use their visitor badges to access the two shows.

Counter Terror Expo is a pre-registration only event. Please register at www.counterterrorexp.com/register.



PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

PAUL COBBING, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM IN THE UK, REVEALED THE SUCCESS OF THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH BETWEEN THE FORUM AND THOSE COMMUNITIES AT RISK FROM FLOODING, DURING HIS INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SUMMIT*.

The National Flood Forum is a national charity whose mission is to support those who are at flood risk and to represent their views, aspirations, issues and problems when dealing with agencies. We don't get funding from government or any other source.

We are different to other agencies because we are independent. We focus on empowering people and communities to work together and work effectively with partners. We also work in the spaces others cannot fill. For example, I was recently contacted by one local authority and our environment agency about issues that they are struggling with, to see if we can work with those communities to help make things better.

Very often, people will talk to us when they won't talk to the agencies, or if they are talking to the agencies, it will be confrontational. There is a blame culture. What we can often do is to direct them to services that are needed. It means that we can get results.

THE KEY IS TO LISTEN

We may have to take different approaches at different stages thought the aftermath of flooding.

We are not 'category one' responders with blue flashing lights: we come in afterwards with a trailer unit or to a village hall to work with water companies, local authorities or the environment agency.

The key is listening and also making sure that issues people bring to the door are dealt with there and then.

We never walk away without having dealt with someone's issues on the spot. That's actually what gives people a bad name – that's what people complain about.

You find that people's needs change



as they go along. They don't need lots of information to start with – what they actually need is practical help and advice there and then. As time goes by, they need advice on insurance, reinstating their homes, accommodation, and issues around education. We need to be able to deal with these on an ongoing basis in a different way as their needs change.

We also run an advice line for people struggling to get insurance, a directory of flood products, and a series of publications and guidance. We provide opportunities through our website www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk for groups to share experiences and peer-to-peer learning.

There is also a new 'Property Protection Advisor' section; users type in their postcode and a few details about their house, and receive an estimate about how much it will cost to protect their home. There's a link to some new guidance out on how you go about protecting your own home and the steps you need to take.

FLOOD BLING

When it comes to protecting your house

from flooding, it's no good just getting a bit of 'flood bling'. You actually have to think about what is your flood risk – where is it really coming from. You need to ensure materials are installed to a correct specification and maintained properly. Practice how to use it – and if you don't do all of these thing things, the effectiveness of what you are doing will be reduced.

We have tied that into a form that has been agreed with the insurance industry. You can record your initial risk, what you've done and who signed it off and what the residual risk is. You can then present that to insurers who may, if you are lucky, reduce your premium or give you insurance where previously they may not have. We are looking at things such as accreditation and getting a register of properties that have been dealt with in this way.

We have developed a 'Statement of Principles' to allow people to include flood insurance as part of their household insurance. We've been negotiating with government and the insurance industry for nearly three years now on a new scheme. The scheme at the moment allows people to get insurance but doesn't deal with affordability, which will be dealt with in the new scheme.

We also worked with the Scottish Government and Scottish Environment Protection Agency, and launched it as a separate Scottish Flood Forum charity, which has been a huge success.

I have been talking with a number of insurance companies about their approach to dealing with people who have been flooded. Two or three of the largest ones said that when they get floods, they drop all other claims except fire, because of the impact of flooding on the claimants. They understand that if they get in early

and handle it properly, that will reduce the impact on the whole claims process.

The reason is because of the trauma caused by flooding. People get flooded not just with water but everything, including sewage. It is the smell and stench of their homes that lasts for months and months. They also lose personal possessions, not just the stuff of financial value but things they treasure, like photos.

The other difficulty is the recovery time. We are still working with people across England and Wales who were flooded last year. The impact is ongoing and lasts a long time.

People say that the recovery process can be as traumatic or worse than the flood itself and that actually their troubles start when the blue flashing lights go. In a sense that's why we exist. The key element compared to fire or other instances or tragedies is that flooding can and often does return again and again and again.

IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

Things like finding accommodation, project managing a building project while holding down a job, living out of your home and supporting your family. These are really stressful and some people are just not up for that.

There are issues about keeping a business alive, dealing with insurance companies, loss adjusters and builders, keeping up with your education, perhaps having health problems. If you are vulnerable in some way, (learning difficulties, elderly etc) it makes it even more difficult.

There are a range of factors that come into play but don't appear immediately obvious. We still haven't had a really good study on the economic resilience impact, rather than just effects on individual businesses.

When it comes to business, there's an immediate impact on stock, logistics, difficulty of staff getting to work, sales impact. Local businesses worry that customers will go to the village next door and do business there and just not return. But it's not just the business itself, it is the supply and demand chains as well.

INCREASING RISKS

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report 2012 identified flooding as the biggest risk for the future. The risks, it reported, are going to increase

FLOOD PROTECTION PYRAMID



Flood Risk in England and Wales

- 2.4 million properties at risk from river and coastal flooding.
- 3.8 million at risk of surface water flooding.
- In England, one in six of the population are at risk.

Flood Risk in Scotland

- One in 22 of population, which is similar in Northern Ireland.
- In 2001, the estimate was under two million properties at risk.
- By 2011 the figure had increased to 7.9 million.

significantly.

Flood defences are important and will continue to be so, but there is no way, given the projections from the Climate Change Commission and number of claims coming through the insurance industry, that we have enough funds to build flood defences everywhere to remove the risk entirely. Building flood defences doesn't eliminate the risk – it reduces it.

We have learned from dealing with fires that actually putting out fires is the last thing to do, when everything else hasn't worked. It's all about preventative measures like smoke alarms, making sure people know what to do, where to go etc.

We need to do the same thing for flooding: it is about having systems in place to reduce the risk and preparing people for what to do in the event of flooding. It is important that the plan is practiced regularly, so people remember.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

What we need is a holistic approach to flood risk management. In an English context, we have to stop using terms like 'flood defence', 'flood barrier', and start

talking about 'risk management'.

For most communities, the solutions are particular to that community. Communities have the local knowledge that any amount of modelling cannot produce. Modelling is great but there are limits and it can never replace that local knowledge.

Communities are not bothered about what type of water it is or where it comes from: they know they need to do something about it. They often need to be involved to deal with traumatic issues. Being involved helps them deal with that. So, working with communities is also about empowering communities.

The approach of National Flood Forum is to work with communities first. And when they are ready, we will help them to work with the partners: that means that you don't get into the contentious arguments that typify these sorts of debates. We take the anger out of the situation and we gain long-term partnerships that lead to solutions.

The National Emergency Planning Summit, took place in Croke Park on 5 December 2013.

KEEPING TRACKS ON CYBER ATTACKS

WITH A PHENOMENAL INCREASE IN CYBER ATTACKS ON COMPANIES IN IRELAND DURING 2013, IT EXPERT BRIAN HONAN, BH CONSULTING, OUTLINED SOME MAIN FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH THESE ATTACKS, TO DELEGATES AT THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SUMMIT.

Cyber security has become the top global technological issue, according to the findings of a study published in September 2012 by Deloitte in their 'Global Financial Services Industry Security Study'. We are not talking about computer networks: we are talking about the gas grid, the power grid, air traffic, everything else that we rely on IT to run.

Even Barack Obama is saying that the cyber threat to the US is one of the most serious economic and national security challenges they face. In 2012, the former head of MI5, Jonathan Mills equated the cyber threat to the UK economy to terrorism, citing one case in the London financial sector in 2011, where an attack resulted in cumulative losses of £850 million.

Leon Panetta, the head of the CIA, has described the threat of cyber warfare as very real, which could threaten the US' grid system, its financial system and paralyse the country.

Here in Ireland, Minister for Justice and Defence Alan Shatter called cyber security a complex issue that requires co-operation across all sectors to ensure the safety of our networks and infrastructure.

ORGANISED CRIME

The biggest threat we face is criminals. Organised crime is heavily involved in cyber security. It's a low-risk, high-gain exercise for them. They can send out computer viruses and take in a lot of money over the internet. The latest extortion software, called 'cripple locker', is a virus that encrypts all the data on your computer.

You cannot get to your data. If you have no back-up, you have lost it. They will then leave a message to say that you have three days to pay your ransom

or if not, your information is gone. This virus has been so successful that they cannot cope with the demand of people looking to pay their ransom!

So, who do we see as a hacker? The teenage boy in a basement, eating pizza, with no girlfriend, no social life? The geeky nerd, stereotypical in many images? They are still there and still a threat. But they are not the most dangerous threat we worry about.

For example, 'Anonymous' is one of the most successful online activist groups. The internet has been used to promote activism for decades but 'Anonymous' took it to a new level to promote their aims and goals. They will take aim at any organisation that they feel slights them in whatever way and they do pose a threat.

RADICAL TERRORISM

Criminals will attack systems and computers for information such as financial, credit card data, intellectual property, or anything they can use. Sensitive information that many government departments will hold on development, finance, national strategy can be used to sell on to other nation states.

It is very hard to trace these attacks and thus, hard to prosecute the criminals behind them. They can work from jurisdictions with no laws or where police don't co-operate with western police forces.

However, it's not just about criminality. It's also about terrorism. Terrorists use



the internet to get money to buy bombs and bullets, as well as to radicalise. The man who was the brains behind the Bali bombing was sentenced to death and wrote his autobiography on death row. In it, he calls on followers to 'take up cyber terrorism to generate money for Al Queda'.

REVEALING DATA BREACHES

A recent report from international IT experts Verizon revealed that 69 per cent of data breaches were revealed by a third party, as the organisations involved did not know they had been breached. A further nine per cent of data breaches were actually revealed by customers.

The difficulty in many of these attacks is that they're often not difficult at all. The most effective tool of the hacker is actually Google: a Google search can be one of the most effective tools they can use. If you search for your own organisation, along with User IDs and passwords, you'd be surprised at what information

comes back. There's a website called Johnny.ihackstuff.com which has generated search queries you can put into Google to get that information.

The vision we have of sophisticated computer experts having to code for many hours and hack away through many systems is often far from reality, where cyber attacks are frighteningly easy.

LACK OF MONITORING

In 2012, there were 432 separate incidents or reports of companies in Ireland that had been hacked. In 2013, that number is over 5,800 incidents, which is a huge increase, as the nature of these cyber attacks change, with some becoming more automated.

A lot of the problems stem from people having poor passwords. 'Password' is not a secure password. 'Password1 is not either'. 'Let me in' is one of the most common passwords in the world.

Another issue is that people who are using Wordpress or other web platforms, if they haven't managed them and kept them up to date, they become vulnerable. Out-of-date anti-virus software is another problem. The basic issue is a lack of monitoring. It's like having a burglar alarm on your house that doesn't ring.

The two certainties in life are death and taxes. Now, there is a third. You are going to have a security breach: it's not a case of 'if'. How you deal with this is going to determine how much damage it causes to your organisation and your reputation.

Our traditional response is very 'ad hoc' and unplanned: we deal with it as it happens. How many people have a documented well-tested response policy and plan? The middle of a crisis is not a good time to be making a plan. It can lead to prolonged recovery times, reputational damage etc. If you don't have a plan in place, it's hard to deal with.

UNDERSTAND YOUR NETWORK

Look at your networks and how many people are from an IT background? How many have fully segmented their network, know how it performs on a normal day? If you know that, then anything out of the 'norm' could potentially indicate an attack.

For example, if there's a huge increase in log-in attempts at 4am on a Sunday morning, is that normal behaviour for your

system? It could be. But is there someone trying to break in or is there traffic happening that shouldn't?

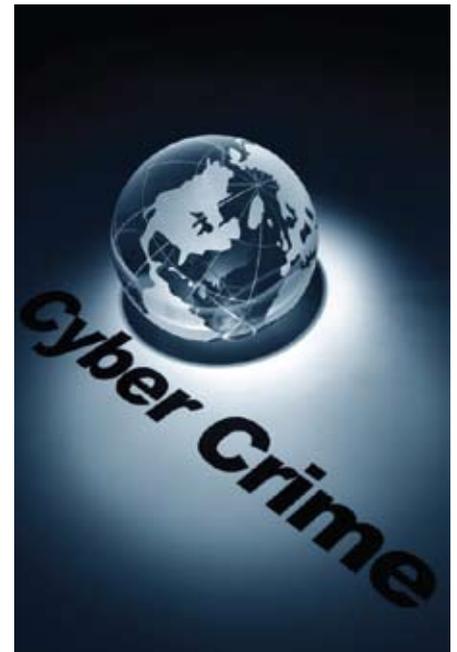
Understand your network and how it works under normal conditions. A good place to start is to monitor your logs, identify the key events and react to them.

You need to set up your security team. IT is not the problem: you need a lot of disciplines to handle a cyber attack. You need people with information security, IT operations people and HR personnel, particularly if you suspect that the attack is internal. You also need legal advice, particularly in dealing with the media and what you should say and, perhaps more importantly, what you should hold back.

Public relations is another key area in any security breach. You must be able to communicate clearly and honestly to anyone affected, not just the public but media and staff, so everyone understands what's going on and is not left guessing.

DATA PROTECTION

Do you know how and who to contact within the Data Protection Commissioner's Office? Do you have a policy in place



as regards when to contact An Garda Síochána? Trying to figure this out during an attack is very difficult, so go to them and have that relationship established.

How do you get your logs? Do you, perhaps, have someone saving company information on a USB stick? How do you

Criminals will attack systems and computers for information such as financial, credit card data, intellectual property, or anything they can use. Sensitive information that many government departments will hold on development, finance, national strategy can be used to sell on to other nation states.



deal with that? If you have an unencrypted laptop gone missing – how do you deal with that? You need to think of the attacks that could happen to your organisation!

At the very top, you need to be able to detect an attack. Are you, like nearly 80 per cent of organisations, waiting for someone to ring up and say: 'Hey, do you know you have a security breach?'

Imagine that call coming from a journalist!

Do you know how to eradicate or contain a cyber attack? It's not just simply a case of wiping off the webserver and reinstalling software. If you are reinstalling the same software and same security bugs, they can come back. How do you recover? Can you get data back? Do you have secure back-ups?

SOCIAL MEDIA

The whole area of communications is extremely important in a cyber attack. One area is social media – if you have a security breach, it's going to be on Twitter. How do you make sure you get the right message across to the right people at the right time?

Your response team needs to be trained in what to do in the event of an attack. Your staff need to be able to identify a potential security breach: how do they know the email they just got is a normal email or an attempt to get them to click on a link?

One of the biggest issues is whether to show off your dirty laundry. Do you declare you have a breach? You may not be the one to disclose it. For example, sometimes people sign up to websites with a unique email address, so if they get spam, they know who has been breached. I would encourage any company to come clean about any data breach.

There are ways you can do it. You can work in user groups. Verizon has a link on its website where the whole community can learn about how to work better to address these issues. For details visit www.verizonenterprise.com/DBIR/2013/industries/. However, the overall key to dealing with cyber attacks is to put in place a plan or policy.

Sustainability
by Coillte

Giving our local communities a big hug!

Natural resources,
sustainably managed.
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European Business Awards
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NATIONAL FIRE-BASED EMS IS HOT TOPIC

AS THE IRISH FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES ASSOCIATION CONTINUES ITS CALLS FOR A NATIONAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE, ITS NATIONAL SECRETARY AND CHAIR JOHN KIDD TOLD DELEGATES AT THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SUMMIT THAT THIS WOULD BE THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES, BASED ALONG THE LINES OF THE EMS MODEL IN THE UNITED STATES.

Dublin Fire Brigade (DFB) is the only fire-based emergency medical service (EMS) in Ireland and Great Britain, where firefighters/paramedics play a dual-role as cross-trained personnel.

In terms of cases of cardiac arrest survival rates, Dublin comes second to Seattle in the USA in survival rates for out-of-hospital arrests due to fibrillation. This is mainly due to the strategically located fire stations (fire and ambulances) – so that typically a fire appliance and ambulance will respond offering eight personnel to commence defibrillation, CPR, and life-saving drug administration.

Ninety per cent of cities within the USA are fire-based EMS providers because of the capability to achieve response times of four minutes or less with the same dual-role cross-trained personnel, as well as the cost-savings from one service.

SERVICE PRIVATISATION

Could the privatisation of the services happen here in Ireland and at what cost to the public who may call on it? Such is the adverse effect in the USA of privatising ambulances services, that several cities such as Boston and New York took the ambulance services back into the fire services.

IFESA wonders if it is ethical that a business should make profit on citizens who need essential care, rescue and lifesaving. Will we go back to the days of the early fire services as provided by insurance companies who put their plaque/mark over premises and would not intervene if not 'belonging' to them?

Meanwhile, attacks on emergency personnel remains an ongoing problem. IFESA believes that until something is inserted into legislation, then this vile attack on emergency personnel will continue.

Unlike Gardaí, who have their own compensation scheme, other emergency personnel have no similar initiatives in place. IFESA makes the point that compensation is not the solution, however it should be there when prevention has failed.

BENCHMARKING

On benchmarking Ireland's services with our US counterparts, a national fire-based EMS throughout Ireland would be an efficient use of resources. It eliminates the need for dual human resource departments, wages, procurement etc. In fact co-location of resources, similar to the successful model in operation in the US would be more cost effective.

In terms of a comparison, in Ireland with a population of 4.8 million people, there are 30 Chief Fire Officers (CFOs), approximately 270 Assistant Chief Fire Officers (ACFOs), 200 civilian staff for an operational staff in the fire service of 2,500 frontline (both full-time and retained).

Compare that with the situation in New York; with a population of eight million people, there is one CFO, four Assistant CFOs and 150 civilian staff with 11,000 operational frontline fire personnel.

NO REGULATIONS

The Federal Emergency Management



Agency (FEMA) in the US oversees all the EMS-related agencies, and the fire and ambulance services are under the Department of Justice, similar to other countries.

However, inter-agency rivalry continues to be a major problem in Ireland. There are no regulations for an integrated EMS-based system, and Government ministers seem to pass it on for reviews. There are too many reports in Ireland, and no one wants to make decisions.

There is a need for shared services and more integration from the four local authorities who look after 1.3 million people in Dublin.



SNAPSHOTS AT THE EMERGENCY SUMMIT

SOME OF THESE SPEAKERS AND DELEGATES WERE SNAPPED AT THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SUMMIT IN CROKE PARK ON 5 DECEMBER 2013.



Summit chairperson Anthony Lawlor, National Director of Units, Irish Red Cross, pictured with summit speakers – Conor Galvin, Flood Risk Assessment & Management Section, OPW; Paul Cobbing, CEO, National Flood Forum, UK; and Michael Sheehy, Geologist with the Geological Survey of Ireland, during the morning session.



Charlotte O'Dwyer and Sharon Morrow from Tallaght Hospital.



Dr Margaret Desmond, EPA (second left) who presented EPA's latest climate change updates, pictured with delegates Mary Kelly, An Bord Pleanala; Lawrence Dempsey, LYIT; and Rob McHale, Portakabin All Spaces.



Cyber security expert Brian Honan, BH Consulting (centre), pictured with delegates Paddy Bowler, Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS), and John Martin, Office of Public Works.



Lin Tseno Hong, UCD, pictured with summit speakers Michael Sheehy, Geological Survey of Ireland, and Dr Margaret Desmond, EPA.



Summit speakers pictured during coffee break (l-r): Krishna De, Digital Communications Strategist; Tom Hegarty, National Incident & Leakage Manager with Bord Gais Networks; Conor Galvin, Flood Risk Assessment & Management Section, OPW; and Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive, National Flood Forum, UK.



Padraig O'Sullivan, Cork University Hospital, and Karl Mulhall, Interaction Data Centres.



Delegates Patrina Donnelly and Sue Burrows from Beaumont Hospital, Mick Davern and Vincent Murphy from Aviva Stadium.

ANTISOCIAL MEDIA?

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIST KRISHNA DE OUTLINED HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE AND INTEGRATE THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN SUPPORTING A CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AT THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SUMMIT.

When it comes to social media, the first thing to remember is that not everyone is actually using social media tools. The last time I looked at Irish data, something like 18 per cent of us had never been on the Internet in Ireland. That is not always about accessibility, it is also about: 'I've got no interest and don't actually want to be there'.

When we have an issue or crisis, it's now about looking at these tools to support us in terms of getting the message out there. In Ireland, we still find a lot of organisations don't have governance and policies in place.

Recent research carried out by William Fry found that only about 46 per cent of sizeable organisations actually have policies in place in Ireland, yet 80 per cent of our employees are using social media, even if you have a policy that says we'd rather you'd not use these in the workplace.

Three types of policies:

1. Your policy as an employer and what that means for your employees. For a large organisation, that is perhaps organised centrally and communicated to all staff, including temporary and contract staff.

2. A set of guidelines for people who manage social media channels. These people are often out of the loop in terms of keeping them informed when an issue arises. The social media communications team (sometimes outsourced) are then not aware and not ready to respond when people start to ask questions on social media platforms.

3. A set of policies in place on social media platforms; such as Twitter policies, a comments policy on your website, your Facebook profile or LinkedIn groups.

REVIEWING YOUR REPUTATION

You should review monitoring tools to look at your 'reputation'. It is essential to view

social media in order to understand what people are saying about your organisation and making a decision on whether you are going to take any action.

These monitoring tools can be a really good early warning system and identify any issues. These can be outsourced to PR agencies and digital agencies, and many larger organisations are putting such processes in place.

Google Alert is a free tool to pick up content from the web that may never be on the front page of search results. It must be supplemented with other things, such as tools that actually help to also search within social networks. There are some low-cost tools available, while larger organisations may look at higher investments, which could refine the tools, so that it can then be used for reputation management and also for early warning identity.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

We need to look at crisis communication in terms of social media. There is no Irish data available but in the UK, 80 per cent of those using Twitter are doing so on their mobile phone. Therefore, Twitter is a prime platform for crisis communication, because it's a news channel. You have to make sure your crisis communications work well if people are going to look at your content, be it your updates or other information you are going to share.

There is also a new free tool called Twitter Alerts. An Garda Síochána was the first agency to sign up to it in Ireland. If you are in a situation where you are updating the public around emergency issues, you can apply for this and promote it on your website.

If you are using social media channels, you need to choose the right ones for you in terms of audience and your goals.

Things you might want to explore include having a process in place in a crisis? If you have a major crisis to handle, what happens to your website?

A recent example was the horsemeat



issue. One organisation's whole website went down and there was just one page with the phone number of their PR agency, who handled everything. Others took different approaches.

So, you need to make sure you have a process in place in case an issue arises. You also need to work out how to operate your business as usual, because not everyone is going to be affected.

I can think of some organisations here in Ireland who implemented emergency blogs, usually at the time of a crisis. One of the issues they had was they couldn't keep their website updated easily to keep the public informed about what was going on in their area. So picking the right social media tools is vital.

RESPONDING TO MEDIA

Having worked with large-sized companies, I have had to handle everything from terrorism attacks through to hurricanes and the building coming down! You need to be ready to respond to the media in a crisis. At the end of the day, they want eyeballs and ears on their content – even with great relationships, they are going to publish their story.

Micro-video content is seen a lot more. Twitter will have a six-second video tool built in as of this January. We are seeing a lot more images and multi-media and you can add to that in terms of audio. Right across the world, podcasts keep people informed and getting the story out.

If someone is alerting you to

AIR CORPS CONTINUES TO FLY HIGH AFTER 50 YEARS

THE IRISH AIR CORPS CELEBRATED ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HELICOPTER AVIATION IN NOVEMBER 2013. SINCE THESE VERY FIRST LIFE-SAVING MISSIONS, THE HELICOPTER WING – NOW CALLED No. 3 OPERATIONS WING – HAS PERFORMED OVER 2,300 SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS IN ADDITION TO 4,000 AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE TRANSFERS.

Young and old members of No. 3 Operations Wing gathered in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell on 26 November 2013 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the arrival of helicopters to Ireland.

The day was a chance for retired members from the helicopter wing to meet with the next generation of helicopters and crews. Having a proud history of service to the State, over the last 50 years the men and women of No. 3 Operations Wing have pioneered in search and rescue, Garda air support and air ambulance support in Ireland.

The pioneering pilots of the Air Corps introduced rotary aviation to Ireland when they flew two Alouette III helicopters from France to Ireland, landing in Casement Aerodrome on 26 November 1963.

FIRST HELICOPTER FLIGHTS

The arrival of these helicopters – call-signs 'A195' and 'A196' – signalled the establishment of 'Helicopter Flight' and committed the Air Corps to develop national daytime Search and Rescue (SAR) for the State.

This new tasking saw the Air Corps complete its first SAR mission on 23

December 1963, only three weeks after the service had gone operational, with the first air ambulance flown in February 1964.

Since these first life-saving missions the Helicopter Wing – now called No. 3 Operations Wing – have performed over 2,300 SAR missions and 4,000 air ambulances, saving countless lives.

This has led to No. 3 Operations Wing being the most decorated unit in the Defence Forces. It has 22 Distinguished Service Medals, 12 Department of Marine Meritorious Medals, as well as two coveted French Federation Aeronautique



Celebrations in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell on 26 November marked the 50th anniversary of the arrival of helicopters to Ireland.

Internationales's 'Diplome D'Honneur' for humanitarian service and the Irish Air line Pilots' Association 'Fitzmaurice' award for services to Irish aviation.

NIGHT VISION PIONEERS

Over the last five decades the unit has continued to represent the dedication, professionalism, loyalty and courage of the pioneering pilots of the 1960s.

In 1986 the introduction of the Dauphin II helicopter began a new era for SAR operations in Ireland, allowing the Air Corps to introduce a 24-hour SAR service to the State.

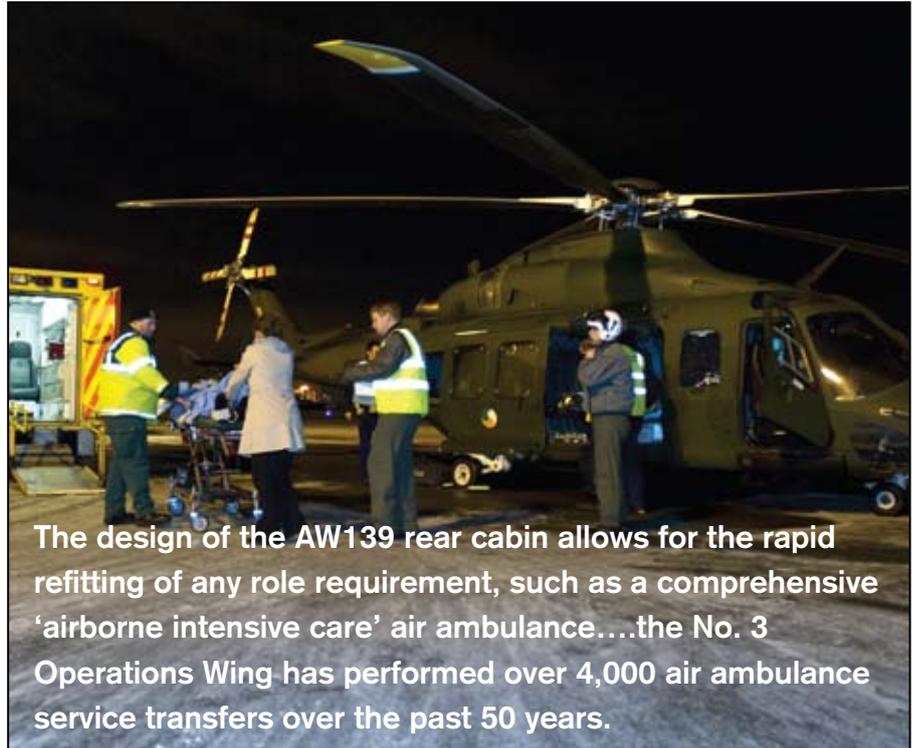
In 1997 the unit commenced operations with the dedicated Garda Air Support Unit at Casement Aerodrome, and to this day it exclusively provides pilots, technicians and an operating base for An Garda Síochána.

In December 2008 the Air Corps pioneered the introduction of night vision-aided flight to the State. They now use night vision goggles to assist on its national and international air ambulance transfer service which it operates 24/7. It is the only service in the State that has this leading edge capability.

In 2009 the introduction of the under-slung 'bambi-bucket' system enabled the Air Corps to assist in tackling large fires from the air. This capability was proven in May 2011 when the AW139s dropped millions of litres of water on fires in Donegal and Mayo.

AEROMEDICAL SERVICE

In June 2012 the air ambulance operation



The design of the AW139 rear cabin allows for the rapid refitting of any role requirement, such as a comprehensive 'airborne intensive care' air ambulance....the No. 3 Operations Wing has performed over 4,000 air ambulance service transfers over the past 50 years.



The first air ambulance was flown in February 1964.



Interagency co-operation is core between the Air Corps and the other emergency services such as the RNLI.

CURRENT FLEET UNDER NO. 3 OPERATIONS WING

No. 3 Operations Wing operates a fleet of six Agusta Westland AW139s, two Eurocopter EC135 P2 aircraft and two Garda Air Support EC135 T2 aircraft.

- The AW139 is a medium-lift twin-turbine multi-crew utility helicopter, with a troop-lifting capacity of up to 14 personnel in the normal configuration, with a fully compatible Night Vision Goggle cockpit.
- The design of the AW139 rear cabin allows for the rapid refitting of any role requirement, ranging from an armed Special Forces insertion/extraction, to Presidential VIP transport, to a comprehensive 'airborne intensive care' air ambulance and SAR aircraft.
- The aircraft also has the ability to carry a payload of 2.2 tonnes underneath the helicopter which allows the transport of heavy loads into remote and otherwise inaccessible area. For example, for a mission which requires the rapid deployment of equipment in support of the Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams.
- The two EC135 P2 aircraft first entered service in 2005 and operate seven days a week carrying out a wide variety of roles for the Air Corps, and are utilised as the main rotary wing training aircraft.
- Both EC135 T2 aircraft operate seven days a week in the Garda Air Support role. Operational control of the aircraft remains with the Department of Justice, whereas the Air Corps provides pilots to the Garda Air Support Unit to fly the aircraft.



Agusta Westland AW 139



EC135 P2



EC135 T2

expanded to include the new interagency emergency aeromedical service pilot scheme based in Custume Barracks, Athlone.

Since the introduction of this pilot scheme the Air Corps has answered over 800 call-outs.

The Air Corps celebrated the anniversary on 21 November 2013 with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque

in Baldonnel. The plaque, presented to No. 3 Operations Wing by the Irish Mine Rescue Committee, represents the diversity of the Air Corps' interaction with outside agencies and the strong working relationship formed with these bodies.

The event was attended by serving and retired members of the Helicopter Wing, and included some of the crews that brought the original aircraft to Ireland

in 1963.

Over the past 50 years the Air Corps has been an invaluable support to the wider Defence Forces and has made a significant contribution to the security of the State.

The men and women of No. 3 Operations Wing truly are a testament to the Air Corps' motto For aire agus Tairisea t ('Watchful and Loyal').

ALLIANCE LOOKS FOR MINIMUM RIGHTS FOR CRIME VICTIMS

THE VICTIMS' RIGHTS ALLIANCE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ENSURE THAT THE EU VICTIMS' RIGHTS DIRECTIVE BECOMES LAW IN IRELAND WITHIN THE PROPOSED NOVEMBER 2015 TIMEFRAME, SO THAT CRIME VICTIMS RECEIVE MINIMUM RIGHTS TO INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND PROTECTION.

Over the past year the EU has developed and adopted laws giving support, protection and rights to victims of crime. These laws will have a major impact on how victims are treated in Ireland. Currently Ireland has no legislation giving victims' rights, except for a Victims' Charter which sets out the rights which "should" be afforded to victims by State agencies. This Charter is aspirational and it has no legal effect.

Commenting at the launch of the Victims' Rights Alliance in Dublin's Mansion House, Maria McDonald BL, author of the 'Know your Rights' booklet on the Victims' Rights Directive, said that the alliance was formed due to the inconsistencies experienced by members in the manner by which information, access to support services and protection is being provided to victims of crime.

"The Victims' Rights Alliance wants to ensure that all victims of crime receive minimum rights to information, support and protection under the Directive. We would hope that Ireland not only meets the standards set out by the EU Directive, but also surpasses them in terms of treating victims with the respect and dignity they deserve."

She added that it is vitally important that the EU Directive is transposed into Irish law. "And if that doesn't happen, then

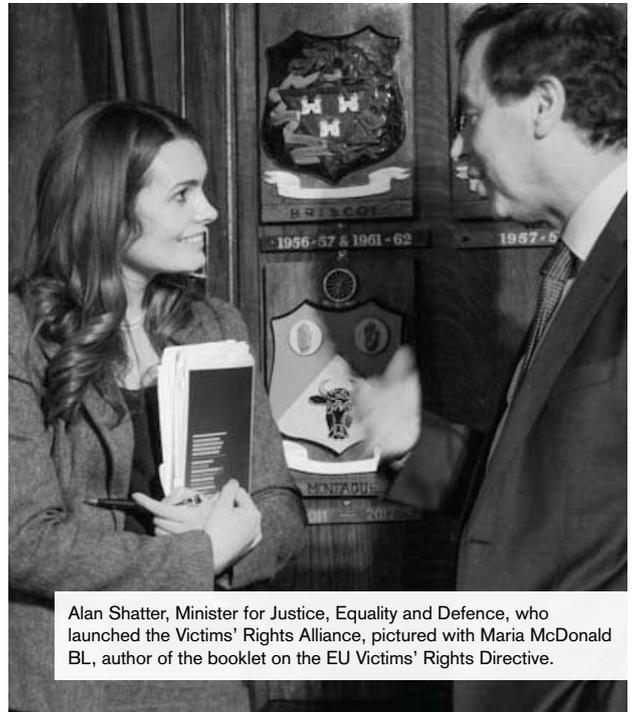
arguably very little may change for victims of crime. Once the European laws are transposed a victim can enforce a breach of their rights in the courts; however, it seems unfair and unreasonable to expect a victim to go through the stress and trauma of court proceedings once again.

"Other options, such as a Victims of Crime Ombudsman or a Victims Liaison Service may be a more victim-friendly means of dealing with complaints or breaches of victim rights, potentially offering a swift solution."

VICTIMS BILL

Alan Shatter, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, said that work on the Victims Bill is ongoing in his department with a view to securing government agreement to a draft scheme of a Bill. "It is my intention to send this draft scheme to the Justice Committee for initial scrutiny prior to detailed legal drafting. Whilst enacting the Bill is the initial step in the case of the Victims Bill implementation is of paramount importance. The three main agencies concerned – An Garda Síochána, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Courts Service – are aware that the Directive must be implemented by 16 November, 2015.

"These agencies deal in large volumes of crime. There are at least 100,000 crimes involving victims every year.



Alan Shatter, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, who launched the Victims' Rights Alliance, pictured with Maria McDonald BL, author of the booklet on the EU Victims' Rights Directive.



Pictured at the launch in the Mansion House (l-r): Maria McDonald BL; Shirley Cummins, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre; Joan Deane, AdVIC; Ger Philpott, Minister Alan Shatter, and Dublin's Lord Mayor Cllr Oisín Quinn

Different victims have different needs. As the investigation of the crime develops towards a court hearing or not, as the case may be, the needs of the victim may also change. To introduce significant change in organisations with hundreds or even thousands of staff, operating in already complex environments, requires time, energy and commitment."

Minister Shatter pointed out that the Victims Bill will require certain actions and standards of the criminal justice agencies. "As public bodies and as bodies tasked with upholding the law of the land you can be rest assured that they will be most anxious to comply with their legal requirements under the directive.

"It is not accidental that the first victim support organisation was established by retired police officers. The police and prosecutors are aware that victims whose needs for information, advice and emotional support have been met in an appropriate way, are better informants and witnesses and improve confidence in our criminal justice system generally."

CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE

Lisa Kennedy, Chief Executive of the Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS), believes that the EU Directive, if correctly implemented, will change the landscape for victims of crime in Ireland and across Europe. She said, "No matter where a crime occurs within the EU, victims of crime should expect the same level of rights, support and protection.

"The Irish Tourist Assistance Service, in its 20th year of operation, is delighted to be part of an alliance working together to ensure maximum compliance with the Directive. Tourists who are victims of crime have specific needs and require immediate assistance.

"Many may not speak English, are left stranded without funds. Many if not all formal procedures will be different to those at home. We look forward to the government making increased resources available so that the Irish Tourist Assistance Service and other agencies which help and support victims of crime can offer the comprehensive services required to comply with the Directive."

Caroline Counihan BL, Legal Director of the Rape Crisis Network Ireland, added that victims' rights have long been a policy priority for the network. "We look forward to the day when survivors of sexual violence crimes will have statutory rights

to appropriate supports and information, whether or not they make a formal complaint to An Garda Síochána.

"We also look forward very much to working with other organisations through the Victims' Rights Alliance to ensure that victims' rights are not only underpinned by statute as soon as possible, but become a practical reality for survivors of sexual violence with the minimum of delay."

Ann Meade MBE, Support after Homicide spokesperson, highlighted that in Ireland the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime does not have a role in representing victims, as is the case in other jurisdictions.

She added, "Support after Homicide (SAH) believes that the proposed Directive will improve the standing of victims in criminal proceedings: it will ensure that victims are better recognised; are efficiently referred to victim support services and have their individual needs assessed and met throughout the criminal justice process."

ACCURATE INFORMATION

Donna Price, chairperson of the Irish Road Victims' Association (IRVA), believes that groups representing victims of crime are best placed to advise on the implementation of the new EU Directive, having had first-hand experience of the system as it currently operates.

She commented: 'Families who have lost loved ones in road traffic collisions have, up to now, encountered great difficulty in obtaining clear and accurate information in relation to the collision, which claimed the life of their family member.

"Delays of several years in obtaining this information have not been uncommon. They have also been faced with substantial fees for this information which is supplied in the form of the 'Garda Abstract Report' and this has added greatly to their trauma."

Price said that it was IRVA's hope that with full implementation of this Directive bereaved families would be able to obtain full and accurate information relating to the death of their loved one in a road traffic collision, free of charge and in a timely manner.

"This will enable our families to better deal with the Coroner's inquest and other legal proceedings which follow such sudden and unnatural deaths, while being fully informed."



Ann Meade MBE, spokesperson for Support after Homicide, said that the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime does not have a role in representing victims in Ireland.



Maria McDonald said that once the European laws are transposed a victim can enforce a breach of their rights in the courts.

ADEQUATE SUPPORT SERVICES

Joan Deane, who spoke on behalf of Advocates for Victims of Homicide (AdVIC) highlighted the need to provide adequate support services for victims of crime, particularly families of homicide victims.

“There is clearly a need to provide counselling services to anyone who has been affected by a traumatic crime. Homicide leaves a lasting impact, our own research has shown that 63 per cent of families of victims of homicide seek counselling and often suffer disruptions to their personal and working life.

“Under the EU Directive, bereavement counselling should be provided for free, so we want to work closely with the Government to ensure that adequate services are provided. We would hope that the authorities go above and beyond in this respect and implement this ahead of the 2015 deadline.”

Sharon O’Halloran, Director of SAFE Ireland, said, “For SAFE Ireland it is critical that the thousands of women who have been living with the terror of violence in their homes have access to a justice system that they can trust, and that recognises the lifelong impact, dangers and pervasive nature of domestic violence.

“A justice system that is equipped with the highest levels of training and professionalism in line with objectives of the EU Victims Directive will provide this vital security and safety.”

Ellen O’Malley-Dunlop, CEO of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, added, “The Alliance gives us a further opportunity to work in collaboration with other NGOs who represent the interests of the many victims of crimes in Ireland.

“The Alliance will be advocating for the implementation of the Directive which will ultimately benefit victims and help them stay the course of the criminal justice system. This will also mean that crimes will not be committed with impunity.”

**For further information visit www.victimrightsalliance.com*

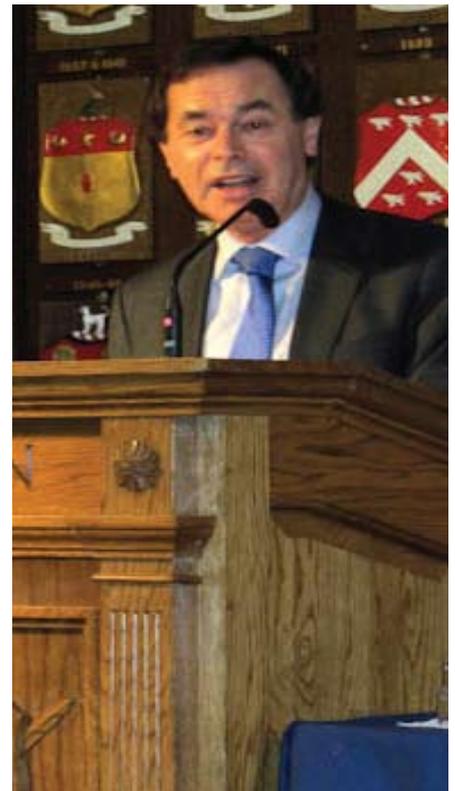
UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE ALLIANCE

The Alliance is an umbrella group and includes:

- Advocates for Victims of Homicide [AdVIC]
- The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre [DRCC]
- The Irish Council for Civil Liberties [ICCL]
- Irish Road Victims’ Association [IRVA]
- Irish Tourist Assistance Service [ITAS]
- Support after Homicide [SAH]
- One in Four

The Alliance aims to work with the Government:

- To ensure that adequate resources are available to victims so they can access information and support services free of charge;
- To make a complaints procedure, a one stop shop, such as a Victims of Crime Ombudsman, available which would deal with any breach of victim’s rights under the Directive;
- To change the manner by which victims are referred to Victim Support Services. This may require a change in data protection legislation;
- To provide access to support services for victims who do not make a formal complaint to the Gardaí;
- To provide relevant training or specialist training for all professionals and persons who engage with victims in the criminal justice system.



GARDAÍ CONNECT WITH VODAFONE ON CHILD RESCUE APP ALERTS

A FREE NEW SMARTPHONE APP HAS BEEN LAUNCHED BY THE GARDAÍ TO NOTIFY THE PUBLIC ABOUT MISSING CHILDREN, IN A BID TO FURTHER INCREASE THE CHANNELS AVAILABLE TO THEM TO PUBLICISE AN ALERT ONCE IT IS LAUNCHED.

The App will also allow users to store photos and useful information relating to their own children, just in case they need to utilise photos/info for a future missing child alert. It will issue alerts about any suspected abducted children, with identifying information like physical appearance, plus any details of suspected vehicles/persons of interest that may be involved. It also enables users to connect directly with the Gardai (via 112/999) and it has the facility to allow users to share alerts across their Facebook pages.

The Smartphone App has been created with the assistance of the Vodafone Ireland Foundation, and is available for free on Apple, Android and Windows Media platforms.

Launched by Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence Alan Shatter, and the CEO of Vodafone Ireland Anne O'Leary, the App utilises both a notification for when a CRI Alert is issued. There is space to securely maintain up-to-date information (including photos) concerning your own children for easy access (by the phone's owner only) should the need arise.

The notification section will include details of the child and/or children who are the subject of a CRI Alert and any additional information that An Garda Síochána believe will help in their inquiries.

People who have downloaded the app will be notified each time a CRI alert is updated with the latest information. They will also be able to share these CRI alert updates with their Facebook friends, as well as being able to contact An Garda Síochána at 112 or 999.

MEETING STRICT CRITERIA

In welcoming the new Smartphone App initiative, Commissioner Callinan said that strict criteria must be met before the CRI Alert is issued. "If these criteria are met, CRI Alert information is distributed by An Garda Síochána to the public through a range of communications channels.

"We now have an additional means of getting the message of the CRI Alert to the public in the form of a smartphone App. Over 50 per cent of the public in Ireland own a smartphone and as a result the potential for quickly reaching vast numbers of the population with critical information is enormous."

Minister for Justice, Equality & Defence, Alan Shatter, said the App is an example of how public and corporate collaboration and innovation can be channelled in a constructive manner to deliver meaningful and relevant benefits to the wider community.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

"The use of social media has an integral and significant role in the effective operation of the CRI Alert, and this App is another important component in that system," added the Minister.

Anne O'Leary, CEO of Vodafone Ireland, said that the App has been supported by the Vodafone Ireland Foundation.

She said that her company was delighted to have played a role in the creation and development of the Child Recue Ireland alert application.

"We really believe that this App will make a positive difference to the lives of many people and assist the Gardaí in the great work they carry out in this area. Social innovation is important to us at Vodafone, we take our responsibility seriously and are keen to employ our technology and skills to use mobile for good."



Pictured at the launch (l-r): Anne O'Leary, CEO of Vodafone, Ireland, the Minister for Justice, Equality & Defence, Alan Shatter, and The Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan.

SUPREME AWARD FOR CAMPAIGNING AGAINST DRINK DRIVING

THE FOUNDER OF *MOTHERS AGAINST DRINK DRIVING (MADD)* WAS RECOGNISED FOR DECADES OF ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGNING WHEN SHE WAS PRESENTED WITH THE SUPREME AWARD AT THE 'LEADING LIGHTS IN ROAD SAFETY' AWARDS FOR 2013.

Gertie Shields lost her daughter in a road traffic collision in 1983 when the vehicle in which she was travelling was hit by a drunk driver.

Since then, her mother has tirelessly campaigned for legislative and social change in relation to drink driving. Hers was a lone voice in road safety at a time when over 400 people were dying annually on our roads each year.

In making a special mention of Gertie Shields, Gay Byrne, chairman of the Road Safety Authority (RSA), said she has given over so much of her life to making Irish roads a safer place.

"Her work has contributed to the sea change in attitudes towards drink driving in Ireland, as well as changes in the legislation on blood alcohol levels and dangerous driving."

RECOGNISED CAMPAIGNING NAME

For the past two decades, driven by the personal tragedy of the loss of her 19-year-old daughter Paula, Gertie Shields has unrelentingly campaigned to rid this country of the scourge of drunk driving, noted the RSA chairman.

Gertie Shields first came to his attention when she made an appearance on the 'Late Late Show' in the 1980s. "Since then she has become one of the most recognised and admired campaigning names against drink-driving as she took her message to the airwaves and print media across the country and across generations.

"To look back now on her ideas and recommendations in the early years of Mothers Against Drunk Driving is to see many of the measures that have, at last, been introduced in recent years."



Gertie Shields, founder of Mothers Against Drink Driving (MADD) was presented with the Supreme Award by Gay Byrne.



Members of the '2 Artillery Regiment' – winners of the Public Sector award – pictured with RSA chairman Gay Byrne.

OUTSTANDING EFFORTS

Gay Byrne presented a total of 29 awards at the ceremony on 11 December in Farmleigh, Phoenix Park. The event was attended by almost 200 award winners, to celebrate the outstanding efforts of individuals and groups throughout the country who help promote road safety in their communities.

Hundreds of nominations were submitted to the 2013 'Leading Lights in Road Safety' Awards. Among the winners were individuals and groups from the business, media, education, emergency services and public sectors.

Out of all the winners, one supreme winner was selected for demonstrating a sustained commitment and contribution to road safety in Ireland.

SPECIAL AWARDS

Due to the significant number of entries received in 2013, the RSA chose to present an additional nine 'Special Recognition' awards to individuals and groups demonstrating special commitment to road safety, including the RSA's Road Safety Ambassadors.

Two new categories were also introduced – 'Education (Special Schools)' and 'Emergency Services'. Among the Leading Lights winners was an innovative reflective 'L' plate project called 'Visu-L' by Mount St Michael Secondary School, Claremorris, who wanted to make the roads safer for learner drivers following the death of a fellow student; an initiative called 'Operation Safe Home' run by the teachers of Scoil Chlochair Mhuire,

Carrigtwohill to ensure all pupils make it home from the school grounds safely. In addition a road safety action initiative was staged simulated two-car collision in UCD, to raise awareness with students about the consequences of using a mobile phone while driving. by Seamus Storan, road safety officer with Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council.

The 2013 'Leading Lights in Road Safety Awards' were presented in the following categories: Approved Driving Instructor, Business, Education (Special Schools Education, Community, Preschool, Primary, and Secondary), Emergency Services, Media, Road Safety Ambassador, Road Safety Officer, Public Sector, CPC Training Organisation of the Year and CPC Trainer of the Year.

WINNERS OF 'LEADING LIGHTS IN ROAD SAFETY' 2013

Approved Driving Instructor (Car) - Diane Harvey
 Approved Driving Instructor (Bus) - Charlie Simpson
 Approved Driving Instructor (Truck) - Philip Rice
 Approved Driving Instructor (Motorcycle) - Jonathan Coburn
 Business - Shell E&P Ireland Ltd
 Education (Community) - Mizen Rovers GAA Club
 Education (Pre-School) - Learn Early Montessori Academy & Creche
 Education (Primary) - Scoil Bhríde, Athgarvan, Kildare
 Education (Primary) - Scoil Chlochair Mhuire, Carrigtwohill, Cork
 Education (Secondary) - Mount St Michael School, Roscarberry, Cork
 Education (Special School) - Paul Ryan: Cope Foundation
 Emergency Services - Rescue Organisation Ireland/Eagraíocht Tarrthála Éireann
 Media - Irish Examiner
 Road Safety Ambassador - Gertie Shields
 Road Safety Officer - Seamus Storan
 Public Sector – 2 Artillery Regiment
 CPC Training Organisation of the Year - Musgrave Retail Partners Ireland
 CPC Trainer of the Year - Benedict Maguire

An additional nine awards were presented in a new 'Special Recognition' category to rally drivers Toni Kelly and Craig Breen, Kinsale Community School and Dave Byrne of Newport Special School, as well as Road Safety Ambassadors Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Ray D'Arcy, Keith McErlean, Rick O'Shea, Eoin Kelly, and Pat Spillane.



Members of Shell E&P Ltd, winners of the Business Award



Seamus Storan, Road Safety Officer with Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council, pictured with Gay Byrne, RSA chairman, on receiving his award.



Members of Rescue Organisation Ireland (ROI) were the winners of the new 'Emergency Services' category award, pictured here with Gay Byrne.

UNIFORMED APPROACH TO NATIONAL SEARCH EXERCISE

CIVIL DEFENCE AND GARDA PERSONNEL RECENTLY JOINED FORCES IN THEIR FIRST NATIONAL SEARCH EXERCISE TO DEVELOP A STRONGER INTER-AGENCY RELATIONSHIP AND A UNIFORMED APPROACH TO MISSING PERSON INCIDENTS. REPORT BY BREDA GRAHAM, VOLUNTEER WITH NORTH TIPPERARY CIVIL DEFENCE.

The Devil's Bit Mountains outside Templemore, Co. Tipperary provided the perfect backdrop for this major national search exercise on 6-7 December 2013. The two-day event was attended by instructors from both the Civil Defence College and the Garda College in Templemore, Garda search managers, and Civil Defence search managers, team leaders and responders.

Róisín McGuire, principal of the Civil Defence College, said the objective of the event was to "strengthen existing Civil Defence links with An Garda Síochána, to demonstrate the effectiveness of recent training and build an inter-agency relationship".

Civil Defence personnel and volunteers gathered with Garda Search Managers from across the country at the Garda Training College in Templemore for a safety briefing on the first morning of the event.

Civil Defence search managers from Tipperary North, Donegal, Leitrim and Cork North and An Garda Síochána's senior search managers were then briefed on the 'Missing Persons' scenario by Garda College Instructors. Teams of Civil Defence Search Managers and Senior Garda Search Managers were subsequently assigned search sites on the Devil's Bit Mountain.

SETTING THE SCENE

The scenario entailed searching for hill walkers and people on a sponsored walk who had gone missing in the area, in order to test the skills of all participants. Following the briefing, a convoy of Civil Defence and Garda vehicles left the



Garda College for the exercise site.

An incident control unit was set up to at the site to provide constant updates to the teams who were deployed to their search areas. Mapping, planning and radio communications were conducted. A plan of action was agreed upon on how to roll out the search, in addition to the deployment of equipment and search techniques. The team leaders were briefed by search managers from both An Garda Síochána and the Civil Defence.

During the exercise the Garda Air Support Unit helicopter was called out to assist in the search and identify heat sources using an on-board FLIR camera. This provided the incident control unit with possible locations of missing persons.

Both weather conditions and the terrain made searching for missing persons somewhat difficult as heavy rainfall and thick fog descended on the mountain with visibility dropping to less than 20 metres.

FULL DEBRIEFING

Despite this, casualties were successfully located, treated by the medics at the scene and stretchered out to the roadside. On successful completion of the exercise, everyone involved returned to the Garda College for a full de-briefing of the events.

During the debriefing, an instructor from the Garda Operational and Occupational Division, said he would definitely work with the Civil Defence again, adding that such an exercise should be held on an annual basis.

The general feedback overall was very positive, with everyone in agreement that this is a step in the right direction. Search managers from An Garda Síochána were impressed by the professionalism and the high level of training demonstrated by Civil Defence volunteers.

VISION TO PLAN EXERCISE

During his address to both course instructors and participants, the Minister of State at Department of Defence, Paul Kehoe, praised the Civil Defence and the Gardaí for their vision in planning an exercise that brought volunteers from both organisations to work side by side. He also commended both the Gardaí and the Civil Defence on the continuous work they do in the area of missing persons.

Bill Smith, Director General of Civil Defence, said he was extremely proud



THE FIRST NATIONAL SEARCH EXERCISE

Speaking to 'Emergency Services Ireland' after the weekend, Roisin McGuire said that the national exercise attracted in the region of 60 Civil Defence volunteers from many local authority regions.

This is the first time that Civil Defence has linked up with the Gardaí for missing persons search training, and the principal of the Civil Defence College has looked to introduce a form of standardized training for their personnel and volunteer crews nationwide with the Gardaí, over the past two to three years.

"Two different scenarios were rolled out on the first day. Two groups were set up by the search managers who instructed the volunteers to go out and search in each incident. Personnel from the Garda College and the Civil Defence College co-ordinated the event and were at hand to monitor progress of both search scenarios.

The second day entailed two workshops in the Garda College on crime scene searches and major missing persons search operations and what the Gardaí look for themselves."

McGuire said that the exercise was essentially targeted at those who have done the search managers or search instructors training course, or the search field skills course. "Over 200 Civil Defence members from various regions had expressed an interest in participating in the two-day exercise, but we could not accommodate them all. So, hopefully this will be the first exercise of at least one or two on an annual basis, and we also aim to roll it out at a regional level."

Likewise, up to 20 Garda search managers and search instructors from around the country attended the training course in Tipperary. "The aim of this event," she said, "was to develop even stronger links between the Civil Defence and the Gardaí to ensure that this continues on."



of the professional approach taken by Civil Defence during the search, and how members showcased the capabilities of Civil Defence in terms of the approach taken, equipment used and how they deployed techniques used.

"We are a primary statutory organisation volunteer base of the State. We are a second line of support. It is crucial that principle response agencies know how we deploy our capabilities and train to our strengths. Our capability to sustain an exercise is a huge asset in building on inter-agency relationships," he added.

Anthony Graham, North Tipperary Civil Defence Officer, who hosted the exercise in conjunction with both colleges, said the co-operation from both sides was excellent. "The objective of working with An Garda Síochána and building on the existing relationship with them was certainly met," he added.

PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS

On the second day, a Garda Detective presented a number of high profile incidents of missing persons, with which he has been involved to date.

Practical workshops on casualty packaging for stretcher carry-outs were also conducted by advanced paramedics from Civil Defence, while crime scene preservation training

was conducted by instructors with the Operational Skills Training Unit of the Garda College.

One instructor from the Garda College, who assisted in the co-ordination of the exercise, said: "The day went extremely well due to the commitment and professionalism of the volunteers from Civil Defence, and from a Garda

perspective, it was a huge success."

Civil Defence College principal Roisin McGuire said that the exercise's objectives had been surpassed. "There is no doubt that Civil Defence volunteers will continue to be called upon to assist in searching for missing persons. Plans for future exercises are already being discussed," she noted, in conclusion.



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'WORLD'S BEST NEWS' HIGHLIGHTS PROGRESS IN FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

THE 'WORLD'S BEST NEWS' IS A NEW INITIATIVE LAUNCHED BY IRISH NGOS TO HIGHLIGHT THE PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST EXTREME POVERTY. UNLIKE OTHER MEDIA, IT IS A FREE NEWS SERVICE THAT DOES NOT ONLY FOCUS ON THE DRAMATIC AND THE SUDDEN, BUT TELLS THE BIGGER STORIES OF HOPE AND CHANGE THAT NORMALLY REMAIN HIDDEN, WRITES HANS ZOMER, DIRECTOR OF DOCHAS.

The 'World's Best News' is about telling the story of the historic and unprecedented revolution that is slowly unfolding behind the headlines: the unreported reality of steady and unrelenting improvement in human lives right across the world.

We live in an information age, with sometimes around the clock news coverage, but are the many items of 'news' actually contributing to our increased understanding of the world around us?

Research shows that the vast majority of people in Ireland think that they are receiving enough information about the developing world, yet only 19 per cent say they feel well informed about developing countries.

And despite the many reports about progress in the fight against global poverty, about half the number of people in Ireland do not think that developing countries are any better off now than 20 years ago.

And this is, at least in part, because the media are not telling us the good news story. Media coverage of "aid" and overseas issues usually focuses on crises and disasters. The news gives the impression that developing countries are a mess: poor and dependent on aid. The 'World's Best News' is a paper to show the other reality, to give space to positive stories that other newspapers won't necessarily cover.

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*For further details on the World's Best News visit www.facebook.com/TheWorldsBestNews

THE POWER OF A SHARED SET OF GOALS

World leaders agreed a set of goals for the international community to bring about a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority.

- There are now 600 million fewer people living in dire poverty. The proportion of people living below the poverty line fell from 47% in 1990 to 24% in 2008;
- Enrolment rates among children of primary school age increased markedly in Sub-Saharan Africa: from 58% in 1999 to 76% in 2010. For the first time ever, nine out of every ten (primary school age) children in the world are in school;
- The world has achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys. The ratio between the enrolment rates of girls and boys grew from 91% to 97% in 2010;
- Millions more children in developing countries live to see their fifth birthday, and the child mortality rate plummeted from 97 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 63 per 1,000 in 2010 – a decline of 35%;
- Maternal mortality has nearly halved since 1990. Globally, maternal death ratios fell from 400 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 210 per 100,000 in 2010;
- Access to treatment for people living with HIV increased in all regions. At the end of 2010, 6.5 million people in developing countries were receiving anti-retroviral therapy for HIV and AIDS - an increase of 1.4 million people since 2009;
- Globally, tuberculosis rates have been falling since 2002, meaning the world is on track towards halving the number of patients by 2015.
- The number of deaths resulting from malaria has decreased globally by 17% since 2000;
- In 2010, 89% of all people on earth have access to safe drinking water;
- The target of halving the number of people living without access to safe drinking water was achieved in 2010;
- The lives of over 200 million people living in urban slums (43 times the total population of Ireland!) have been improved, through the provision of water and sanitation.



The 'World's Best News' is a free news service that tells the bigger stories of hope and change that normally remain hidden.



Irish Aid and ChildFund Ireland are working together to bring Early Childhood Development programmes to marginalised communities in three African countries – Uganda, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

ENDING - GUINEA WORM DISEASE, SMALL POX AND POLIO

1. GUINEA WORM: The dreaded Guinea Worm Disease is now almost extinct. The disease, which is an infection of the skin caused by a worm called 'dracunculiasis', is now only recorded in 542 patients – a 48 per cent decrease from 2011.

The World Health Organisation, WHO, estimates that the disease will be eradicated by 2015. The disease spreads through water fleas that have ingested Guinea worm larvae. When people drink contaminated water, their stomach kills the water fleas but not the larvae within. The larvae develop into worms that can penetrate the intestinal wall and move around under the skin.

2. SMALLPOX: So far, smallpox is only one disease that has reached the status of worldwide eradication since 1980. At the end of the 1960s, smallpox was still endemic in Africa and Asia. A co-ordinated international programme of vaccination campaigns, surveillance and prevention measures contained epidemic hotspots and helped better inform affected populations.

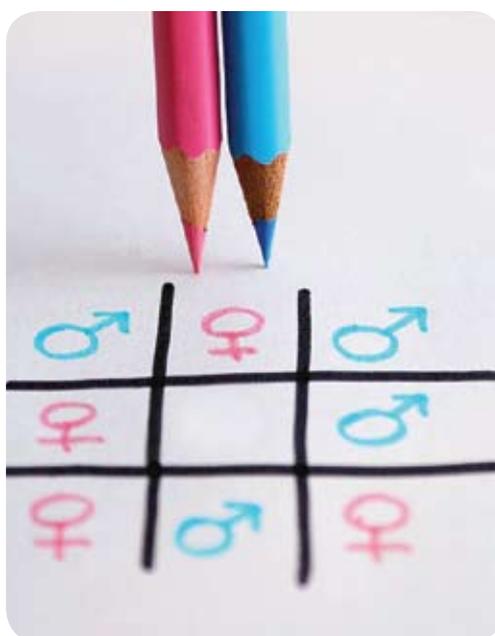
3. POLIO: Polio was once a disease feared worldwide, striking suddenly and paralysing mainly children for life. A global Polio Eradication Initiative has reduced the occurrence of the disease by 99 per cent since 1988. Polio now survives only among the world's poorest and most marginalised communities, mainly in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria.

UN TARGET IS MET, AS GIRLS MATCH BOYS IN SCHOOL

A milestone has been reached in the field of international development co-operation. A UN report published in 2013 shows that 90 per cent of the world's primary school-aged children are now enrolled in schools.

"Worldwide we now have as many girls in primary schools as boys, meaning that one of the key goals set by the UN has been achieved," said Hans Zomer, Director of Dochas.

In the year 2000, world leaders agreed eight goals to rid the world of extreme poverty. Many of the goals are to be achieved by 2015, and the UN has reported that some of the goals have been met ahead of target, while others are behind schedule.



FOCUS ON RISE IN THE NUMBERS SLEEPING ROUGH IN DUBLIN

AS NEW FIGURES REVEAL AN ALL-TIME HIGH NUMBER OF PEOPLE SLEEPING ROUGH IN DUBLIN SINCE THE COUNT BEGAN IN 2007, FOCUS IRELAND SAID THIS MUST ACT AS AN URGENT WARNING THAT A GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE ARE AT RISK DUE TO THE RECESSION.

The latest figures issued by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive show 139 people were found sleeping rough in the capital in November 2013 compared to 94 in April. This is despite an extra 80 emergency beds in place when the count took place, provided each year under the annual Cold Weather Strategy.

Focus Ireland said this shows a growing need and maintains that rough sleeping remains a consistently serious problem due to the continued lack of access to housing to help support people to move on from being homeless.

The charity has called for improved access to suitable emergency accommodation and a move on housing all year round in order to end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by the target date of the end of 2016.

Focus Ireland staff work every day and night of the year supporting people sleeping rough, as part of a Street Outreach team run jointly with Dublin Simon. The team works to support people to get in off the streets but the charity says this work is being hindered by lack of access to move on housing.

Housing supply, it claims, is a key factor and one that needs to be made a priority by the whole of Government if the target date set by Housing Minister Jan O'Sullivan to end long-term homeless by the end of 2016 is to be achieved.

AN ALL-TIME HIGH

Focus Ireland CEO Joyce Loughnan said: "The rough sleeping count figures are very concerning with numbers at an all-time high since the count began in April 2007 with a rise of just under a 50 per cent rise since spring.

"On top of this with figures showing

that six additional people are accessing homeless services every day and only two of these being moved out of homelessness and into housing, it's clear that more urgent action is required. The need to deliver better access to move on housing is now more crucial than ever."

A Focus Ireland conference has highlighted the need to tackle the issue of voids in local authority housing units as many housing units are currently unoccupied due to needing repair or upgrade work. The charity said this would be one way to increase access to housing quickly if this issue was addressed.

The rise in the rough sleeper count reflects the trend of spike in demand for services for the charity. In the past ten months of this year compared to last year Focus Ireland has seen a rise of 18 per cent in the number of people seeking its support.

PEOPLE LOSING THEIR HOMES

Loughnan continued: "The problem of homelessness is not only rough sleeping. We are now seeing more people at serious risk of losing their homes due

to the impact of the recession and it's highly concerning to see the rise numbers of families becoming homeless. In Dublin alone the number of families becoming homeless has recently doubled from 8 to 16 every month.

"Worryingly, five children a week are losing their family home. Most of these families were previously living in private rented accommodation. Prevention is cheaper than cure and we call for increased investment in housing advice services, such as those provided by Focus Ireland across the country, to help people at risk of homelessness deal with their problems before they lose their homes."

Focus Ireland said new figures also show a massive 43 per cent increase in the number seeking housing advice from its services to prevent them losing their homes – to a total of 4,248 between January to October 2013 compared to 2,973 people during the same ten months in 2012.

These lifeline services are largely funded by public fundraising. People can donate at www.focusireland.ie or by calling 1850 204 205.



KEY ISSUES OF SECURITY VERSUS SAFETY IN PRISON

JOHN LONERGAN, FORMER GOVERNOR OF MOUNTJOY PRISON, SHARED SOME THOUGHTS SECURITY VERSUS HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFLICTS IN THE PRISON DURING HIS CAREER SPANNING 42 YEARS, TO DELEGATES AT AN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE. REPORT BY GRACE HENEGHAN.

During the past 50 years major work has been done in terms of health, safety and welfare at work, due to legislation but mainly down to changes in behaviour, priorities and awareness."

Such were the opening remarks by John Lonergan, former Governor of both Mountjoy and Portlaoise prisons, during his captivating keynote address to delegates at the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) conference in Galway, recently.

He recalled that when he first started work back in 1964, initially during a summer job in the sawmill industry, injuries were part and parcel of the working environment. "People were either badly injured or lost their lives."

Lonergan pointed out that thankfully in today's Ireland many people are alive adding that equally thousands and thousands more are healthy and without serious injury and living normal lives.

"This would not be a reality were it not for the work of organisations such as NISO and what it promotes and stands for. I've spent the best part of 42 years working in the prison service and I always had a difficulty with the conflict of interest



between security and health and safety."

There was a fundamental conflict, he noted, between the two sectors; most notably in Portlaoise Prison where he spent his first four years as Governor, where security was the critical priority but health and safety was not a priority.

"So, every time you did something to make the prison more secure you can be rest assured that you were equally undermining safety. For example, good fire safety practice was totally incompatible with good security practice."

NARROW ESCAPES

He candidly said there were "some

narrow escapes" in Mountjoy Prison, but particularly in the high-security Portlaoise Prison, due to what he referred to as "a totally unrealistic and unsafe emphasis on security".

Having spent four years as Governor in Portlaoise, particularly in the high-security south wing that housed five high-profile prisoners – all serving up to 40-year sentences – he recalls one very serious accidental fire incident.

"An argument over access to a computer broke out between two prisoners. Eventually one got offended and decided to set fire to the computer while the other inmate was absent. But

the fire didn't burn quickly enough for his liking, so he decided to aid the fire by pouring a 2lb bag of sugar over the small fire, which was starting underneath the computer.

"Of course the sugar immediately burst into flames and made a noise like an explosion. So, everyone in the prison thought it was an actual explosion because we were dealing with subversive prisoners; fire arms and bombs were part and parcel of the reality.

"Within seconds the cell itself went into an amazing inferno and everyone thought that it was a bomb; there was a stampede and they all dived to the floor. With the cell door open this gave the fire the opportunity to burn and the smoke to spread from the small south wing into the main block of the prison.

"Being top high-security prison, Portlaoise had a tiny cage built on the gate of the south wing and a prison officer was locked inside and he didn't have the key to escape – there was a tiny hole on the gate in which the key would have been passed in and out by the prison officer. The logic behind this was that the prison officer could not be blackmailed or threatened by the inmates to open the gate to allow them out of the wing.

"Security was dead sound but the officer's safety had not even been considered. Quickly the smoke took complete hold and they realised that this prison officer could not get out of the cage. Eventually they found the key but when passing it through it had fallen on the floor inside and he couldn't find it as he was blinded by smoke.

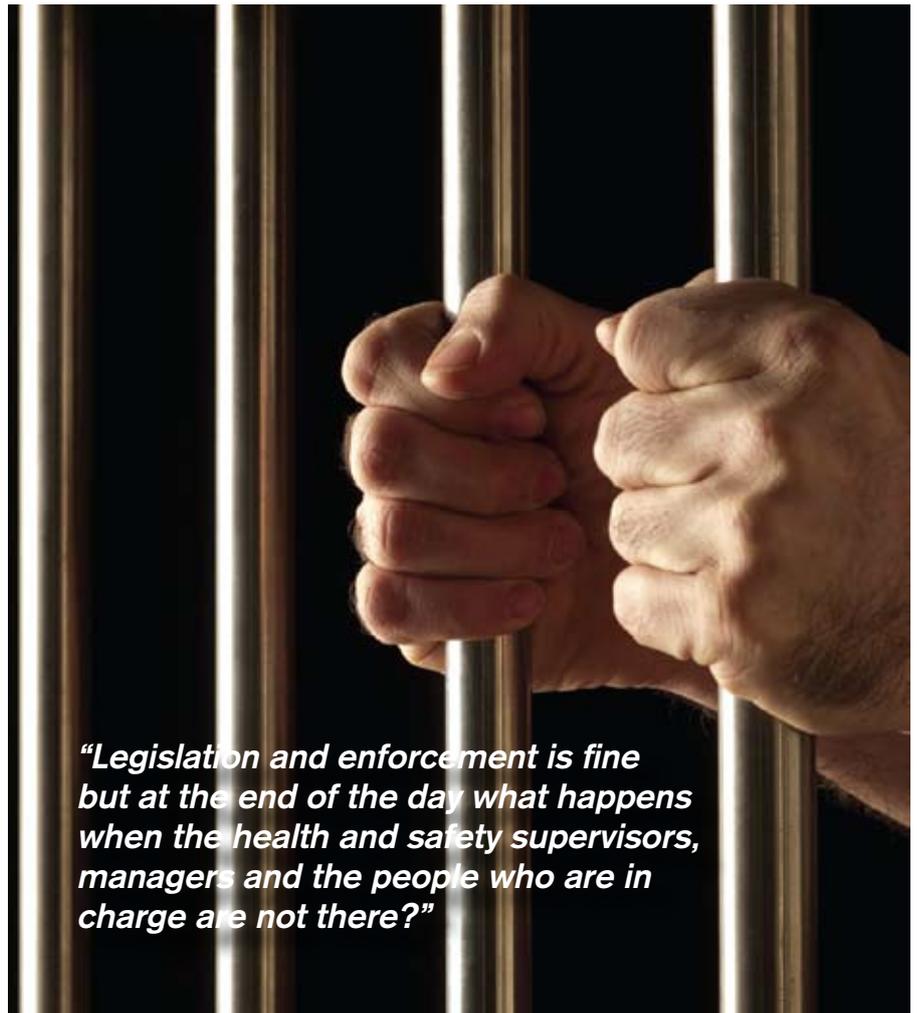
"However, it was a miracle that nobody died – both the prison officer and 19 others were taken out of the prison unconscious and thankfully later made a quick recovery. Again, it just highlighted the conflict between the total security of the prison versus the safety and welfare of both prisoners and staff."

FIRE SAFETY INCIDENTS

He said that many other issues arose around that time. "For example, on two occasions when I was involved in dealing with serious fire incidents, the fire brigade would not hose down the cells because they said that this was not their job.

Likewise the prison staff were not trained to deal with the smoke and the fire to unlock the prison cells.

"There was the conflict again between



"Legislation and enforcement is fine but at the end of the day what happens when the health and safety supervisors, managers and the people who are in charge are not there?"

saving lives versus a whole lot of policies and procedures in relation to workplace health and safety. It made me very aware that health, safety and welfare in the workplace was a very important issue.

"I was always preaching to staff and management that it was fine to take risks until something goes wrong or if somebody is badly injured, dies or a number of people die. As remember that as part of an enquiry you as a health and safety professional will be called to answer for your behaviour, practices, performance and procedures.

"Legislation and enforcement is fine but at the end of the day what happens when the health and safety supervisors, managers and the people who are in charge are not there? The real crunch is to know what happens when health and safety personnel are absent...is it a day-to-day practice done as a matter of routine, or only because there's an inspection or the boss is on the horizon. When staff are under pressure in an emergency what will happen?"

PADDED CELL INCIDENT

Another very bad experience, he recalled, was when an inmate tried to set himself alight in a padded cell. Prisoners are only placed in padded cells, the former Governor explained, to protect them from harming themselves or if they are deemed insane for a period of time and awaiting medical treatment.

"Every security procedure was undertaken to prevent this prisoner from self-harm; he was dressed in paper clothing...but nevertheless he had smuggled in a matchstick at some stage and by some way or other he got a fire going and eventually the fire spread.

"The padding took fire and it was highly toxic, so a huge amount of smoke soon developed. It was a new building, but all of the technology worked the wrong way...everything that could go wrong went wrong! The staff on duty opened the cell door and dragged out the prisoner who initially resisted their rescue attempts."

Lonergan said that while the prisoner's

life was saved and the prison officers were courageous, they broke every rule in the health and safety book. "How could you criticise their heroic actions, but at the same time they broke every written procedure and policy and every single training programme in which they had participated.

"By the time they got him out they had left the cell door open and, of course, the open door meant that the smoke bellowed out, causing havoc throughout the prison."

CHANGING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

He noted that these incidents highlighted that changing human behaviour, having discipline, adhering to good practice in an emergency and under pressure in a crisis was "the real crunch".

Touching upon his own frustrations and challenges of trying to change human practice and human behaviour, he described this as a very slow frustrating process. "People doing the same things for many years may need to change that practice but this can be slow and frustrating and it takes time.

"It demands patience, endurance and absolute conviction that over a period of time you will be able to bring about change, but it must come from all of the people who will buy into what you want to do."

DON'T TAKE SHORTCUTS

However, in times of recession and austerity the danger is to take shortcuts, he warned. "During my time I had some very serious arguments and disputes with senior management figures in the Department of Justice over resources. I was regularly told that 'resources are no excuse', but resources are absolutely essential!

"The easiest part is to introduce and develop policy, which includes legislation and all the types of guidelines and policies. But the real challenge is resourcing the organisation or company to enables them to achieve their aims."

Lonergan said he always believed that a manager's responsibility and duty to deliver the highest quality of service and performance, based on the resources available. "If you are not given the resources then you cannot fully achieve this. However, people should not take short cuts to achieve their aims with and be popular.

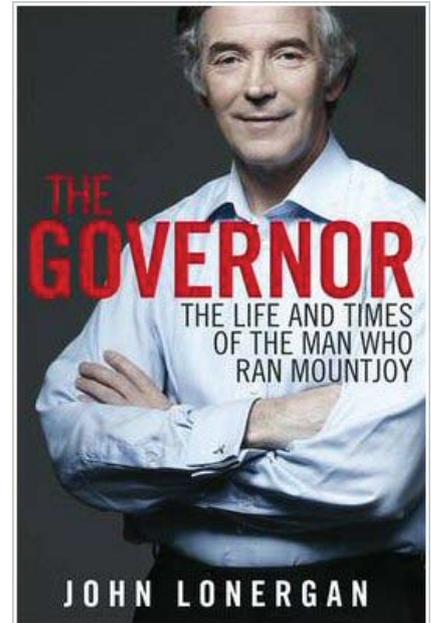
THE GOVERNOR'S PRINCIPLES

John Lonergan served in the Irish Prison Service for over 42 years. He was Governor of Mountjoy Prison for over 22 years and also spent four years as Governor of the top security prison at Portlaoise.

He retired in 2010 and later that year his autobiography 'The Governor' was published, which tells of his idyllic childhood in rural Tipperary, coming face to face with the darkest aspects of Irish life, to grappling with the politics of working in a service that was the plaything of officials and politicians.

His philosophy is that change, personal or otherwise, cannot be enforced on people and he believes that real and meaningful change only comes about through dialogue, consent and agreement.

John entered the prison service in 1968 and in the years that followed, as he saw human nature at its worst - and



often, unexpectedly, at its best. He developed a deep understanding both of human nature and of Irish society.



"There will never be the perfect health, welfare and safety at work environment. It does not exist because you're dealing with human beings and, therefore, there's the potential for failure or poor practice.

However, what organisations such as NISO have achieved is immense and what they do is immeasurable in the context of ensuring that people go to work and come home safe."

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF WOMEN BEHIND BARS

A CO-ORDINATED INTER-AGENCY RESPONSE IS BADLY NEEDED TO ADDRESS THE CHRONIC OVERCROWDING AND REVOLVING DOORS IN IRELAND'S TWO FEMALE PRISONS, WHERE WOMEN OFFENDERS ARE BEING SENT INSTEAD OF PROVIDING NON-CUSTODIAL ALTERNATIVES, ACCORDING TO THE FINDINGS OF A NEW STUDY BY THE IRISH PENAL REFORM TRUST.

Prison is being used as a place of respite for women with multiple complex needs, when community-based responses would better address women's offending behaviour, according to the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT).

The IPRT maintains that a co-ordinated inter-agency response is required to address the chronic overcrowding and revolving doors in Ireland's two female prisons.

Current proposals to build 50 cells at Limerick's female prison will exacerbate the issues, the agency claims, unless matched by a commitment by Government to significantly reduce the female prison population, through the provision of non-custodial alternatives for women offenders.

These core findings are included in the IPRT's latest position paper '*Women in the Criminal Justice System – Towards a Non-custodial Approach*'. The IPRT study was launched by Minister of State for the Departments of Health, and Justice, Equality and Defence Kathleen Lynch at a seminar – Re-designing the Pattern: Women and the Criminal Justice System – in Dublin on 4 December 2013.

IPRT Executive Director Liam Herrick said: "There is something profoundly wrong with a society where women seek prison as a place of respite from the chaotic and often dangerous lives they lead on the outside."

A LAST RESORT

"Prison should be a last resort, not a first resort – this is especially true for women offenders, many of whom are sentenced for non-violent and less serious offences," he maintained.

"Following the Thornton Hall Review Group report, the Government

acknowledged that prison building will not address overcrowding issues. The progressive policy developments we have seen in the male prison estate must now be extended to include the female prison estate.

"Any expansion of the female prison estate is short-sighted, and will only compound the cycle of damage to families and communities of sending increasing numbers of women to prison.

"Instead, we need to see low-risk women offenders diverted to non-custodial community-based alternatives, such as the 'one-stop-shops' in the UK, which address the mental health issues,



Liam Herrick, IPRT Executive Director



addictions, experience of abuse, poverty, homelessness and other critical factors which characterise offending by women," concluded Herrick.

There was a 25 per cent increase in the number of female committals to prison in 2012, even as male committals decreased slightly. There were 150 female committals in 1990; 402 in 2005; and 2,092 in 2012, according to the Inspector of Prisons' interim report on the Dóchas Centre (published on 3 December 2013).

IPRT RECOMMENDATIONS

IPRT is now calling on the Minister for Justice and the Irish Prison Service to bring to an end the damaging practice of imprisonment for fines default with urgency, in an attempt to address the overuse of remand for women offenders.

In addition, it also wants Minister Shatter to reconsider proposals for penal expansion at Limerick's female prison, and instead direct resources to provision of community-based alternatives. It says that specialist mental health courts should be developed, which divert those with mental illness who have committed minor offences to community inpatient or outpatient facilities.

IPRT also claims there is a need for gender-proof non-custodial alternatives, such as community service orders, to ensure that no women are excluded from such measures.

Overall, all the key stakeholders should develop an interagency approach to effectively address offending behaviour by women. Key stakeholders include the Probation Service, the Irish Prison Service, the HSE, the Garda Síochána and the community and voluntary sector.

There are also recommendations to provide mother and baby units at Limerick Prison to ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of imprisoned mothers and their babies in line with international best practice and domestic child protection rules.

One of its final recommendations highlights the need to provide adequate reintegration supports for these women offenders, both during their prison sentence and following release, with particular emphasis on stable and secure housing.

OVERCROWDING IN IRELAND'S TWO FEMALE PRISONS

- On 3 December 2013, the two women's prisons were the two most crowded in the Irish prison estate at 119% (Dóchas Centre) and 118% (Limerick Female Prison).
- There were 125 women in custody in the Dóchas Centre, which has a design capacity of 105.
- There were 33 women in Limerick Female Prison, with a bed capacity of 28, according to the Irish Prison Service (the Inspector of Prisons gives the design capacity as 24).
- There was a 13% increase in number of women committed to prison in 2012; women now make up 15.5% of individuals committed (compared with 13.5% in 2011; and 12% in 2010).
- The number of women committed to prison in 2012 for fines default was 1,687; this is a five-fold increase on 2008, when 339 women were imprisoned for fines default.

Source: www.irishprisons.ie and IPS Annual Reports 2012, 2011, 2010 and 2008.

IPRT POSITION ON REMAND FOR WOMEN OFFENDERS

The 'IPRT Position Paper 10: Women in the Criminal Justice System – Towards a Non-custodial Approach' looks at the complex range of needs experienced by many women convicted of an offence and the associated overuse of remand for women offenders.

Key Messages

- The number and proportion of women in the Irish prison population has increased significantly in recent years. Most women are committed to prison for non-violent offences, such as non-payment of fines. Consequences have included overcrowding in women's prisons and an overuse of temporary release.
- Women offenders tend to come from a background of social disadvantage and poverty, and often suffer from mental health problems, substance dependency, accommodation problems and poor family relationships. These issues can make it difficult for women to adhere to bail conditions, which has led to an overuse of remand for women offenders. This in turn has negative implications for children of women who are imprisoned on remand and the employment prospects of these women.
- A high proportion of women in prison have children. Women also play an important role in caring for dependent relatives. Women who are imprisoned can no longer fulfil their caring responsibilities and the consequences of this can be significant. This is particularly an issue for mothers with babies, due to the absence of a mother and baby unit in either female prison in Ireland.
- Women face a range of problems on being released from prison, relating to housing, accommodation and stability, and over half of women prisoners reoffend.
- Developments in the UK have reflected a growing acknowledgement of the value of non-custodial alternatives and community-based supports for women offenders. This has also been highlighted by the UN, in the 'Bangkok Rules', which have informed the Irish Inspector of Prisons on the subject of women prisoners.
- The 'one-stop-shop' approach to supporting women offenders in the community takes a holistic approach, with a range of supports and services provided in one location. A number of centres in the UK are based on this promising model. In Ireland, the Tus Nua project provides supported housing and other supports to women leaving the Dóchas Centre.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION UNDER MAJOR REVIEW

WOMEN'S AID IS CALLING FOR A 24/7 ON-CALL SYSTEM FOR EMERGENCY BARRING ORDERS, SO THAT WOMEN CAN ACCESS LEGAL PROTECTION WHEN THEY NEED IT THE MOST, AND CLAIMS THAT IRELAND'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION IS STILL IN NEED OF MAJOR REFORM.

Women's Aid has welcomed a report in relation to domestic and sexual violence by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality as a positive step in the review of domestic violence legislation and providing a welcome opportunity for much needed reform.

Commenting on the report Margaret Martin, Director of Women's Aid, said her agency believes that everyone experiencing abuse deserves legal protection, and that protection should be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

"We look forward to working with the Committee towards this goal, and aim to give voice to the needs and experiences of the women we support through full participation in the review process."

According to Martin, emergency barring orders provide an opportunity to make a difference for women and children's safety in a time of recession, and can be implemented within available resources. There is already a similar on-call system in operation for criminal law courts in Ireland.

"We know from women using our support services that the lack of access to legal protection when the courts are closed leaves women and children vulnerable to serious harm and further abuse over-night or over the weekend.

"At a time of diminishing funding and resources, we see domestic violence refuges operating at capacity, and when there is no space in refuge this presents a major barrier for women fleeing dangerous abuse in the home. Emergency barring orders increase the chances that women and children can remain safe in their own homes. It can mean the difference between staying securely at home with



The report coincides with the recent launch of Women's Aid 'One in Five Women' Campaign by RTÉ Fair City Actress Helen Norton, pictured here with Margaret Martin, Director of Women's Aid.

legal protection and sleeping in a car or sleeping rough."

'ONE IN FIVE WOMEN'

This review has the potential to significantly improve the lives of the one in five women in Ireland experiencing domestic violence. Launching the Women's Aid 'One in Five Women' campaign, RTÉ Fair City actress Helen Norton said: "After portraying scenes of horrible domestic abuse against 'Vivienne' on Fair City, I was overwhelmed by women contacting me who thanked me for the conversations that the storyline had started.

"This is too big an issue for us not to talk about. The 'One in Five Women' campaign gives us all a chance to show that domestic violence is not acceptable in our communities, to learn about the services available to women, and be able to support loved ones should they need us."

Women's Aid has submitted a series of additional recommendations to the Committee that, if acted upon, would

immediately increase protection for everyone affected by domestic violence.

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Martin said: "We have seen the immediate impact that improved legislation can have on women and children's safety. Following the 2011 extension of eligibility for safety and protection orders to groups like non-cohabiting parents with a child in common, we saw an immediate increase of 34 per cent in applications for safety orders and 23 per cent in applications for protection orders-in 2012."

She noted that many thousands of women avail of legal protection every year in this country, but added that a significant number who still unable to access protection.

"Ireland's domestic violence legislation is still in need of major reform in order to fully protect vulnerable women and children when they need it the most.

We congratulate the Committee on the launch of these submissions, and their continued commitment to work towards this reform.

PUTTING THE BRAKES ON INCONSISTENT SPEED LIMITS

A NEW APPEALS MECHANISM FOR INCONSISTENT SPEED LIMITS, THE REMOVAL OF MISLEADING 80KM/H SPEED LIMITS ON NARROW COUNTRY ROADS, AND THE END OF 'SILLY SIGNS' IN INAPPROPRIATE LOCATIONS, ARE SOME OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF A WORKING GROUP SET UP BY THE TRANSPORT MINISTER.

The Speed Limits Working Group has published a series of recommendations to reform the speed limit system and ensure that every speed limit in Ireland is both safe and sensible.

Under the other recommendations listed, every speed limit in the country will be audited every five years by the National Roads Authority or the local authority, and speed limit guidelines will become binding. The goal is to ensure that the speed limit on any given road is a fair reflection of the road conditions.

The Working Group, set up by Transport Minister Leo Varadkar, was asked to address inconsistencies in Ireland's speed limits, which can vary significantly between roads and counties, and even on the same stretch of road. It was also asked to find the most appropriate speed limit for country lanes, which currently have a default limit of 80km/h, regardless of road condition.

"This detailed report sets out a new approach, and my department will now work with the NRA, local authorities, the Gardaí, and the AA to implement its recommendations. If people are going to respect speed limits, then we need to ensure that speed limits respect the motorist. But we must also ensure that every limit is safe and sensible," the Minister added.

Conor Faughnan of the AA said: "Irish motorists have been hugely supportive of road safety policy in recent years. AA members are continually telling us that they support speed enforcement but that many speed limits across the country are set incorrectly.

"The updated policy will allow for a consistent and rational approach across the entire network which is very necessary."



The 80km/h speed limit will remain.

Summary of the Recommendations

- A new appeals system will allow **the right to appeal a given speed limit** to the local authority, to be considered within a given timeframe. If dissatisfied with the response, the appeal can be escalated to an independent review body will assess the speed limit and will be empowered to instruct a local authority to change a speed limit if it is found to be inappropriate.
- The RSA will run an **awareness campaign on the new 'rural speed limit' signs** and other measures, and will update the Rules of the Road.
- The NRA and local authorities will **review and update speed limits on a five-year cycle** to ensure appropriate fit and compliance with the guidelines. The Department of Transport is currently mapping every speed limit in the country on to a computer database.
- **Trials will be run of variable speed limits**, which can be adjusted according to weather conditions, the volume of traffic, the time of day, or the day of the week.
- **Average speed limits will be introduced on motorways** or other long-distance fixed roads to determine whether a vehicle has driven faster than the maximum speed limit over a given length of road.
- The rules for the setting of temporary speed limits to allow for road works will be updated. This will allow city and county managers to apply speed limits at road works more responsively and flexibly; for example to apply lower limits only while works are underway.

**For a copy of the report visit www.dttas.ie/roads/publications/english/speed-limit-review-2013*

IRELAND GEARS UP FOR MORE 'VIRTUAL' CARS

ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR CALLS IT THE 'VIRTUAL CAR', AND IT IS BECOMING A GROWING TREND IN IRELAND AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO RENT THE EXACT TYPE OF VEHICLE THEY NEED WHEN AND WHERE THEY NEED IT.

No one has a car that perfectly meets their needs at all times. What is fine for a short daily commute to the office may not be ideal for a longer drive or weekend sporting activity.

So, rather than compromise on comfort or space, people are choosing to rent exactly what they need for the specific journey in hand.

In the festive period, for instance, people may want to take their whole family to a Christmas gathering in safety and comfort, but can't because their own car is too small. While people are familiar with renting a car abroad, more are seeing the benefits of hiring a car that's fit for a specific purpose.

George O'Connor, managing director of Enterprise Rent-A-Car Ireland, says: "Enterprise offers a weekend special, with competitive rates and a complimentary pick-up/ drop-off service. This means that the benefit of having the right 'Virtual Car' when you need it is affordable and convenient for lots of people.

WEEKEND SPECIAL DEAL

"Some of our customers who drive for a living or are city commuters don't have the need for a car from Monday to Friday. Yet, they still need the mobility that only a car can provide at weekends," explained O'Connor.

"They pick up a car on their 'Weekend Special Deal' and return it on Monday morning on their way to work. For people living and working in the city, many are finding that the concept of a 'virtual car' makes sense. This is particularly the case during holiday periods."

For those requiring vans and other commercial vehicles for work, or indeed weekend purposes, Enterprise supplies a wide range of vehicles that are suitable for whatever the customer has in mind. This could range from an extra set of wheels for their business when they need it, or a complete fleet if required.



George O'Connor, managing director of Enterprise Rent-A-Car Ireland.



Enterprise provides commercial vehicles for businesses right across the country.

FLEXIBLE VEHICLE SOLUTIONS

In fact, Enterprise provides commercial vehicles for businesses right across the country. These include flexible vehicle solutions for those companies that need transportation on a seasonal or ad hoc basis and don't want a car or van sitting outside their premises for weeks at a time doing nothing.

"If you let us know that you are in the emergency services when you book the

vehicle, we'll give you an immediate 5 per cent discount. We'll pick you up and ensure that you have a fantastic rental experience every step of the way. Just bring your ID in when you collect the vehicle," added O'Connor.

Enterprise weekend special rates start from €15.99 per day.

To find out about rates and availability, visit www.enterprise.ie or telephone 1890 227 999



AGENCIES NEED TO GANG UP AGAINST VIOLENCE AND CRIME

GARDAÍ SHOULD JOIN FORCES WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PUBLIC BODIES IN SETTING UP A NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO TACKLE GANG VIOLENCE, ACCORDING TO ONE YOUTH WORKER BUT SAYS THE FACT THAT IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A BIG PRIORITY WITH THE GOVERNMENT IS THE MAJOR PROBLEM. REPORT BY JAMIE DEASY.

Gang and drug-related violence has reached a point where some youth services have had to implement additional safety measures to protect the lives of their young members due to fears they could be caught in the crossfire between rival factions.

The complexity of the issue of young people's involvement in violence and drugs means that the perpetrators and victims of a violent incident can sometimes be members of the same youth service.

The interventional aspect of youth work that involves professionals trying to prevent vulnerable young people in disadvantaged areas from being dragged

into a future mired in drugs and violence has never been more essential.

Youth workers are in a unique position to positively influence the lives of vulnerable young people. But some in the profession can feel frustrated because they face an extremely challenging task in preventing some young people from becoming involved in crime because of the failure of the Government to tackle the deeper societal causes of drug-related violence.

High levels of unemployment, cutbacks in education and in social welfare payments for young people have also made the task of trying to shepherd young people away from a life of violence

and drugs more challenging as some young people take the view that selling drugs is the most expedient economic choice they can make.

RISING CRIME STATS

Crime statistics show 60 people were killed in violent incidents in Ireland in 2012, a rise of 15 on the previous year, according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

It was the first time in years that there has been a sharp rise in the number of homicides and it is widely accepted that the trend is largely attributable to a surge in gangland killings last year, the vast majority of which occurred in Dublin.

Alarming, the violence has, at times, spilled over from the realm of the criminal underworld and has directly and indirectly affected the lives of young members of some of the city's youth clubs and services.

Earlier this year, one young member of the Ballyfermot Youth Service was shot, but fortunately survived the incident. Gerry McCarthy, service co-ordinator, said the shooting was just one of a number of violent occurrences in the last two years involving members of the service.

He also pointed out that members of the service had been both the victims and the perpetrators of gangland violence in the area. He added that the shooting and other incidents in recent times have had major repercussions for the staff and members of the youth service.

"After the shooting happened there were a lot of young people traumatised. I know our staff were traumatised because we had to have additional counselling for the staff here. And also for the young people, we had to provide a safe space for them to talk about it," he said.

"We have had to heighten our security; we had to put in CCTV both to protect the staff and create a safer space for young people."

McCarthy believes that an increase in violence in the area among young people is linked to a sharp rise in unemployment in recent years, which has in turn led to an increase in the level of drug dealing across Dublin.

"The young fellas have no work and they have no money and this is a way of making income. It is as much about economics as it is about anything else. There is a lot of money to be made in drugs. Some of the kids getting involved in these gangs would be just 14 years old," he added.

VIOLENT INCIDENTS

Domhnall Costigan, a youth worker at the Finglas Youth Resource Centre, said violent incidents perpetrated by and against members of the youth service are not unusual and have involved shootings, pipe bombings, beatings and stabbings in the recent past.

Some of the young people the centre comes into contact with, who are as young as 15 years old, are either on the periphery of gangs, or have already been recruited by them and are involved in

low-level drug dealing, he pointed out.

In recent times, one young member of the service ended up temporarily in a coma after he was savagely beaten at a local football pitch because of an allegedly unpaid €30 drug debt. In addition, Costigan said in some cases young men who had been threatened by drug dealers to whom they owed money were afraid to leave their homes and this made it difficult to have any positive influence on their lives through youth work.

"We see now a lot of young men sit in all day playing computer games because they are scared to leave their house for fear of money owed, or something that has happened in the past," he continued.

"When young people might be afraid of who is down in the youth service or where the other young people might come from, they won't come down. It takes a lot of perseverance and unfortunately the cutbacks in resources can hamper a youth worker's ability to engage with them."

Dr Hilary Tierney lectures in youth work in the MA in Community and Youth Work in the Department of Applied Social Studies at the NUI Maynooth. She said the areas where gangs were most likely to operate in were 'marginalised' communities that had high degrees of poverty and inequality.

She suggested that youth work needs to examine the reasons why young people are attracted to violence and gangs and develop co-ordinated responses to address both the causes and impacts.

Crime statistics show 60 people were killed in violent incidents in Ireland in 2012, a rise of 15 on the previous year, according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO).



VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

"It is not uncommon for young people to be both victims and perpetrators [of violence]. It's not surprising that it creates a particular dynamic within communities in terms of 'no-go' areas and issues about young people not being able to leave certain sides of the street, never mind not being able to leave their homes," she said.

"The question that you have to ask is 'what is it that is going on'. I think that it is too easy to look to families and communities as the source of the problem rather than looking at the wider societal issues.

"You have to look at what is the attraction of so-called 'gangs'. They seem to offer young people some sense of belonging and some sense of apparent safety by being identified as belonging to one gang or another.

They seem to offer young people some possibilities of having an identity that has some status and in very practical terms it can offer a source of income."

“So, when you are wondering about what youth work can do, youth work can’t intervene in the causes on its own, so in some way there would have to be a coordinated response, a serious effort on behalf of, number one, the government to deal with inequality and poverty, not a piecemeal approach. I think there would also have to be efforts to create solidarity across generations within communities but also across communities.”

Katherina Nugent, programme director of the Bachelor of Arts in Community Youth Work at Dundalk IT, said youth workers she had spoken to had conveyed a sense that there has been an increase in the visibility of criminal activity linked to gangs in some of the more disadvantaged areas in Dublin in recent years.

Noting some of the more worrying aspects of the issue, Nugent, who previously worked as a youth worker in Dublin for 20 years, said that young people are becoming involved in gangs at a younger age and are also finding it easier to gain access to guns and automatic weapons.

She said that to challenge the normalisation of antisocial behaviour in some areas and the increasing exposure of young people to criminal activity, youth work has to adopt a more integrated approach to addressing the causes of gang violence.

INTEGRATED APPROACH

“There is recognition that early intervention with young people is crucial – the younger they can be engaged the better,” she said.

“Youth work needs to and has been looking at a more integrated approach in working with young people. We cannot work with a young person just as an individual, there has to be understanding that they are part of a family, a community and a society, so working with families and other services in a manner which is inclusive to all parties is vital,” she added.

In addition, she said more research on the issue of violence and gangs needs to be done within communities and youth work settings and with the young people themselves, and a strategy approach that is based on this evidence should be adopted.

She suggested that Irish youth workers could also try to establish more links with youth workers and services abroad such as in Leeds/Bradford, where



‘SPEAK TO THE STREETS’ IN THE UK

‘Speak to the Streets’ – the Leeds-based not-for-profit organisation – aims to engage young people to direct them away from gang violence. It also works with local authorities, schools, community centres, charities and individuals on a one-to-one basis.

It has established a workshop that has been adopted in youth projects all over Britain and has had positive outcomes on young people’s involvement in gang violence.

‘Speak to the Streets’ was set up by Shane Fenton, whose mother Pat Regan – a notable anti-gun and peace campaigner – was tragically killed in avoidable circumstances in 2008. She had already lost one son, Danny, who was murdered after becoming embroiled in gang warfare in 2002, after which she became instrumental in the ‘Mothers Against Violence’ charity.

Fenton established ‘Speak to the Streets’ as a way of ensuring other families don’t have to go through the same experience, with a focus on parenting, pre-gang education and converting street skills to life skills.



Fenton and his volunteers use high profile events, MCing, breakdance and other art forms to aide their work.

the 'Speak to the Streets' youth service was established as a direct result of criminal and gang activity in the area.

The charity aims to engage young people between the age of 11 and 19 and directs them away from gang violence with a focus on parenting and pre-gang education and it shows young people how to turn street skills such as street art into life skills.

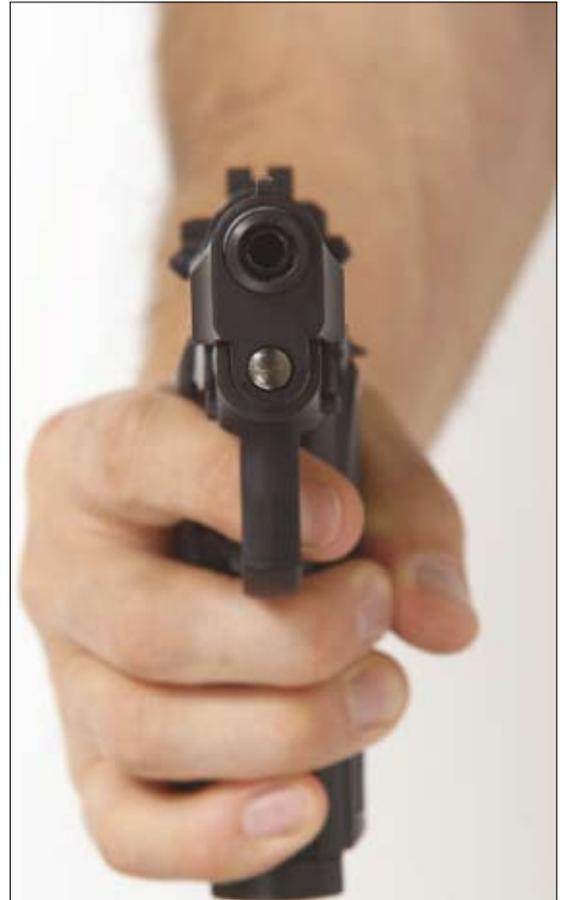
ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES

Gerry McCarthy strongly believes that youth workers can have a hugely beneficial influence on the lives of vulnerable young people who are at risk of getting involved in drugs and violence.

But he also firmly believes that in order to help youth workers achieve positive outcomes in young people's lives, the Government must come up with ways of addressing the root causes of drug-related violence before a significant proportion of the current generation of young people in disadvantaged areas are permanently scarred by it.

McCarthy added: "Youth workers can change the lives of young people, but we need the help of the Gardaí and the other services and public bodies to do this. "There needs to be a national initiative to tackle gang violence and if they have to bring a lot of agencies together, they should do it. It doesn't seem to be a big priority with the Government – that is the problem.

"When you think of it, most of the people that have been killed are gang members and there are very few outside of it. The effect it is having in communities like Ballyfermot and Crumlin is that it has frightened people. The level of fear is unacceptable."



**Article courtesy of 'YNOW' magazine, published by the City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB).*

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Your Home in the City since 1840



The Stephen's Green Hibernian Club is Ireland's Premier Private Member's Club.

Filled with an essence of warmth and welcome, every member belongs to more than just a Club, it is a home. Located on St. Stephen's Green, the Club provides all its members the perfect setting in the city for Christmas parties, entertaining family, friends and clients.

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www.sghc.ie

IRISH MEDICINES BOARD RECOMMENDS DEFIB CHECK-UPS

THE IRISH MEDICINES BOARD IS ADVISING SPORTS AND COMMUNITY CLUBS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO CHECK SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE LEVELS ON THEIR AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS DURING THE WINTER, AS LOWER TEMPERATURES AND FREEZING CONDITIONS CAN AFFECT PERFORMANCE.

The Irish Medicines Board (IMB) is offering practical storage and maintenance advice to organisations and groups who hold automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on their premises, via a leaflet which can be downloaded by the users.

Organisations, clubs and agencies with such devices are reminded that changes in weather temperatures, poor storage or failure to complete the recommended maintenance checks on the product may result in device malfunction.

AEDs provide vital first response care in the event of sudden cardiac arrest. However, if such a device is not maintained adequately it may not perform effectively in an emergency situation.

There has been a marked increase in the number of defibrillators in use across the country in sporting venues, schools and shopping centres with the development of smaller, easier-to-use, portable devices.

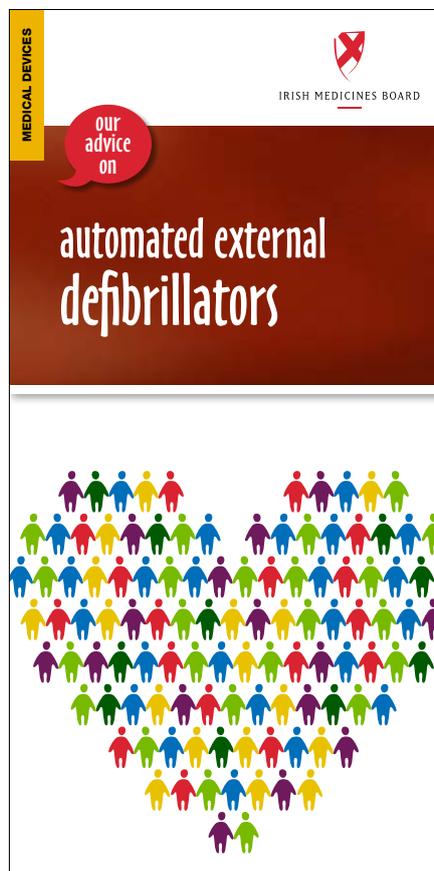
With cases of Sudden Adult Death Syndrome (SADS) becoming more prevalent in Ireland, the Irish Medicines Board and other healthcare agencies have said it is imperative, therefore, that AEDs are accessible and in good working order at all times.

CONCISE GUIDELINES

The IMB highlights clear and concise guidance to provide advice on selecting and purchasing an AED for use in a community setting. It also provides recommendations for maintaining the device after it has been purchased:

Guidelines include:

- All medical devices including defibrillators must carry a CE mark which ensures that when used and stored properly, the device should



- work as intended and be safe.
- Defibrillators can be badly affected by the weather and other environmental conditions.
- Review the product manual for the device and its accessories to identify the conditions that could affect its performance, such as:
 - Storage temperature;
 - Exposure to moisture and damp. For example, is the AED stored beneath a window, over a radiator, or near a door?
 - The manual should be stored with the defib and be accessible at all times.

- A maintenance plan and schedule should be put in place; someone familiar with the operation and storage of the defib is given the task of keeping the plan up to date.
- The device may need to be updated or changed during its time in use. For example, it may require new software.
- Regular servicing and maintenance is essential and must be carried out in accordance with the guidance given by the manufacturer.

NEED TO REMEMBER

According to Anne Tobin, Medical Devices Vigilance and Compliance Manager, IMB, "We're conscious that groups, organisations and many community clubs have put great effort into securing these often expensive defibrillators for their premises.

"However, remember that they are medical devices and need care and attention to ensure that they remain in perfect working order."

She said that the IMB's leaflet is designed as a reminder to owners and users that defibrillators are complex devices which, if stored in unsuitable areas, may not perform in a potentially lifesaving situation.

"I would also encourage users who have encountered a safety issue with a medical device that they have used to report the issue to the IMB. Details are available on the IMB website," she concluded.

The AED leaflet is available for download from www.imb.ie. Copies can also be requested by emailing brochures@imb.ie.

SEA RESCUE PHOTO EXHIBITION DOCKS IN DUBLIN

AN OUTDOOR EXHIBITION SHOWCASING STRIKING PHOTOS OF THE LIFESAVING WORK OF THE RNLI IN IRELAND AND THE UK THROUGH THE LENS OF LIFEBOAT CREW MEMBER AND PHOTOGRAPHER NIGEL MILLARD WAS DISPLAYED ON GRAND CANAL SQUARE IN DUBLIN.

From dramatic shots of lifeboats battling fierce seas to candid portraits of the charity's dedicated volunteer crew members, lifeguards and fundraisers, the photo exhibition showcased over 50 iconic images captured through the lens of award-winning professional photographer Nigel Millard.

The exhibition was the first time that photographs of the RNLI's work were made available to the public in this way, and featured some of the most impressive photos from Millard's new book, 'The Lifeboat: Courage on our Coasts'.

His photos – the result of two years' work – offer a unique insight into the lifesaving work of the RNLI. Among the Irish lifeboat stations to feature in the exhibition are Baltimore in West Cork, Achill Island in Mayo, Rosslare Harbour and Kilmore Quay in Wexford, Dunmore East in Waterford and Newcastle in Down.

A number of Irish faces also feature in a portrait montage that sums up the RNLI's family, those who give their time and talents to support the lifeboat crew or those who carry out the rescues themselves.

To capture the images, Millard, who volunteers as a crew member at Torbay in Devon, visited RNLI lifeboat stations and lifeguard units around Ireland and the UK. At each lifeboat station, he carried a pager and was alerted to call-outs, along with the local crew, to capture the action first-hand.

Nigel Millard was on board the Baltimore lifeboat and captured the moment on camera when in 2011 the racing yacht 'Rambler 100' capsized during the Rolex Fastnet race in Cork and 16 crew members were rescued off the upturned hull.

DECADE OF ICONIC IMAGES

There is a varied range of images depicting the rough weather conditions lifeboats crews in Ireland launch into on search and rescue operations.

Rosslare Harbour lifeboat crew use their Severn class, Donald and Barbara Broadhead to tackle angry swells in the Irish Sea while Ireland's first Tamar class lifeboat, stationed at Kilmore Quay, makes short work of the heavy swells off the Wexford coast. The book features images from 20 Irish lifeboat stations.

For nearly a decade, professional photographer and volunteer lifeboat crew member Nigel Millard has been capturing the spirit of the RNLI in his portraits and reportage-style photographs.

This year, his book of almost 500 iconic images of RNLI life 'The Lifeboat: Courage on our Coasts' offers an insight into the day-to-day work of the RNLI all around the UK and Ireland.

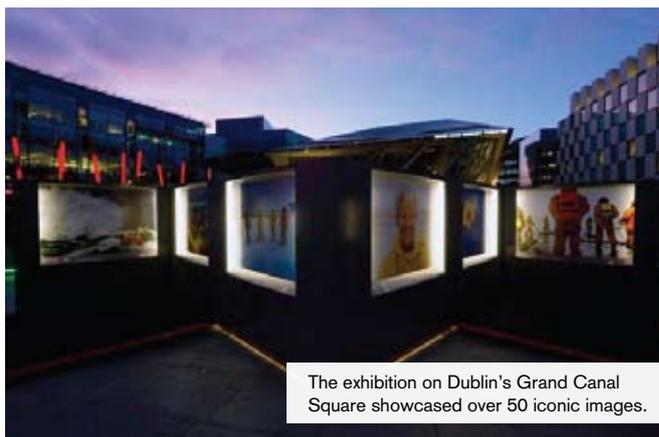
As well as its run in Dublin (15 Nov-2 Dec) the exhibition has appeared in Birmingham (26 Sept-16 Oct); Manchester (18 Oct-



Brigadier General Paul Fry, Irish Air Corps, Ian Sheridan and Joss Walsh (Howth RNLI) pictured with Nigel Millard. (Pic: Howth RNLI/Tara Murphy)



RTÉ's Bryan Dobson and Trevor Whelan, Baltimore RNLI. (Pic: Howth RNLI/Tara Murphy)



The exhibition on Dublin's Grand Canal Square showcased over 50 iconic images.

11 Nov), and after Dublin it moves to Cardiff (5-27 Dec), Edinburgh (4-24 Jan) and finishes in London's South Bank (28 Jan-10 March).

BETTER UNDERSTANDING

Nigel Millard says he hopes the images will give people a better understanding of the RNLI's lifesaving work: "My favourite photo is a casualty's eye view. I've been a man overboard on exercises – once in the water, you see nothing, then just a tiny bit of orange, and it's not the sun, it's a lifeboat. It epitomises the work I do, and the work of the RNLI."

He said he wanted the RNLI in Ireland to feature strongly in the book and the exhibition. "I worked with lifeboat crews around the country and also with the Irish Coast Guard, who regularly exercise with the lifeboat crews. There are some incredible shots in this exhibition including the Kilmore Quay and Rosslare lifeboats battling waves of the south east coast of Ireland."

Millard was very proud to see his work and the work of the RNLI volunteers on display in the centre of Dublin. "People who don't know anything about rescue at sea will learn about it and know we're here to help. Someone might even be inspired to volunteer – not necessarily on the crew, but maybe as a fundraiser. Or some people might wish to donate."

FOCUS ON THE BEST

Nigel Millard is best known for his ongoing commissions for the RNLI, for his special issue Royal Mail stamps, and for commissions for companies including Mercedes, Land Rover and Lloyds Bank.

He has been working with the RNLI now for almost a decade. In 2010 Millard was awarded the RNLI Supporter Award for his continued support.

His book is written by Dr Huw Lewis-Jones, a historian and editor with a PhD from the University of Cambridge, while the foreword has been contributed by HRH the Duke of Cambridge.

Lewis-Jones was curator at the National Maritime Museum and is now an award-winning author who writes and lectures widely about maritime history, exploration and the visual arts. He accompanied Millard on many of his photoshoots, and says of the book and exhibition: "It's a way of reminding people that they are only ever a short journey from the sea."

"We've joined crews all around Ireland and the UK on shouts, but also for a cup of tea. The photos are a collection of what the RNLI family means, the true spirit of the charity – ordinary people doing extraordinary things."

An online version is at www.rnli.org/courageonourcoasts. 'The Lifeboat: Courage on our Coasts' by Nigel Millard & Huw Lewis-Jones. Published by Conway (RRP €30/£25).



TIME TO FOCUS ON PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

The RNLI is running a photography competition – My Coast – while the exhibition is touring. It is challenging photographers to capture what the varied and beautiful coasts mean to them.

The winner will be given a large format print of an image of their choice from the 'Lifeboat: Courage on our Coasts' exhibition, signed by photographer Nigel Millard, and a photo quality Epson colour printer.

A shortlist of 10 entries will be selected by Nigel Millard, who will be looking for striking images that encapsulate the photographer's experience of the coastlines and something of their relationship with the sea.

The shortlist will then go forward for a public vote on the RNLI's Facebook page. The closing date is Monday 31 March and the winner will be notified by Monday 5 May.

Complete the online form at www.rnli.org.uk/mycoast and email your images as JPEG files to mycoast@rnli.org.uk.



Breaking Seas: Ireland's first Tamar class lifeboat, stationed at Kilmore Quay, makes short work of the heavy swells off south east Ireland.



Lieutenant Colm Fox, Irish Naval Service, Martyn Smith, RNLI Divisional Inspector Ireland and Rupert Jeffares, Howth RNLI. (Pic: Howth RNLI/Tara Murphy)

EURO EMERGENCY CONFERENCE IN POLE POSITION!

THE EUROPEAN EMERGENCY NUMBER ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN WARSAW ON 2-4 APRIL WILL BRING TOGETHER EMERGENCY SERVICES, PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES FROM EUROPE, MIDDLE-EAST, ASIA, SOUTH AMERICA AND NORTH AMERICA TO SHOWCASE BEST PRACTICES.

The three-day European Emergency Number Association (EENA) Conference in the Polish capital again aims to foster the sharing of best practices between the relevant stakeholders.

As part of the conference the EU Emergency Services Workshop will be developed around the concept of change – either related to governance or introducing new developments like cloud-based services. It will also include updates and debates on several important topics such as spectrum, e-Call 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.

The '112' Awards be presented across a number of categories, to recognise and reward emergency services and citizens for promoting the emergency number '112'.

The selection procedure consists of two stages. During the first stage, proposals from all over Europe falling into 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.



Ireland's Will Carolan, HSE National Ambulance Service, received the 'Outstanding Call-Taker' award from Dieter Nuessler, vice-chair of the EENA Advisory Board, in 2012 in Riga, Latvia.

112 AWARD CATEGORIES

Awards will be presented in the following categories:

- **Outstanding Education on '112':** Organisations that demonstrated clear results in raising awareness of the emergency '112' number that can be used throughout the EU.
- **Outstanding Call-Taker:** 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:** Initiatives that have contributed to a better collaboration and integration between different emergency services such as EMS and the police.
- **Outstanding Rescue:** 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:** 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:** An emergency call centre that has achieved clear results for citizens' safety.
- **Outstanding Political Initiative:** Politicians who have contributed to a better promotion and/or functioning of '112'.
- **Outstanding National '112' System:** National organisations or institutions that have implemented an efficient '112' system, considering technical and operational results.
- **Outstanding Citizen and Rescue:** 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.



*For further info visit www.eena.org

SECURITY INDUSTRY REWARDS EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

THE '2013 COURAGE AWARD' - ONE OF NINE SECURITY INDUSTRY AWARDS PRESENTED BY THE IRISH SECURITY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION - WAS IN HONOUR AND REMEMBRANCE OF DETECTIVE GARDA ADRIAN DONOHOE, WHO WAS MURDERED IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN JANUARY 2013.

The Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA) Awards for 2013 were attended by over 250 private security industry personnel and senior management from a variety of industries. Also in attendance were members of the Private Security Authority and An Garda Síochána.

According to ISIA President, Sheenagh McCullagh, the awards scheme gives the ISIA an opportunity to celebrate both industry leaders and their people. "It is evidence of the ISIA members' dedication to excellence, that they take the time to consider those individuals and teams that help make their company a leader in the security industry," she noted.

McCullagh thanked the members who came to the event to celebrate their employees' success and she paid tribute to all those who submitted nominations for 2013. Nine awards were presented on 23 November in Dublin's Powercourt Hotel.

PREMIER AWARD

The Premier Award, sponsored by Noonan, was presented to Co-operation Ireland; Ireland's largest cross border charity. Co-operation Ireland creates opportunities for groups from the two main religious communities in Northern Ireland and from both sides of the border.

Their work breaks down sectarianism and encourages integration of communities across the island of Ireland. The work of Co-operation Ireland is in the spirit of the ISIA Premier Award; the Paul Lynch Memorial Trophy is presented each year to an individual or group whose work has contributed to improving the safety and security of the people of Ireland. The award was accepted by CEO Peter Sheridan on behalf of Co-operation Ireland.

COURAGE AWARD

The '2013 Courage Award' was presented in honour and remembrance of Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe, who was murdered in the line of duty in an ambush by raiders while escorting cash being collected from the Lordship Credit Union, outside Dundalk, in January 2013. Nobody has yet been charged with his murder.

Sponsored by G4S, the award was accepted on behalf of his family by Derek Deloughrey, his brother-in-law.

"It reminds people of the courage displayed by members of An Garda Síochána and the risks that they face each day when working to keep all of us in the



PREMIER AWARD: John O'Donoghue, MD, Noonan; and Peter Sheridan, CEO, Co-operation Ireland.



COURAGE AWARD: Sheenagh McCullagh, ISIA President; John Showlin, G4S; Derek Deloughrey who accepted the award on behalf of his deceased brother-in-law Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe; and Miriam O'Callaghan.



EVENT SECURITY PERSON: Michael McGuirk, RSP; John Clare, Brinks; and John Whitcomb, Hytera.

industry and in society safe," noted Niall Feely, ISIA Vice President.

SECURITY OFFICER

The award for 'Security Officer of the Year' was presented to Soban Anwar, Synergy Security Solutions. It was sponsored by Amtrust International and Robertson Low, the main sponsor of the ISIA Awards 2013. Anwar was presented with this award for the exceptional service and outstanding contribution he makes as a retail security officer at Boots Ireland. There were also three merit award recipients on the night – Marco Bodae, Brinks; Sean O'Connor and Mark White, both from Synergy Security Solutions.

SECURITY SUPERVISOR

The award for 'Security Supervisor of the Year' was presented to Tom Timmins, Brinks Ireland, for work he does at Intel, where he is responsible for supervising a team of 35 officers and four team leaders.

Two merit award recipients on the night included Garry Dawson, Synergy Security Solutions, and Paul Murphy, Sodexo. This award was also sponsored by the main sponsor Amtrust International and Robertson Low.

EVENT SECURITY PERSON

John Clare, Brinks Ireland, won the Event Security Person of the Year award, and was specifically nominated for the work he carries out at Croke Park.

There were also two merit awards presented to Sue Campbell, Renaissance Security Services, and Conor McGuirk, Pulse Security Management. This award was sponsored by Hytera and RSP.

INNOVATION IN SECURITY

The 'Innovation in Security' award was developed to foster and encourage innovation in the security industry. Four finalists were selected in this category – MTS Security in partnership with Everseen, Stanley Security Sales Department, Stanley Security Quality Department, and and TDS.

The award, sponsored by Anixter and Milestone, went to Stanley Security. "The submission was based on a piece of work completed by the company for a customer in the pharmaceutical industry. It was a true example of innovation in practice," stated Sarah O'Donnell, ISIA Communications Director.

"It was clear from the selection process that innovation is part of the culture in Stanley and this submission was evidence of that," she added.

ELECTRONIC SECURITY TECHNICIAN

A new category for 2013 was the 'Electronic Security Technician of the Year' award, sponsored by Amtrust International and Robertson Low.

The award has presented to Chris Barbour of TDS who works with a number of key TDS clients and is the lead technician with Dublin Airport Authority. The three merit award winners were Luckasz Belka and Shea Stamp from Stanley Security, and Colin Black from Brinks.

ELECTRONIC SECURITY SUPERVISOR

The 'Electronic Security Supervisor of the Year' award – another new category for 2013 – was presented to John O'Connell, Stanley Security, who is responsible for their service and maintenance engineers across Munster. Sponsored by NSI, the three merit award recipients were Noel Browne of Noonan, Stephen Cassidy of G4S, and Philip Hennessy of Jade.

LOCKSMITH OF THE YEAR

A customer's choice for 'Locksmith of the Year' award was also introduced for the first time in 2013. Clients of ISIA members were invited to complete a survey and provide feedback on their locksmith of choice.

Survey respondents were asked to rate their locksmith in terms of criteria such as customer service, quality of work and technical knowledge.

The overall winner of this year's ISIA 'Locksmith of the Year' award was Crothers Security; the two finalists were D15 Locksmiths and J. Williams.



INNOVATION IN SECURITY: Brendan McDonald, Anixter and Milestone; pictured with Jaroslaw Piernicki, Stanley Security.



ELECTRONIC SECURITY SUPERVISOR: John O'Connell, Stanley Security, pictured with Kay Aitkin, NSI.



SECURITY OFFICER: Mark Boland, Director, Robertson Low; Soban Anwar, Synergy Security Solutions; and Ronan Conboy, CEO, Amtrust International Underwriters.



ELECTRONIC SECURITY TECHNICIAN: Mark Boland, Director, Robertson Low; Chris Barbour, TDS; and Ronan Conboy, CEO, Amtrust International Underwriters.

'JUST IN TIME' REWARDS FOR GARDA RESCUES

A NUMBER OF GARDAÍ WERE AMONG THE 22 RESCUERS HONOURED AT THE 2013 IRISH WATER SAFETY NATIONAL AWARDS CEREMONY FOR THEIR ACTIONS, WHICH SAVED 36 LIVES IN NEAR-DEATH DRAMATIC INCIDENTS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

Thirty-six lives were saved from 22 incidents through the brave actions of rescuers who recently received due recognition at Irish Water Safety's National Awards Ceremony at George's Hall, Dublin Castle on 19 November.

Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources and Environment, Community & Local Government, presented the 'SEIKO Just in Time Rescue Award' to the rescuers in appreciation for saving so many lives.

"Tragically an average of 140 drownings occur in Ireland every year," commented Minister O'Dowd, "and although that's 140 too many, the figure would be even higher but for the dramatic efforts of these individuals who saved others from drowning." He also paid tribute to the ongoing work of volunteers who teach swimming and rescue skills.

"The tragic drownings during this summer's warm weather brought home the need for constant vigilance around water. During the hot spell, 12 people drowned in two weeks and in July alone, lifeguards trained and assessed by Irish Water Safety, rescued 559 people from drowning."

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Last year, the 147 drownings in Ireland were higher than the annual average.

"This has been reason enough to highlight the work of Irish Water Safety volunteers and their partners in the public and private sector in educating more people on how best enjoy our aquatic facilities more safely. Complacency around aquatic environments is simply not an option", he added.

"I appeal to all adults to make themselves more aware of the dangers in, on and around water", continued



Donegal's Garda Colin Dodd was presented with his award by Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources and Environment, Community & Local Government, and Breda Collins, chairperson of Irish Water Safety at Dublin Castle.

Minister O'Dowd. "It only takes seconds for tragedy to strike and this can so easily be avoided if people take responsibility for their own safety by learning about the hazards. I ask that people encourage friends and family to read Irish Water Safety's guidelines at www.iws.ie so that they don't become a drowning statistic."

"Drownings often happen quickly and silently with 80 per cent of drownings occurring close to the victim's home. What is tragically constant each year is that males are most at risk, tragically reflected in the fact that of the 147 drownings last year, 113 were male and 34 female. An alarming 47 per cent of accidental drownings occurred in the 30-59-year age group clearly demonstrating that regardless of age, one is never too

old to learn how to stay safe around water," the Minister concluded.

Long-Service Awards were also presented in recognition of 670 years of personal service by 29 Irish Water Safety volunteers from around the country for teaching swimming, rescue and water survival skills.

***Lowdown on Letterkenny:** On 23 September 2013, a local taxi driver alerted the Gardaí to a woman who had entered the water at Oldtown Bridge in Letterkenny. Garda Colin Dodd rushed to the scene and entered the water and upon reaching the woman, brought her to safety. The woman was taken to hospital where she made a full recovery.

***Monaghan Lake Call-Out:** On the

evening of 31 January 2013, Garda Donal Callaghan was on duty when a call came into the Garda Station about a woman in distress at Peters Lake in Monaghan Town. He immediately went to the scene, and swam to the area where the lady was spotted. On finding the woman face down and unconscious he brought her to safety and, with the help of colleagues, lifted her to shore. He performed CPR and successfully resuscitated her. She was taken to hospital and made a full recovery.

***River Shannon Rescue:** On 6 June 2012, Garda Joe Hayes, a well-known footballer, was on this way to work when he spotted a young woman in distress standing by the edge of the water. The woman entered the water and without hesitation Joe jumped in after her and brought the woman to safety. The woman made a full recovery.

***On the Double in Mayo:** On 18 November 2012, just three weeks after his first water rescue, Garda Mark Irwin was on duty with Garda John Boyle, at the Quays, at an area called 'The Point'. They came upon a car at the edge of the pier. There was a man in a distressed state standing on the pier and another man in the water. The Gardai threw him a lifebuoy but the man wouldn't let go of the ledge. They went down a ladder towards him and reached the man and pulled him up the ladder to safety. The man was taken to hospital where is made a full recovery.

Garda Irwin's other rescue took place on 29 October 2012 in Westport, Co. Mayo. A car had toppled 15 feet into Knappaghbeg Lough and landed upside down in the lake. Both Reserve Garda Corrigan and Garda Irwin entered the water but had difficulty opening the car door.

Irwin managed to manoeuvre his hand into the car and keep the person's head above water. The fire brigade arrived 20 minutes later and used cutting equipment to free the man. The man was taken to hospital where he made a full recovery.

***Tragic ending to heroic rescue:** On 21 March 2013, at River Swilly in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal Garda Shane McGee was alerted to a report that a man had jumped into the water. Without hesitation Garda McGee went to the river and after observing the man in difficulty, he entered the water and brought him to safety. (NOTE: Although the person was saved, he tragically died three days later).



Monaghan's Garda Donal Callaghan pictured with Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources and Environment, Community & Local Government, and Breda Collins, chairperson of Irish Water Safety at Dublin Castle.



Garda Joe Hayes pictured with Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources and Environment, Community & Local Government, and Breda Collins, chairperson of Irish Water Safety at Dublin Castle.



Mayo-based Garda Mark Irwin, Garda Reserve Stephen Corrigan and Garda John Boyle were presented with their Seiko 'Just In Time' award by Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources and Environment, Community & Local Government, and Breda Collins, chairperson of Irish Water Safety at Dublin Castle.

RANDOM DRUG TESTING IS AN EFFECTIVE DETERRENT

RANDOM DRUG TESTING IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE DETERRENT TO ENSURE SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE. THIS WAS THE STARK MESSAGE DELIVERED TO INDUSTRY EXPERTS AT AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN VIENNA ON DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE.

As the business world adapts to new realities on corporate manslaughter, Randox Testing Services presented a case study to the 8th European Workplace Drug Testing Society Conference in September to outline how introducing the policy can cut positive tests by over three-quarters.

Drawing on official UK Government figures the Co. Antrim-based firm explained how more than one in six people in the prime recruiting pool aged 16 to 24 take drugs regularly, while an estimated 17 million working days are lost each year due to alcohol misuse in the UK alone.

With Randox providing testing services for major employers in the aviation and construction sectors, awareness is strong in safety critical industries. However, whilst risks to employee safety might be less prominent in the wider corporate world, poor productivity, discipline, morale and customer experience can all have a serious impact on an organisation's bottom-line.

DROP IN POSITIVE TESTS

The operations manager at Randox Testing Services said their case-study showed that by consistently applying a random testing policy the client company went from a high-point of 66 per cent of persons testing positive to 16 per cent doing likewise in just two years, a reduction of over three-quarters.

"Interestingly the stats also show waves of a deterrent effect. Over months after temporary spikes of positive results, when disciplinary procedures engage including dismissals, we can spot relatively linear drops in people testing positive. From this we can deduce word clearly spreads throughout workforces that those taking drugs will be caught



and, if appropriate, dismissed," Gary McCutcheon added.

"Randox Testing Services supports organisations operating a range of health and safety policies relating to drug and alcohol misuse, including point of recruitment, post-accident, and with-cause options. Some industries require random testing by law, but in presenting our findings to conference we are convinced of the benefit for more widespread use."

It could be regarded as a timely approach as more and more companies are advised to review their policy given legal developments in corporate manslaughter. McCutcheon explained: "With awareness of corporate manslaughter increasing amongst employers, we expect a preventative approach to drug-abuse to become more wide-spread.

"Indeed some European countries have signalled early intent to go further and widen liability outside board of directors, to managerial level."

SAFETY AT WORK

Outlining the returns on a more comprehensive approach he said that the principal benefit is obvious – everyone is safer at work.

"However, reducing absenteeism, theft, and boosting productivity, and reduced insurance premiums are also important factors.

"As industry leaders we were delighted to be asked to present our findings at the 8th Symposium on Workplace Drug Testing in Vienna.

International presentations such as this are prestigious showcasing opportunities for Northern Irish firms, and form a key pillar of Randox Testing Services' business development strategy."

**The symposium took place in Vienna in September 2013. For further details visit www.ewdts.org/index.php?id=conference-2013*

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL SEMINARS 2014

The EAP Institute will host two seminars in February to outline a best practice approach to manage the performance, safety and health risks associated with drugs and alcohol, and to manage individuals who may endanger themselves or others in the working environment.

Entitled 'Managing the Performance, Safety & Health Risks of Employee Drug and Alcohol Use' these one-day seminars will take place in the following locations:

- Dublin Maldron Hotel on 6 February 2014
- Limerick Radisson Blu Hotel and Spa on 20 February 2014

The information sheet on intoxicants at work, published by the HSA in September 2011, outlines actions that employers should take to manage the health and safety risks posed by intoxicants (defined as drugs and alcohol).

The information sheet contains information on how employers should manage the situation were an employee reports for, or is on duty under the influence of an intoxicant.

Regulations on intoxicant testing will not be introduced by the Minister.

There are also implications for safety critical employees and those who drive to work, including professional drivers, of the Road Traffic Act 2011 and the lower alcohol limits which came into effect on 28th October 2011.

Speakers at these one-day seminars will include Maurice Quinlan, Director of the EAP Institute, and Eddie Marks, Business Development Executive with Randox Testing Services.

The fee is €350 or €280 if booked online at www.eapinstitute.com before 31 December 2013.



CAMPAIGN TARGETS GENETIC LINK TO ALCOHOLISM

A new campaign aims to raise awareness of the genetic link associated with alcohol dependence, with research showing that a person is eight times more likely to develop a drug or alcohol addiction if their parent had such an addiction.

As part of the 'Reduce Your Alcohol Use' campaign, 800 people over the age of 30, who consume alcohol, were surveyed. The results revealed that almost two in three people believe that alcoholism has a genetic component that runs in families.

The online survey, entitled 'Alcohol: A Review of Contemporary Usage & Attitudes' revealed that over 40 per cent of participants surveyed had a family history of alcohol problems. And just over 30 said they drink moderately or not at all as a result of how people in their family consumed alcohol.

According to Dr Garrett McGovern, a GP who specialises in substance abuse, alcohol dependence is characterised by "compulsive alcohol seeking and use, despite harmful consequences to themselves and those around them".

"Our research found that of those who sought professional help for their drinking, 47 per cent had a history of alcohol dependence in their family. Being aware of your alcohol intake and reducing if you need to will help ensure history does not repeat itself," he advised.

Calum Best, son of legendary footballer George Best who passed away in 2005, is now supporting a new campaign on the issue, 'Reduce Your Alcohol Use' to highlight the genetic link associated with alcohol



Dr Garrett McGovern, a GP specialising in substance misuse, pictured with Calum Best at the launch of the 'Reduce Your Alcohol Use' campaign. (Pic: Marc O'Sullivan)

dependence.

"Alcohol dependence is a chronic disease. I witnessed this first hand with my father, who drank heavily every day of his life up until he died at the age of 59," said Best. "Like my father, I have an addictive personality. In my early 20s, I experienced the celebrity lifestyle of drinking excessively and got wrapped up in the nights out.

"My mother was a huge influence, and offered me help and support when I decided to change my life. Now, I go to the gym regularly, eat right and monitor the level of alcohol I consume on nights out."

Best stated that while a person's genes are not their "destiny", those with a family history of alcohol dependence, should be aware that they may be more at risk of becoming addicted to alcohol.

IRELAND TO LEAD THE WAY IN E-HEALTH INNOVATION?

SUBSTANTIAL HEALTH REFORMS ARE UNDERWAY IN THE IRISH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, ACCORDING TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. DR AMBROSE McLOUGHLIN TOLD DELEGATES AT A HEALTHCARE INFORMATICS SUMMIT THAT A SYSTEM FOUNDED ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS, BASED ON HEALTH NEEDS WITH A UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE-BASED MODEL IS WHERE WE ARE HEADING.

The Healthcare Informatics Society of Ireland (HISI) Stakeholders Summit saw sessions from health IT professionals, Informatics leaders from the public and private health sectors and Irish academia. In the opening plenary session, chaired by Department of Health Assistant Secretary, Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Secretary General of the Department, Dr Ambrose McLoughlin spoke of the need to make requisite changes if order to have sustainable healthcare to meet the needs of our citizens.

“For example, hospital groups are the most fundamental reform and the most fundamental reorganisation of health delivery in Ireland since the foundation of the state. I have been working in the health system for over 30 years and I can vouch for how dramatic these changes are.

“Under the Healthy Ireland policy, launched by the Minister in March 2013, the Department is working towards a smoke-free Ireland by 2025. In the same vein the Health Identifiers Bill 2013 is a cornerstone for the development of eHealth and is a critical enabler for its progression in the coming years.”

Commenting on the unique positioning of ICT, medical devices and pharma in Ireland, Dr McLoughlin said: “We have the top names already in this country across ICT and medical/pharma area.

“This gives us a distinct competitive advantage and all the indications are for continued growth in this area. The eHealth strategy is a critical piece of the whole health reform process and it is intended that the Department will publish its strategy before the end of the year.”

E-HEALTH CORE COMPONENTS

The Government has approved the eHealth strategy and its core components include:

- CIO for Irish Health care system.
- Creation of an entity call eHealth Ireland
- Closer cooperation with Northern Ireland in eHealth.
- Publication of the Health Information Bill.
- Setting up of ecosystems to promote a collaborative environment’.

Dr McLoughlin commented: “If we can get this right we can make Ireland a leader in eHealth innovation. There is a key role for the health sector in aiding recovery in the wider economy and in having a role in creating sustainable high quality jobs.

“The Action Plan for Jobs has a role for the health sector and we are currently engaging with the key stakeholders such as Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in this regard.”

Eilish Hardiman, recently appointed

CEO of the Children’s Hospital group gave an enlightening insight into how she believes ICT can help reform children’s hospital services. Among her many suggestions was an integrated clinical network for paediatrics and neonatology across Ireland.

Also present were Enterprise Ireland’s Dr Ciarán Duffy and Stephen O’Reilly, the national contact points for the €70 billion ‘Horizon 2020’ research and innovation framework programme from the EU. A range of opportunities were discussed such as once-off €50,000 grants to SMEs for the first six months saying that these can rise from €1m to €2.5m in the first two years.

The deputy CEO of the Irish Computer Society Mary Cleary outlined interoperability and skills development in healthcare and said that the Healthcare Informatics Society of Ireland (HISI) “will continue to work with the Department of Health, EU and US on developing the skills needed”.



Pictured at the HISI summit (l-r); Dr Ambrose McLoughlin, DoH Secretary General; Jim Friars, CEO of the Irish Computer Society and ICS Skills; Bairbre Nic Aonghusa, new DoH Assistant Secretary General; and Kevin Conlon, DoH Principal Officer of ICT.

LACK OF PROPER FUNDING STRATEGY FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

THERE IS A LACK OF AN OVERALL STRATEGIC CO-ORDINATION OF FUNDING FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH IN IRELAND, ACCORDING TO THE FINDINGS FROM THE FIRST MAJOR STUDY INTO THE HEALTH RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT, UNDERTAKEN BY THE MEDICAL RESEARCH CHARITIES GROUP (MRCG).

Prof Bernie Hannigan from the University of Ulster, who was specifically commissioned by the Medical Research Charities Group (MRCG) to carry out this research, presented the main findings at the MRCG's recent conference.

Entitled 'Health Research in a Changing Environment – Challenges, Opportunities and Impact', the conference was attended by over 100 members from the Medical Research Charities Group (MRCG), researchers, academics and stakeholders.

"The MRCG is a critical player in health research in Ireland and our 35 member charities are very aware of the significant challenges for health research in a more difficult economic environment.

"The emerging findings raise a number of issues in terms of the long-term investment in health research in this country," said Philip Watt, MRCG chairperson and CEO of Cystic Fibrosis (CF) Ireland - one of the group's members.

EXTENDING HEALTHY LIVES

"The MRCG believes that research discoveries are central to achieving the goal of extending healthy lives.

"Research into the cause of diseases, methods for prevention, techniques for diagnosis, and new approaches to treatment have increased life expectancy, reduced infant mortality, limited the toll of infectious diseases, and improved outcomes for patients with all forms of chronic diseases."

He said that it's a recognised fact that patient orientated clinical research tests new ideas and makes rapid medical progress possible.

"We are calling for the enhanced



Pictured prior to the conference in the Rotunda Hospital were (l-r): Avril Kennan, Research Manager, DEBRA Ireland; Grace Cappock, Public Affairs and Communications Manager, Medical Research Charities Group (MRCG); Marie Downes, Development Executive, MRCG; and Sophia Millington-Ward, Senior Scientist, School of Genetics, TCD. (Pic: Mark Maxwell)

participation of patient groups and medical charities in health research in Ireland in a way that is consistent with emerging national and international good practice.

"This would include the promotion of alliances/partnership between key stakeholders, including patient groups and medical charities; researchers, the Department of Health/HSE and other research funders and sponsors," Watt

added.

"Our members have been instrumental in supporting health research in this country, especially through their continued support of the Joint Funding Scheme, run in partnership with the Health Research Board.

The final report from the emerging findings from our research will be published in January 2014," he concluded.

MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Lack of overall strategic co-ordination of funding for medical research in Ireland.
- The Research Prioritisation Exercise (RPE) has enabled a continued public commitment to R&D. However, its implementation creates gaps in the funding of certain types of projects and certain researcher career stages.
- Research projects most affected are those at intermediate stages between discovery and clinical application, which has implications for patients, particularly those suffering from a rare disease.
- Clinical researchers lack career structures, time for research in their contracts or sufficient interaction with scientists.
- Implementation of the EU Fixed-Term Working Directive has made employers risk-averse so non-permanent staff are less secure than previously.
- Research funds from charities are hugely welcome, and clinical researchers see charities as a vital connection to patients, but the lack of overhead is a pressure on award recipients' institutions.

PARTNERSHIP PROJECT TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISKS IN THE UK

NORTHUMBERLAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (NFRS) AND THE NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK HAVE STARTED WORK ON A PROJECT TO HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF WILDFIRES IN THE UK'S NORTHERN COUNTY.

The Northumberland Collaborative Burning Project is also supported by the Northumberland Fire Group; a multi-agency stakeholder group created to address wildfire issues, that will help protect people, the economy and the environment.

Dry springs and summers during recent years have led to the need for such a project which will see NFRS deliver specialist training to firefighters in Bellingham, Rothbury and Wooler. The next generation of firefighters will also be provided with these new skills as NFRS visit branches of the Young Firefighters' Association for those aged 13-17 years.

Alex Bennett, chief fire officer for Northumberland County Council said: "Unless the heather moorland is properly managed, the peat soils which have taken thousands of years to establish can catch fire and burn right down to the bedrock. The additional training we can provide to our staff and those at the national park will ensure an effective partnership that works to reduce the risk and spread of wildfires in the future."

The training is designed in two parts; a theory session delivered at each fire station; and a hands-on practical training session called a collaborative burn in various sites throughout the park.

Each collaborative burn will be completed by trained wildfire experts from NFRS, retained firefighters from rural fire stations and local landowners and managers.

This training exercise involves creating a fire in an area of the park and has two key benefits; helping those involved to work together safely, effectively and efficiently to reduce the fuel loads that naturally build up in the moorland over time; and by reducing the amount of fuel this lowers the risk of wildfires occurring



and spreading throughout the park in the future.

The younger firefighters will receive wildlife training, map reading and navigational skills which are vital for firefighters attending wildfire incidents and are also key, transferable skills for those who may enter into land management professions.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The project is being supported by Northumberland National Park Authority's, (NNPA) sustainable development fund.

Andrew Miller, head of programmes and conservation at NNPA said that the Northumberland National Park has some of the most important moorland habitats in Europe.

Fire has been used to manage these areas for centuries and it is important that all of us involved in their protection work together and share knowledge, expertise and experience. "This project

brings together farmers, shepherds and gamekeepers with firefighters and National Park staff in a very positive and practical way."

One of the farmers involved in the project is Andrew Rogerson at Belshiel Farm, he said: "This project will enable farmers like me who are working in the National Park to work and train with the Fire and Rescue Service for mutual benefit. During the project the local fire crews will be familiarising themselves with the area and we will be developing good working relationships. This project is helping us to work together to manage fuel and prepare for potential future wildfires."

In addition to the training and collaborative burns, NFRS will purchase additional wildfire suppression equipment as part of the project. This equipment will be stored within the National Park for use at wildfire incidents in the park and during future training exercises.

RETRIEVAL 2014 GETS READY FOR LIFT OFF IN APRIL

The Emergency Medical Retrieval Service will once again host Retrieval 2014 – the UK’s premier conference covering pre-hospital, transfer and retrieval medicine on 24-25 April.

Register before 1 February 2014 to take advantage of early bird prices. Submissions for abstract papers and free paper and poster sessions will close on 31 January.

For a word copy of either the abstract submission or registration forms email anne.cadman@gcc.scot.nhs.uk For

full conference programme visit www.emrs.scot.nhs.uk/iconference2009/programme.pdf



CYCLE RESPONDERS PEDAL THEIR WAY TO NATIONAL HEALTH AWARD

A team of London Ambulance Service medics on cycles have won a top health service award for making a difference to the treatment provided to patients.

The Service’s cycle response unit (CRU) won the Emergency Care in the Right Place, First Time category of the 2013 NHS Innovation Challenge Prizes.

Tom Lynch MBE, Operations Manager for the CRU and a former BMX champion, first came up with the idea of responding to calls on bikes in 2000.

He said: “We are very proud to have won and we feel honoured to have been selected against such a high quality list of medical innovations.

“Our equipment, training and the bicycles have developed over the years, but our purpose has remained the same – getting life-saving care to patients as quickly as possible.”

The CRU responds to emergency calls in particularly congested areas of the capital such as the West End, Heathrow Airport, Kingston town centre and the City of London.

The medics – who carry a full range of medical equipment – are able to reach patients quickly to administer

potentially life-saving treatment while an ambulance is on the way.

The team is also able to treat those with less serious illnesses and injuries at the scene and without them then needing to go to hospital – so helping to free up crews to respond to other calls.

The project was awarded a prize of £100,000 together with the Alasdair Liddell Memorial Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Healthcare Innovation. Tom plans to distribute the prize fund to other ambulance Services across the UK, as well as use it to expand the Service’s unit and invest in new equipment.

CRU staff respond to approximately 16,000 calls a year; they resolve around 50 per cent of all incidents at the scene, and their average response time to calls is six minutes.



LONDON’S TRAUMA CARE RECOGNISED AT AIR AMBULANCE AWARDS

From the Lifetime Achievement Award for CEO Dr Gareth Davies to the Pilot of the Year for Neil Jeffers, London’s Air Ambulance celebrated its success at the Association of Air Ambulance Awards of Excellence 2013.

The charity that delivers an advanced trauma team to critically injured people in London collected four key awards at a ceremony that recognised the individual achievements of professionals from the air ambulance industry nationwide.

Air ambulances from across the UK gathered in Kensington at the event organised by the Association of Air Ambulances, the trade body which unites Air Ambulance charities from across the country and operators and ambulance services.

London sees some of the highest levels of trauma in the

world and the capital’s air ambulance treats approximately seven patients every day.



Dr Gareth Davies (second left) pictured with colleagues from London’s Air Ambulance.

SECURITY FIRMS TO TENDER FOR GLASGOW 2014 CONTRACTS

Security arrangements for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games (23 July – 3 August) have taken a major step forward, with 19 security suppliers now invited to tender for a range of Games-specific security contracts.

Police Scotland Deputy Chief Constable, Steve Allen, Security Director for the Commonwealth Games, said: "Glasgow 2014 will be a fantastic sporting event which we want to ensure people can enjoy, from the starting blocks to the finishing line. From the time that athletes and spectators start arriving in Scotland to the closing ceremony, it is Police Scotland's absolute priority to ensure a safe and secure Commonwealth Games.

"To deliver that, Police Scotland and the Organising Committee have spent many months developing a programme through which we will work with the private security industry to deliver appropriate levels of security and stewarding staff. These staff are expected to be deployed in a range of specific, targeted locations across the footprint of the Commonwealth Games, from Games venues and accommodation to training facilities.

"Police Scotland will always have the lead role and responsibility in delivering Games safety and security, with private contract security staff used in roles which do

not require police officers to carry out those specific functions such as stewarding and venue and site security."

David Leather, Glasgow 2014 Chief Operating Officer, added: "Glasgow 2014 has been working positively and collaboratively with Police Scotland and the private security industry to develop security and stewarding solutions which will play a key role in delivering a safe and secure Commonwealth Games next summer.



For more information on Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games visit www.glasgow2014.com/

NEW STUDY CHECKS OUT THE BEST USE OF GP 'FIT NOTES'

Researchers from the University of Nottingham are investigating the best way to use GP 'fit notes' to facilitate a timely return to work for those with health conditions.

This study, commissioned by IOSH, is the first looking into the way fit notes are used to consider the views of patients, employers and GPs together. The GP fit note was introduced three years ago to replace the old sickness certificate.

It allows GPs to recommend whether a patient is not fit for work or may be fit for work. GPs can also suggest adjustments that will enable patients to stay at work or return as soon as possible. Research into long-term work incapacity shows that the longer people are on sick leave, the less likely they are to return to work

Avril Drummond, Professor of Healthcare Research at the University, who is leading the study, said they want to know how fit notes are being used, how useful they are in helping people return to and stay at work, and how they could be used more effectively.

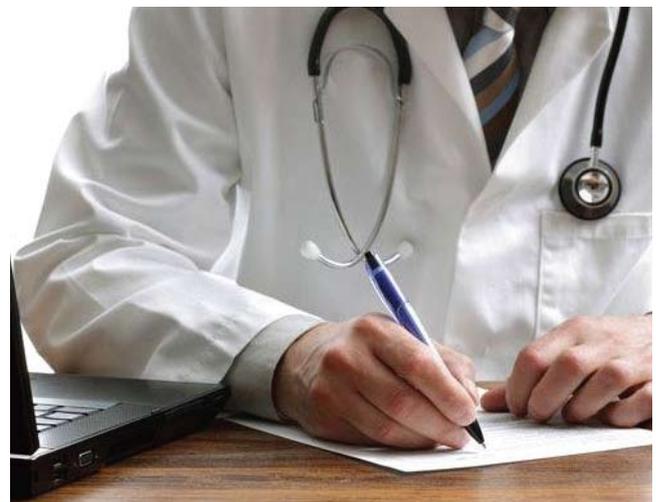
The researchers are gathering information through questionnaires and interviews with information will then be used to establish the 'ideal' fit note, as well as inform training and how to improve communications between all parties.

Prof Drummond said: "A fit note should consider the patient's health condition and how this affects them carrying

out every day activities and their general fitness for work. It needs to consider both what the patient can do, and what they have difficulty doing."

Jane White, research and information services manager at IOSH, said: "The first four to six weeks of a person being absent from work is a critical window, and without proactive intervention this could lead to long-term sickness absence.

The GP's fit note is a vital link between a person, their employer, and them going to work with the right support when they are able."



ATTACKS MAY FORCE HEALTH WORKERS TO QUIT THE NHS

Cutbacks and violence at work have led many healthcare workers to consider leaving the NHS, a UNISON survey of 2,000 healthcare assistants has revealed.

The union found cuts in staffing levels and insufficient training, coupled with continuing reports of violence against staff, were behind the collapse of morale.

It said a "staggering" 85 per cent of respondents said they have seen or experienced verbal abuse, with 20 per cent revealing they have been exposed to physical violence at work.

Over three quarters of respondents (78 per cent) reported staffing levels have dropped over the past year. UNISON head of nursing, Gail Adams, said: "This survey illustrates the sometimes grim reality for healthcare

assistants, assistant practitioners and care support workers, whose already challenging job is made harder by decreasing staffing levels and the threat of aggression and violence."

More than 40 per cent of respondents admitting they had considered leaving their profession either fairly or very seriously over the past year. Calling for urgent investment in staff, training and development, Gail Adams said: "When four in ten healthcare assistants are considering leaving the profession, something is very wrong.

"This survey is demonstrating the real impact of government cuts – demoralised staff who are trying to deliver the best possible care they can in ever more difficult circumstances. Cuts aren't working, and if these vital professionals are depleted even more, the impact on patient care will be enormous."

NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY IS NOW OPERATIONAL

For the first time in the UK, a single law enforcement agency will be responsible for leading the national response to cut serious and organised crime, following the establishment of the new National Crime Agency, which is now in operation.

Such crimes may vary from smashing multi-million pound, cross-border criminal networks and gangs and cracking intricate global cyber-crime, to tracking down child sex abusers in the hidden web and uncovering some of the most complex international fraud.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) will use its 4000 plus officers to harness the expertise and resources of law enforcement across the UK and abroad, to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to continuously disrupt the most serious criminals and groups.

It will hold the single authoritative intelligence picture of serious and organised crime affecting the UK, and have the mandate and powers to lead and co-ordinate the police and other law enforcement agencies.

The NCA will lead the whole of the UK's fight to cut serious and organised crime, ensuring that such criminals and criminal groups are prioritised and that proportionate operational activity and disruption is directed against them, both at home and overseas.

The NCA will comprise four commands – Organised Crime, Economic Crime, Border Policing and CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection).

In addition, it will have a National Cyber Crime Unit to reflect the broad range of threats that are posed by serious and organised criminals.

Keith Bristow, NCA Director General, said the agency is a UK-wide crime-fighting agency, which will have the capability to tackle serious and organised crime in areas that have previously had a fragmented response.

These include the border, cyber and economic crime, and those that needs their increased impact, like child protection and human trafficking.

NEW PRESIDENT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

The new President of the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) for 2013-2014, said he aims to build upon the achievements of the CFOA over previous years.

In his first presidential address, Paul Fuller (pictured right) from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, said he wants to build strong, positive, relationships ensuring that members' views and priorities are effectively communicated. He also wants to work with key organisations, bringing together expertise and understanding in research to increase the safety of the built and natural environment.

Fuller is also seeking commercial opportunities that

will allow the organisation to be sustained by its own funding activities rather than donations. He also wants to continue to influence change – through providing professional advice on best practice and via the soon-to-launch Fire Parliamentary Scheme. This initiative will bring MPs into much closer contact with their fire and rescue service locally and nationally.



FRAMEWORK LOOKS TO THE FUTURE OF IMPROVED INTEROPERABILITY

One year on from the official launch of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) and the foundation for the future of improved interoperability – Joint Doctrine: the Interoperability Framework is published.

The purpose of doctrine is to provide specific guidance to police, fire and ambulance commanders on the principles for effective joint working at major or complex incidents. It also provides the directors and managers of other responder organisations an understanding of joint police, fire and ambulance operations.

It provides the foundation for JESIP and informs the

remaining programme of work over the next 12 months. Two one-day courses have been developed for police, fire and ambulance services who will be jointly training over 18,000 operational and tactical commanders over the next 12 months.

The 'Train the Trainer' programme to enable this national training initiative ran throughout October 2013 and resulted in a network of over 260 JESIP trainers.

Further training products for other staff and an awareness package for wider Category 1 and 2 responders are in development and will be completed before September 2014.

PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS FOR POLICE AND ACADEMICS TO CUT CRIME

Methods to strengthen the links between policing and academia and support high-quality research and training were outlined at a major conference recently hosted by the College of Policing.

The event at the College's Bramshill site in Hampshire, towards the end of November, brought together representatives from the police, Police and Crime Commissioners and higher education.

The aim was to help build collaboration across the different organisations that in turn will assist in the development of an up-to-date evidence base of what is effective in reducing crime.

College of Policing's Chair, Professor Shirley Pearce, said: "The collaboration that events like this can foster is core to our role as the professional body for all in policing. Bringing together police practitioners, police and crime commissioners and academics enables ideas to flow between the different bodies and new links to be made."

College of Policing's chief executive, Chief Constable

Alex Marshall, said the conference presented a valuable opportunity to develop the long-lasting partnerships between the police and academics.

"By working together we will help deliver new and effective approaches to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and build an extensive knowledge base for policing.

Work to build successful partnerships between the police service and academia is only one part of the work of the College's work to develop and promote good policing practice," noted Marshall.

The College is also hosting the newly-established What Works Centre for Crime Reduction, one of a national network of six centres including health, education, ageing, local growth and early intervention.

The centre will draw together a strong collaboration of leading UK universities, the police service and crime reduction partners, to review existing evidence on crime reduction practices and interventions.

FIRST ANDROID TABLET FOR DEFENCE MARKETS

The first secure Android tablet solution suitable for defence and government markets is now available, and follows the new technology partnership to develop future-proof systems for industries where security is critical.

The fully integrated solution made its debut at this year's DSEI exhibition in September. The Getac Z710 7in Android 4.1 tablet provides a more secure system from which to support a wide range of bespoke applications that government and defence markets can use with confidence.

Aimed at sectors that require a fully portable device, it weighs just 800g and has a battery that gives over 10 hours of operational time. It includes a 1D/2D barcode reader that enables rapid data capture – up to three times faster than other devices using software-based scanners.

The Android operating system features on the new tablet

will include device encryption, system hardening, peripheral control and management, which significantly improves ability to enforce and audit security policies while reducing support and maintenance overheads.

Other significant features include high sensitivity advanced GPS technology, WiFi and Bluetooth. Engineered for extreme conditions, the ultra-sensitive touchscreen can be operated even while wearing gloves.





INTERNATIONAL NEWS

SEARCH AND RESCUE EUROPE 2014

Enhancing capabilities, increasing interoperability, and saving lives will be the key buzz words during Search and Rescue Europe 2014, which will focus on better integration for more effective SAR operations.

In 2014, the community will come together once again for Search and Rescue Europe – this time in Denmark on 2-4 April – to advance the discussions of integration and interoperability whilst tackling new issues such as the importance of social media to SAR operations.

In 2013, Search and Rescue Europe brought together leading SAR practitioners to discuss the move towards better integration between different SAR agencies.

Ultimately, the three-day event in April will advance the discussions begun in 2013 and move the community a step closer to an effective and integrated search and rescue capability.

The event will continue to provide a broad European analysis capabilities and strategic plans, in addition to:

- Case studies from SAR agencies outside of Europe – learn



For updates visit www.searchandrescueeurope.com/

how other nations are enhancing their SAR provision in disaster hotspots such as Africa and Asia.

- An examination of the importance of social media to search and rescue – how to capitalise on unique online communities to save lives.
- Understanding the importance of training for SAR operators both at the technical and inter-agency level to create a more effective SAR force.
- Insights into the diverse problems facing SAR operations in diverse regions, from the Arctic wilderness to the vast migration across the Mediterranean into Europe.

NEW CARS GEAR UP FOR EMERGENCY CALL TECHNOLOGY

Under new proposals by the European Commission, all new cars produced in the EU from October 2015 will have to be fitted with an 'eCall' system that calls the emergency services in the event of a crash.

The Commission estimates that the new technology could save up to 2,500 lives a year. The system automatically dials 112 – Europe's single emergency – and communicates the vehicle's location to emergency services, even if the driver is unconscious or unable to make a phone call.

The proposal has been delayed over a disagreement about whether car manufacturers that provide their own private emergency dispatchers would be exempt from the requirement. In the end a decision was taken against any exemption, although car manufacturers can continue to install their own dispatcher services as long as the 112 eCall system is also installed as a back-up.

The Commission has been pushing eCall since 2005, but a previous attempt to encourage member states to roll out the technology voluntarily by 2009 failed. Much of the resistance was due to cost concerns among member states.

The Commission estimates that installation will cost less than €100 per car. A 2011 impact assessment concluded that the only way to ensure adoption was to make it mandatory.

eCall could speed up emergency response times by 40 per cent in urban areas and 50 per cent in the countryside. "When an accident happens, every minute counts to rescue injured victims," said Siim Kallas, European Commissioner for Transport (pictured right).

"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.





INTERNATIONAL NEWS

CANADA AND USA SIGN ASIA-PACIFIC CO-OPERATION FRAMEWORK

The United States and Canada will increase their security co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region, American and Canadian defense leaders announced recently.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said that signing the agreement on America's day of remembrance for President John F. Kennedy (22 November) reminded him of a speech Kennedy made to the Canadian parliament in 1961.

The secretary quoted from that speech: "The warmth of your hospitality symbolizes more than merely the courtesy which may be accorded to an individual visitor. They symbolize the enduring qualities of amity and honor which have characterized our countries' relations for so many decades.

"Our bilateral defense relationship -- symbolised by NORAD [North American Aerospace Defense Command] -- is one of the strongest in the world," the secretary said.

Hagel noted that an area of particular emphasis for both nations is humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. "At a time when both the US and Canadian armed forces are proud to be providing relief to the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan, implementing this framework will help us co-ordinate these activities even more effectively going forward," he said.

The Canadian Defense Minister Rob Nicholson said Canada has no greater or closer friend and ally than the United States. "As the global security environment grows ever more complex, we also continue to seek ways to work together beyond the hemisphere," he added.

Nicholson said Canada recognises the importance of maintaining security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region to ensure its continued peaceful growth. "Both Canada and the US share with our Asian partners an interest in promoting stability," Nicholson said.

COMPUTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS UP WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

A joint workshop on improving co-operation in the EU between Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and law enforcement agencies was organised by Europol and the EU Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA).

The main aim of this initiative is to get the two communities to work more closely together both at the strategic and operational level and to foster, improve and assist each other in fulfilling their tasks more efficiently.

Some main priorities were drawn up such as:

- Legal Basis: How accommodating and flexible are the current and future legislations for mutual needs
- Identified Partners: Who are the contact points and how to reach them

- Trust: How to further enhance trust between the two communities
- Mutual training: How can each community teach/learn from one another
- Exchange Capabilities: Tools and services in use and interoperability. What is working and needs to be improved
- Procedures: What kind of procedures/checklists are already available and how can they be improved
- Timing: CERTs and LEA have different time constraints that each party has to integrate in their expectations.

**For further information on the workshop visit www.enisa.europa.eu/*

PLAN YOUR CONTRIBUTION FOR 'EUROPEAN 112 DAY'

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 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.



european emergency number association



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

EUROPE'S LEADING COLLAPSIBLE TRAFFIC CONE SETS SHINING EXAMPLE

The first heavy duty, self-weighted collapsible traffic cone that complies with EU traffic regulations has been developed and produced by Viewbrite Europe.

Working in conjunction with Viewbrite Safety Products, a Miami-based occupational safety specialist is already supplying the cones to the NYPD, Washington State Fire Department and the US Army.

Viewbrite Europe Ltd spent 12 months on an R&D project with the view to producing a cone for the European market.

The result is a revolutionary safety cone, designed to comply with European traffic regulations that is easily deployed and collapsed, storing almost flat – thereby saving space in vehicles.

The collapsible cones, demonstrated at the 2013 Emergency Services Show at the NEC, gathered interest from a broad range of sectors, such as police and ambulance services, fire authorities, search and rescue, driver training, haulage contractors and utility companies.

Stephen Donnelly, CEO of The Dunellen Group (which includes Viewbrite Europe Ltd and Star Instruments Ltd) said: "Working in conjunction with police forces, fire and rescue services, local authorities and councils we believe that we have produced what will be a 'must have' item for

the emergency services, haulage contractors, government departments, road services and anyone currently using safety cones."

The cones are made from a durable fluorescent orange waterproof material with a highly reflective band, a heavy weight black base made from recycled rubber, with the same height and dimensions as standard rigid cones. A directional light can also be added.



*For further information visit www.viewbrite.co.uk

MORE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CONDUCTED AT MEDICA 2013

Good international business contacts are becoming increasingly important for manufacturers of medical technology and medical products.

More than half of the 132,000 trade visitors arrived from more than 120 countries for MEDICA 2013, with over 4,640 exhibitors representing 66 countries. Visitors obtained information on the spectrum of new products for high-quality, efficient medical care – ranging from medical technology and electro-medicine, laboratory technology, physiotherapy products and orthopaedic technology to health IT.

The newly-planned MEDICA Education Conference included courses providing advanced training on topics for GPs and practical training on devices, as well as high-level scientific workshops on focus topics.

These presentations featured current aspects relating to gender medicine, infectiology, hygiene and personalised medicine.

Other offerings at the 2013 event included the International Conference on Disaster and Military Medicine (DiMiMED), and the MEDICA Medicine & Sports Conference, which addressed special concerns of sports medicine.



*MEDICA 2014 will take place on 12-15 November. For updates visit www.medica.de

MEDICA products on display for disaster and military medicine included mobile medical imaging systems as well as emergency equipment for on-site first aid.

Challenges facing hospital policy were the focus of the 36th German Hospital Conference. In addition to policy discussion, topics included the challenges to nursing care management raised by an ageing population, hospital planning and outpatient specialist care.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

PILOTS TO GO 'ROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS' FOR CHARITY

Two pilots plan to fly 'Round the World in 80 days' 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 in April 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

ARGENTINE VISIT TO INTERPOL FOCUSES ON GLOBAL SECURITY

Argentina's Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman recently met with INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble at the world police body's General Secretariat headquarters to discuss a range of global security issues.

The meeting followed bilateral talks between Argentine and Iranian officials to 'implement the terms' of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by both countries in January 2013, on investigations in relation to the 1994 terrorist bombing of the Israeli-Argentine Mutual

Association (AMIA) centre in Buenos Aires.

Secretary General Noble welcomed the updated developments between the two countries and again reiterated his commitment to facilitate any progress in the case if requested.

The INTERPOL Chief, who will visit both Argentina and Iran in 2014, also confirmed that the organisation's position regarding the Red Notices in connection with the case remains unchanged.

LONG-RANGE FOCUS ON BORDER AND COASTAL SURVEILLANCE

A new thermal imaging camera is the latest addition to the Border Security and Coastal Surveillance product line of FLIR Systems, to provide greater details at a long range with its high definition detector.

Due to their ability to detect human-sized targets several kilometers away, thermal imaging cameras are widely used for Homeland Security, as they are extremely suited for border surveillance and protection.

The new FLIR HDC enables users to see more details at long range without losing situational awareness with twice the wide area coverage at any distance compared to 640x480 systems. The FLIR HDC provides a 16:9 wide screen video to show more of the scene at a glance.

Using a cooled detector, the FLIR HDC provides exceptional long range performance with detection of man-sized targets beyond 18km and vehicles beyond 22km. The

system also supports continuous zoom to maintain situational awareness with target focus in both a wide field of view and during zoom for effective target assessment. This capability ensures users to always have an optimized field of view for targets at any range.

The system also features the new FLIR Image Processing Engine with advanced algorithms developed to generate a perfect picture with minimal adjustment and includes features such as DDE (Digital Detail Enhancement) and CRISP (Clear regional image sharpness). Where DDE is designed for creating a perfect image in high contrast scenes, CRISP does the same in low contrast scenes. Auto perfect mode creates a clear image in any circumstance.

