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ALMOST 3,000 CHILDREN WAITING ON SPECIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has said that it is entirely unacceptable that the number of children in the CHO7 area that includes Dublin South West waiting on an Assessment of Need for services such as speech and language or occupational therapy has been allowed to reach almost three thousand.

Teachta Crowe said “Figures released to me by the HSE show that in the span of a year, the number of children in the CHO7 area that includes Dublin South West waiting on an Assessment of Need for services such as speech and language or occupational therapy has been allowed to reach almost three thousand.

“There are now 2,812 children waiting on an assessment

in the CHO7 area alone and this is putting them and their families in an impossible situation.

“This figure includes 1,243 children who received assessments that were deemed insufficient by the High Court and are now forced to wait yet again for a full assessment so that they may access services they so desperately need. “Parents are being forced to seek out private diagnosis which can cost hundreds, even thousands of Euro and it is entirely unfair that they are being put in this position.

“And once they have received a diagnosis or an assessment, there is a further two year waiting list for services and interventions by the local Children’s Disability Network

Team. “This government has abandoned children most in need and seems to have no plan to deal with it. We are supposedly due a bumper Budget this year and I firmly believe that the Irish people want to see that money pumped into the public services where they can do the most good, such as in our disability and mental health services and the provision of social and affordable housing.

“Children should not be forced to grow up in homeless accommodation or wait years and years for the most basic of health interventions. Clearly, the system is broken in the CHO7 area with almost 3,000 children waiting for an assessment and no real sign or hope of it being fixed any time soon under this government.”

MAYOR HONOURS CAROL COSGROVE ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST IRISH WOMEN’S INTERNATIONAL TEAM



Pictured: Mayor of South Dublin Cllr. Alan Edge with Carol Cosgrave nee Doran (centre) and other members of the original Women’s National Team in County Hall Tallaght

The Mayor of South Dublin County, Councillor Alan Edge, honoured Irish International football star Carol Cosgrave recently. Carol was a player on the first International Irish Women’s football team in 1973. The event sought to acknowledge Carol’s achievements and mark the 50th anniversary of Ireland’s first Irish Women’s International Team. The event was attended by Carol and her family, teammates from the Suffragettes Football Team as well as players from Kilnamanagh AFC and South Dublin Councillors. The Mayor presented Carol with a small gift to mark the occasion, followed by a screening of the Ireland v Nigeria World Cup game.

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THE RAMS IN RHYTHM SING FOR LOCAL BRIDE AND HER DAD'S FIRST DANCE

The RAMS in Rhythm, who sing every month in University Hospital Tallaght, for the enjoyment of the patients, staff and visitors. This is something that the RAMS have been doing for the past six years, in the hospital, as part of our contributions to the patients and Social inclusion.

The echo of the music and singing can permeate to the wards, and especially the waiting areas. Much to the enjoyment of all who would like to stop for a while, lilt and listen to

the music. Recently, as they were singing away and what a surprise when a Bride entered the foyer and started to dance. Not knowing immediately who the gent was, in the hospital gown. It came very apparent that the Bride had called to see her Dad, before she went off to get married in an hours time.

Her Dad had a scheduled procedure due and could not be discharged for the wedding. True to any Brides day, and missing her Dad, she called to the hospital,

and to give her Dad the first dance.

The RAMS had the incredible honor of serenading the father of the bride and the beautiful bride herself, before her wedding, making their dance an unforgettable experience! Seeing the joy on their faces as they swayed to our melodies, was simply heartwarming. The group wish to say a huge thank you to everyone who was there to witness this touching moment, their love and support made this day even more special. A large crowd gathered, and gave a tumultuous round of applause to them both. Most of the audience were all teared up, and with tissues being passed around.

The group's Musical Director Mr Liam O'Donnell, played a very special song for them "You're My Best Friend" a Don Williams number. So not only was the audience teared up, but so too were the singers. The Dad thanked The RAMS

in Rhythm profusely and it was such a surprise that the RAMS were in the hospital, at that moment. The Bride even requesting a RAMS in Rhythm CD, as a memento of her wedding day. The RAMS

in Rhythm have sang at many events, births, birthdays and bereavements, so singing for a Bride was a first.

Liam wished her every happiness in her future

marriage and again a wonderful round of applause from all present. RAMS are looking forward to their continuous support to the Tallaght hospital and perhaps meeting many more Brides.



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Founder: John Russell
Advertising: Anthony Russell anthony@newsgroup.ie
Administration: Sarah Brooks admin@newsgroup.ie



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THE RED LINE BOOK FESTIVAL AND ALAYEX UNLEASH FEMALE CREATIVE POTENTIAL WITH THE QUEENSHIP CYPHER

As part of their residency, the Queenship Cypher will lead a five-week programme of workshops which aim to start a revolution in the Irish music industry, creating a sisterhood of creative

women and empowering female artists through career expansion, talent showcasing, and artistic development. The sessions will take place from 6-8pm on 21st September, 28th

September, 5th October & 12th October with the final performance on the 19th October. The Queenship Cypher launch took place in Tallaght Library on 1st August and is an open invitation for all female creatives aged 18-25, who are interested in being part of the programme to come along to register their interest or simply register here on this link <http://bit.ly/44Ylcdx>.

Spearheaded by visionaries Alicia Esambe and Daniella Doyle, this innovative program is set to redefine the music industry by creating a thriving sisterhood that fosters career expansion, talent showcasing, and artistic development for female artists. Alayex is a female-led creative agency. Driven by the mission to uplift and amplify the voices of creative women, Alayex is at the forefront of fostering a more inclusive and empowering creative landscape.

The programme aims to attract all aspiring female

MCs, producers, songwriters, dancers, and visual artists to showcase their talents. This revolutionary platform serves as a steppingstone for those seeking to turn their musical, movement and visual expressions into a fulfilling career, while forming connections with audiences and fellow female creatives.

The Queenship Cypher emerges as the much-needed representation and collaboration for female rap artists in Ireland. Alicia and Daniella recognised the lack of visibility for female rap artists and the pressure they faced to compete rather than collaborate. In response, they created The Queenship Cypher - a powerful movement that unites creative women under the passion of music and the shared values of respect, love, and humility.

Queenship Cypher facilitator Alicia Esambe said, "We want female artists to be proud and to embody their womanhood. The Queenship

Cypher goes beyond being a mere programme, it is an unbreakable sisterhood of creative women united by their passion for art. We believe that together we can rise, support and celebrate each other. We aim to provide women a safe space to break barriers, push their creativity and encourage them to shape the future of music in Ireland."

The development program is curated in four complimentary streams, each lead by industry experts Songwriting: Guided by Alicia Raye, an acclaimed artist and music mentor, the songwriting workshop will delve into the heart of lyrical storytelling. Music Production: Led by Noise Music mentors, the music production program will help artists to master the art of music production and create inspiring sounds. Set Design: Ella Bertilsson, a resident artist at Rua Red, will help artists to elevate their stage presence with mesmerising visual experiences. And Dance: Under the guidance



of Vithoria Escobar, from UMAKOKO Productions, artists will explore the language of movement and how to use it to complement music.

The Red Line Book Festival is a celebration of all things literary; be it spoken, written or sung! The Red Line Book Festival is an initiative of South Dublin Libraries. The festival seeks to enhance the experience of culturally curious audiences visiting Dublin, offering them an exciting cultural environment in a suburban area of Dublin not normally associated with literary festivals. For more information see www.redlinefestival.ie

Cllr. Charlie O'Connor PC

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52 NEW HOMES IN SAGGART DELIVERED BY CREDIT UNION APPROVED HOUSING BODY FUND

Local Councillor Shirley O'Hara joined the Minister of State for Financial Services, Credit Unions and Insurance Jennifer Carroll Mac Neill in visiting the 52 new homes in Saggart delivered by the Government's Credit Union Approved Housing Body Fund. Cllr O'Hara said "I

was delighted to show the Minister the progress we are making in Saggart and in South Dublin County Council regarding the delivery of social housing. The 52 house scheme in Parklands Estate features the most up to date energy saving measures and is designed in line with best practice of ensuring mixed tenure housing for the community in Saggart." "What is significant about this 52 home scheme is that it is financed by the Credit Union Approved Housing Body Fund. Our Credit Unions have massive untapped potential to provide funding for housing. Less than 30% of credit union savings are productively lent out in the community and the €900 million Approved Housing Body Fund will facilitate members' savings earning a return and delivering much needed social housing".

"Our own local Tower Credit Union has invested in the government's Approved Housing Body Fund and I am delighted that members of

the management and board of Tower Credit Union are here today to see first-hand how their work is making such a positive impact in the local community".

Minister of State for Financial Services Jennifer Carroll Mac Neill TD added "The credit union movement has very, very substantial assets and they are eager to invest in their local communities and transform it for the better. Credit Union Approved Housing Body Fund has enormous potential both to deliver social housing and provide a guaranteed return on members' savings" "Nobody has the personal connection, the relationships, being at the heart of the community and the volunteer ethos that the credit union has.

Tower Credit Union should take great pride in what has been achieved at Parklands in Saggart, and I am delighted this is just the first of many social housing schemes to be delivered

under the Approved Housing Body Fund".

Cllr Shirley O'Hara added "The 52 homes delivered will be allocated to local applicants on the social

housing list. I want to thank Tower Credit Union for the role they've played in this and look forward to meeting the 52 families who will move into these homes in the Parklands".

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Pictured Cllr Shirley O'Hara and Minister for Financial Services and Credit Unions visit new social housing scheme in Saggart

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HAZELHATCH BRIDGE REDESIGN WILL ENABLE MUCH NEEDED ORBITAL BUS ROUTE - PUBLIC CONSULTATION NOW OPEN

Deputy Emer Higgins, TD for Dublin Mid West, has welcomed public consultation on the redesign of the Hazelhatch Bridge junction, in order to facilitate the W6 orbital bus route. The W6 route launched last month in two halves, one route servicing Newcastle to Tallaght and the other servicing Hazelhatch to Maynooth, despite the original plan of a single route from Tallaght to Maynooth.

“The new W62 bus has been a really welcome addition to our public transport network in Newcastle and Saggart - and the fact that it stops at Avoca in Rathcoole has been brilliant too. But, there has been huge frustration that the bus line doesn't link commuters from these villages to Hazelhatch Train Station or students to Maynooth University - as was the original proposal. The reason for this is that the approach to the humpback bridge at Hazelhatch has been deemed too narrow for two time-tabled public buses to pass each other safely. This is something I raised during the initial consultation on the route design and it was so disappointing that no action was taken by the NTA since then in advance of the launch of the route.

It's been particularly frustrating for people from Newcastle who live so close to the rain line but can't access it through public transport and for students from Saggart, Rathcoole and Newcastle who go to school in Celbridge or college in Maynooth,” explained

Deputy Emer Higgins. “I have been in ongoing contact with the NTA, the Council and with Go-Ahead Ireland who operate this route these past couple of years. I even organised for an engineer to come out and carry out a site inspection at the location with me earlier this year so I could put forward solutions to the NTA. I am really pleased that on foot of this groundwork, that the Council are now bringing proposals for the redesign of the junction, to allow two public transport buses safely pass, to public consultation. This will mean extended the traffic-lighted one way system by 88m on one side of the bridge and 46m on the other,” continued Higgins.

“I would encourage anyone who would benefit from the link between our villages and Hazelhatch Train Station, Celbridge and Maynooth, to log on to the consultation portal and have their say. It's also important that local residents who live along or commute through this route to engage in the consultation so any concerns they may have can be ironed out. I will keep contact with the NTA up to ensure that budget for the redesign is provided and will continue to advocate for this work to be carried out as soon as possible,” concluded Emer Higgins.

Further information can be found at consult.sdblincoco.ie and members of the public can make their submissions through this portal.

ORCHARD LODGE MEETING CENTRE – THE NEW AGE-FRIENDLY AMENITY IN CLONDALKIN

Great news regarding Orchard Lodge Meeting Centre - the new age-friendly amenity in Clondalkin. The builders have moved in on site and the fit-out begins! They have set up a not-for-profit limited company to develop and manage the Centre in conjunction with South Dublin County Council.

After many groups spending many years to get this project off the ground - the group have finally received funding, a design, and the go ahead from South Dublin County Council. It is hoped that the centre will open in September this year and will consist of a spacious meeting room, kitchen area, toilets, etc. The final cost is in the region of €300,000. This covers the fit out as the building was a bare shell.

At present the group are fundraising for equipment, kitchen utensils, crockery, etc. If you are a local business or organisation who could help with a financial donation - large or small - they would be

delighted to hear from you at contact email or phone number below. The centre will predominantly cater for older people who live in or around the Clondalkin area. It is an ideal facility for groups and organisations who have need for a meeting space. The facility will be fully wheelchair accessible. The finish will be of a high standard throughout and will include state of the art Audio Visual equipment. Many of the senior citizens groups in the area have already expressed an interest, and

with the advantageous central village location - it is hoped to attract more clubs, groups, organisations and individuals to avail of this facility.

If you are interested in finding out more information or are in a position to donate, email gold.orchardlodge@gmail.com or you can call 083 844 6002. The group intend running some open days in September to showcase the amenity - let them know if you would like to receive notification.



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INTERIORS

HOLLYWOOD STAR GLEESON BREWS UP A STORM FOR 'EXTRAORDINARY' HOSPICE CARE

Actor Domhnall Gleeson recently urged people across Ireland to get behind a nationwide coffee morning in a bid to raise €2million for 'extraordinary' Hospice services.

The Dublin star is supporting Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice, a fundraising drive which has generated €43.2million since 1992. He joined Hospice hosts and volunteers at the iconic Bewley's café on Dublin's Grafton Street and asked everyone in Ireland to host or support this year's event on September 21. Both of Gleeson's grandparents - his father Brendan's parents - spent their final days in St Francis Hospice in Dublin.

"My grandma (Pat) was only there for a few weeks and that was my first experience of being around a Hospice," said the Harry Potter and Star Wars actor, 40. "I was incredibly close to her and I was struck by the atmosphere of care and kindness. She had a rough journey before she got there - and all of a

sudden, that difficult road seemed less punishing to travel." He recalled thinking she seemed 'safe and cared for'. "It was such a relief. "In terms of my granddad (Francis), we had been looking after him for a long time, probably about a year, and didn't think he was going to last that long in Hospice, but he was there for months. "The care was extraordinary, he had a new lease of life, it (Hospice care) gives their body the care it needs and makes them feel special."

He told how Francis constantly joked with staff who, he said, see beyond the illness or life-limiting condition. "There's a focus on creating a connection and patients are not just a problem to be solved on the way to the next problem along the corridor. Each person's journey is different and each one matters to the people working there. "I don't know how they do it, there is an incredible giving of oneself. "So I am asking everyone on September 21, or whenever suits them, to

organise, support or donate to a coffee morning."

Organisers hope to raise €2million in 2023, returning the fundraiser to pre-Covid levels and bringing the total raised since its inception beyond €45million. Together for Hospice, The National Hospice Movement, represents 26 Hospice and specialist palliative home care providers supporting patients and their families. Funds raised locally stay local and go back into each Hospice service, paying for medical and general staff, palliative care beds, home care visits, specialist equipment and new hospice builds.

Dr Sarah McCloskey, Chairperson, Together for Hospice, said: "We are delighted Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice, which is one of Ireland's longest and most loved fundraisers, is now entering its fourth decade of raising funds in support of Hospice in-patient and community services around

Ireland. "It is a chance to celebrate our many coffee morning hosts across the country.

This ongoing support is invaluable and funds vital services and quality initiatives enhancing care for patients living with a life limiting illness." Jason Doyle, Managing Director at

Bewley's Ireland & UK, said the company has stood "side by side" with Hospice since 1992.

"Our business was founded on the principle of caring for people and communities, so we urge everyone to host a coffee morning social to help support the incredible work Hospice carries out every

day."

**Register to host a coffee morning to support your local Hospice on September 21, or on a date that suits you, at hospicecoffeemorning.ie or call 0818 995 996. If you can not host or attend one, you can make a donation at hospicecoffeemorning.ie/donate."*



Pictured Fintan Fagan, CEO, St Francis Hospice, Dr Sarah McCloskey, Chairperson, Together for Hospice, The National Hospice Movement and Jason Doyle, MD, Bewley's with Actor Domhnall Gleeson at the launch of Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice, one of Ireland's biggest fundraisers. Picture credit: Conor McCabe Photography.

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LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES CALL ON PUBLIC TO SUPPORT STRIKING WORKERS

Local People Before Profit representatives in Dublin Midwest have called on members of the public to show their support for striking workers. In recent weeks workers in the local authorities water section, as well as firefighters, have been taking to the picket lines.

The water workers who are members of Unite the Union have been on strike against the framework that would see them being moved from the local authorities to Uisce Eireann (previously Irish Water). Workers are

concerned about the loss of conditions in the transfer and future privatisation of water services. They are also demanding a referendum on keeping water in public ownership.

Workers in the fire service have been on strike to demand improved pay and conditions for retained fire fighters. The retained workers are currently on a retainer of €8500 per year while having to be on call 24 hours a day in case of a call-out. They are demanding proper pay and conditions. Gino Kenny TD said:

“Both water workers and firefighters provide essential services to the public every single day. These workers deserve to be treated with respect and to be paid properly for the work they do. I urge members of the public to show their support for the workers when out on the picket line.”

CLlr Madeleine Johansson commented: “I have visited the striking water workers on the picket line and I was impressed by their determination and their commitment to public services. I tabled a motion, which was passed, at the March County Council meeting calling on the government to hold a referendum to keep water services in public ownership.”

People Before Profit representative for Clondalkin Darragh Adelaide said: “I want to express my solidarity with striking workers. The government has a budget surplus of about €16 billion

and they are still refusing to pay retained fire fighters a living wage. Frontline workers such as fire fighters and health service workers deserve more than applause, they deserve decent pay for their incredible work.” Mark

Kerins, representative for Lucan added: “I went down to Deansrath to stand on the picket with Unite & SIPTU water workers last week. SIPTU workers have refused to cross the picket showing solidarity. As a shop steward

myself I was impressed with the solidarity shown by SIPTU members to the striking Unite workers.

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EDUCATION FEATURE

LOCAL TEENS LEAD NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Local teens Ciaran Smith, Christopher O Sullivan and James Casserly along with teens from across Dublin last month took part in a national conference on children's rights, which was attended by over 100 people from all over the country. Pieces of Us - What's Next? was an event run by the Ombudsman for Children's Office and attended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Pieces of Us is a report which highlights the voices of the 5,515 children who took part in a national online survey and 200 who participated in focus groups. It was presented to the UN Committee in 2022 by our Youth Advisory Panel and this event was an opportunity for children to have their say on what should happen next. Pieces of Us - What's Next was an event where

100 children got the chance to share their views on what the Government should now prioritise for children. Jamal, Jimmy, Ciaran, Christopher, Mia, Toby and James all played an extremely important role as members of the OCO's Youth Advisory Panel, gathering information from young people across Ireland on how they feel about living in Ireland and the changes they want to see. The OCO's Youth Advisory Panel plays a vital role in the work of the OCO, advising about emerging issues and concerns for young people.

Speaking following the event, the Ombudsman for Children, Dr Niall Muldoon commented "We were delighted to have our Youth Advisory Panel involved in this important children's rights conference. They asked strong and challenging

questions, particularly in relation to children's mental health and how Ireland is ensuring that all children have equal opportunities." Dr Carmel Corrigan, OCO

Head of Participation and Rights Education who led in coordinating the Pieces of Us report added "The Pieces of Us- What's Next event was unique in that it gave

a children's perspective on the Concluding Observations of the UNCRC and the concerns that were raised. The children who worked on our Pieces of Us report were

the heart and soul of the report- it was their voices and their insights, and so it's important that they also have a say on what happens next."



Pictured L-R: Caoimhe Cotter, Toby Murphy, Jimmy Ahmed, Ailís Malone, Niall Muldoon, Ciaran Smith, Mia Harding, James Casserly, Jamal Murray, Karolina Byrne, Proff Phillip D. Jaffé (Vice chair UN Committee on the Rights of the Child), Méabh Ní Churraidhin, Christopher O'Sullivan and Tim Grace Byrne.

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OUR TRACK RECORD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

THIRD LEVEL DEGREES NOW AVAILABLE OUTSIDE THE CAO POINTS RACE

With Leaving Certificate students awaiting their results, local TD Emer Higgins, has announced that new programmes will be available from this September, to ensure that third level degrees are available to students outside the CAO points race.

“In July, Minister Simon Harris, launched a new programme to allow students access a third level degree without having to worry about the “points system”, which, we know puts so much pressure and stress on

young people and on parents. Minister Harris heard first hand from students in St. Joseph’s College in Lucan two years ago, and I am really pleased that he used their feedback to shape this new policy,” explained Deputy Emer Higgins.

“I don’t believe that it should be the case that because someone didn’t get a certain number of points in an exam, in a certain year, that they can’t do what they want to do. That’s something students, parents and teachers say to me all the

time, and it’s something the Government has set about changing. I am delighted that Minister Harris has delivered new pathways available for students through the National Tertiary Office (hea.ie) to access the courses they want no matter the number of points they have,” continued Higgins.

From this September, students will be able to enrol in courses in healthcare, enterprise, ICT and creative sectors in a further education institution before progressing to a higher education institution to complete their fully-accredited degree. These programmes represent an important new departure in flexible provision and will provide pathways to learners outside the traditional CAO process

“This is the single biggest transformation to education in decades and is only the start of a much larger reform that Fine Gael will drive in

terms of access to third level education. From September, 23 degree courses will be available outside the points system. We know

the points system has not worked for many of our young people, and now, we can tell the next generation of students they can access

degrees in nursing, business, engineering and media without ever having to worry about points.,” concluded Higgins.

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modules will earn a QQI Level 5 Award. You don’t have to do all eight, though. You can choose to do however many you wish. Why not try one and see how you get on? Modules include Care Skills, Care of the Older Person, Social Studies, Safety and Health at Work, and Communications.

An Cosán welcomes people from all walks of life, providing a safe space for learners to develop their skills and increase their confidence so that they can look forward to a brighter future. Our additional supports include early years’ provision, IT support, laptop loans, parenting support, and one-to-one tutoring, mentoring and counselling.

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IRISH PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS VISIT BRUSSELS

On the 5 of July, EU Commissioner Mairead McGuinness welcomed a group of 22 Irish primary school teachers to the European Commission in Brussels.

The teachers participate in the Blue Star Programme, teaching Irish primary school children all about the EU in a fun and interactive way. This was part of a study visit organised by the European Commission Representation in Ireland, in partnership

with the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland, and the European Movement Ireland. It also included a day of seminars with officials in the European Commission, a meeting with Irish MEPs, and a visit to Ireland's Permanent Representation to the EU. The Blue Star Programme is an initiative of the Irish Government, supported by the European Commission and the European Parliament. It is managed by the European Movement Ireland.



Pictured above: Mairead McGuinness, European Commissioner for Financial Services, Financial Stability, and Capital Markets Union, with the group of Irish primary school teachers taking part in the Blue Star Programme. Pic Credit: Lukasz Kobus/ European Union

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For more information on Griffith's Springboard+ courses, please visit Griffith.ie/springboard

Springboard+ is co funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union, to provide options for reskilling and upskilling into areas of projected growth and areas of skills shortages within our economy



Pictured Caroline Senior Rathmichael NS, Sarah Gallagher Taney Parish Primary School, Commissioner McGuinness, Kerri Walsh Divine Mercy Lucan, Jennifer Holligan St Cronans, Swords. Pic Credit: Lukasz Kobus/ European Union

BARNARDO'S BACK TO SCHOOL COSTS SURVEY 'NEEDS TO BE ACTED ON IMMEDIATELY'

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe said that the myth of free education is struggling with reality as more and more parents are struggling with the costs of sending their children to school each year.

Speaking after the release of the Barnardo's survey on back to school costs, Teachta Crowe said "According to the latest Barnardo's survey on back to school costs, it now costs an average €972 to send a child off to first year in secondary school. The myth of free education cannot stand up to the hundreds needed to be spent on sending children to school, particularly with the new costs such as on digital learning aids that were not an issue even ten years ago.

"This is only further confirmation of the Irish League of Credit Unions survey last month which showed that more and more families are struggling to meet the cost of sending their children to school on top of the other rises in the cost of living. "Sinn Féin have a plan to cut back-to-school costs and to end this financial pressure on families. We would introduce affordable school uniforms, expand the school transport scheme, ensure every child has access to a hot meal in school, and stop families being pressured into paying voluntary contributions.

"Sinn Féin would ensure families get a break from back-to-school costs now. This would help families by ensuring that they get the support they need. "I want to again warmly welcome this timely Barnardo's survey. It highlights many of the challenge facing parents with back to school costs and needs to be acted on immediately."

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about the direction their education and career will go in, as well as learning from experienced teachers how to write papers, how to reference and get hands-on work experience, are just some of the skills further education colleges such as BFEI can develop.

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FORÓIGE WELCOMED INTO THE OIREACHTAS FOR DIGITAL YOUTH SHOWCASE

Young people, volunteers and staff members from Foróige were welcomed into the Oireachtas in July for a Digital Youth Showcase.

The showcase focussed on how we can mitigate the risks associated with digital technologies and social media platforms, while empowering young people to use technology to their advantage safely and securely. Members of both

Houses of the Oireachtas engaged with young people from around the country who demonstrated youth work in virtual reality, coding, robotics, engineering, artificial intelligence and much more. Foróige is committed to supporting young people to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to navigate the digital world safely, responsibly, and creatively, and contribute to thriving

communities online and offline. To this end Foróige is launching a new digital youth brand called Foróige Go - Digital skills for what's now and next - which was displayed at the showcase

As part of the Digital Youth Showcase members of the Oireachtas used virtual reality headsets to join a Foróige Club taking place in the virtual world and spoke directly with young people in North Donegal, West Cork and Arranmore Island. Alongside VR, young people introduced TDs and Senators to a variety of digital innovations, from podcasts created using cutting-edge audio technology to products designed and manufactured using 3D printing technologies.

Creative learning technologies were also on display like using artificial intelligence for good and the many ways online safety and resilience underpins Foróige approach to digital youth

work. Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Seán Ó Fearghail, addressed the young people and staff members at the event stating 'We are pleased to welcome Foróige into Leinster House to hold a Digital Youth Showcase.

There is no doubt that technology is somewhat of a double-edged sword, with so many opportunities and so many challenges. The young people here today will show us all the future of the digital world and instil in us the confidence to embrace it. The exhibition outlines the risks associated with digital technologies and social media platforms, and looks at how these risks can be mitigated, to empower young people to use technology to their advantage in a safe and secure manner. The young people we see here today and throughout the Foróige network will be our future leaders.'

Seán Campbell, CEO of

Foróige, commented at the event 'Foróige and the young people, volunteers and staff engaged in the organisation are honoured to have the opportunity to showcase recent innovations in digital youth work and non-formal education, and the value of empowering young people with the skills and mindset they need to actively shape the digital realm for the better.

Digital youth work has been a part of Foróige for over 20 years. The scope of our digital youth work takes many forms and they are now all wrapped together under our new umbrella brand of Foróige Go - digital skills for what's now and next. All of our digital youth work programmes are designed to facilitate young people to grow their empathy, critical thinking, and digital citizenship.

He continued 'These skills are essential not just to young people's engagement

with digital technologies, but also in their day-to-day lives and relationships, supporting their personal and social development, their values, and their ability to connect with others positively. This work will secure the future of Ireland at the forefront of innovation, enterprise, and digital transformation, by creating a generation of highly skilled entrepreneurs and leaders.'

Anna Finnegan, a participant in the Foróige GoSafely programme aged 16, spoke from a youth perspective on navigating the digital world safely 'I suppose you could say that I started on the internet young, around six years old, and since then I have seen the advantages and disadvantages.

That's why I feel so passionate about this GoSafely programme, my peers are crying out for open conversations and a clear toolkit to navigate through it.'





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MOTORING LIFE WITH**BYD Atto 3 is Leading The Charge****By Breda Corrigan**

The BYD brand is a new entrant to the Irish new car market, and it is the biggest car brand that you may not have heard of yet, with more than 1.8 million cars sold last year, mainly in its homeland, China. Prior to manufacturing cars, BYD (an abbreviation of Build Your Dreams) was one of the world's biggest battery technology suppliers, with approximately one fifth of the world's smartphones using their technology. BYD also build electric trains, buses and forklifts, and they have a workforce of over 600,000 employees. BYD's head car designer is none other than Wolfgang Egger, whose notable creations include the stunning Alfa 8C Competizione and Alfa 156 during his time with Alfa Romeo, and the Q2 during his time with Audi.

Affordable EVs for Europe.

BYD's plan is to produce affordable EVs for Europe, notably the 'Ocean Series', named after friendly ocean creatures, the 'Dolphin' (coming to Ireland in September 2023) and the forthcoming 'Seal'. The inspiration for the 'Atto 3' name comes from an 'attosecond', which is one-quintillionth of a second (which is unmeasurable), and means BYD is pushing all limits, and the '3' refers to BYD's own e-Platform 3.0. Competitors to the Atto 3 include the new Peugeot e-2008, MG ZS EV, ORA Funky Cat, Hyundai KONA and Kia Niro EV.

Striking Design Inside & Out.

The striking exterior design of the Atto 3 is thoroughly modern and coherent, and its sleek presence is enhanced by a sloping roofline and aerodynamic curves that have the ability to turn heads. Strategically-

placed silver/chrome-effect trim on the front grille, the rear quarter panel, around the side windows, above the rear light cluster, on the front wings, and on the longitudinal roof bars add an executive look to the car from every angle. The broad headlights, and coast-to-coast taillights, shine a reassuringly wide beam of light, greatly improving night driving. Front seat occupants are provided with lots of head, leg and elbow room, while legroom in the rear of the car is generous too.

Eye-catching vegan leather colour combination upholstery is visually-appealing and comfortable too, and overall build quality within the stylish cabin is impressive, providing the car with an upmarket look and feel. Ingenious 'guitar strings' across the door bins, along with an airplane-style gear selector on the centre console certainly add lots of character to the cabin, and even the air vents look great too. A 12.8-inch infotainment system comes as standard, with a 15.6-inch screen fitted to top-spec Design models. Ingeniously, the screen is able to rotate from landscape to portrait at the press of a button. An impressive 440-litres of cargo capacity is available behind the rear seats, and this extends to 1,338-litres when the rear seats are folded down. There is a false floor in the boot, under which you can store the charging cables, and there is also enough room to store the rigid luggage cover when you don't need it.

Three Trims, 5-Star Safety.

The Atto 3 is available in 3 trim levels: Active, Comfort and Design, and is available in 5 colours, Surfing Blue, Skiing White, Climbing Grey, Parkour Red and Exploring Green. The Atto 3 is packed with standard safety

equipment across all models, which include Panoramic Viewer, Blind Spot Detection (BSD), Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Hill Decent Control (HDC), Automatic Vehicle Control (AVC), Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC), Intelligent Cruise Control (ICC), Intelligent Speed Limit Information (ISLI), Intelligent Speed Limit Control (ISLC), Traffic Sign Recognition (TSR), Forward Collision Warning (FCW), Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA) and Lane Change Assist (LCA). The Atto 3 has been crash-tested by Euro NCAP and scored a full five-star rating, with a 91% adult protection score, which is at the top end for its class.

Impressive Power & Torque.

Powering the Atto 3 is a front-mounted electric motor that is fed by 60.48 kWh battery pack providing the car with 204hp and 310Nm of torque, allowing a 0-100km/h sprint to be completed in just 7.3 seconds. With an official range of up to 420km, it is quite possible that many drivers will only need to charge the once or twice a week. It can be recharged at a capacity of up to 150kW via a DC fast charger, or up to 11kW on three-phase AC. A 7kW wallbox charger can complete a 0-100% charge in just under 9h 42m, with the same charge possible in just 6h 30m via an 11kW wallbox charger. DC fast charging (150kW) can be completed in just 29 minutes (30-80%), with a 0-100% charge possible in just 80 minutes.

Test Car.

My test car was a BYD Atto 3 'Design', which looked striking in its Surfing Blue metallic paintwork and stylish 18-inch alloy wheels. Key 'Design' features include an electric

tailgate, an air purification system, 15.6-inch electric rotary touchscreen and a panoramic sunroof with sunshade. Like a lot of EVs, the Atto 3 emits a noise at low speeds to alert other road users and pedestrians of your presence, but thankfully the artificial sound generator is muted once you get beyond 32km/h. The supple suspension in the Atto 3 ensures that the car can ease itself over road imperfections and speed ramps in a relaxed fashion. The low-set dashboard allows for excellent forward visibility, and the rear-view camera and parking sensors made manoeuvring in and out of tight parking spaces a simple exercise.

The 204hp electric motor enables the Atto 3 to accelerate briskly, so joining fast-moving motorway traffic, or negotiating busy roundabout's is never an issue. The car handles corners well, and its overall road-holding ability is excellent. The internal door handles are neatly integrated into the top of the highly-positioned radio speakers, and they not only look good, but they are easy to use too. You can bring your music to life with the multi-coloured ambient lighting, as it syncs to the beat of your tunes to light up the whole cabin.

Verdict, Pricing & Warranty.

The all-new BYD Atto 3 is a hugely-impressive all-electric family SUV that is stylish, refined, comfortable, well built, highly specified, and loaded with cutting-edge technology. With prices starting at €39,078 (including delivery charges and a 2-year service plan), it represents outstanding value for money too. A 4-year/120,000km warranty comes as standard, along with an 8-year/200,000km battery warranty.

APARTMENTS ON FORMER COUNCIL LAND BEING LET AT 'EXTORTIONATE' RENTS

Local representatives have hit out at the rents being charged at a new development in Clondalkin calling them 'extortionate'.

The new apartments at Kilcarbery Grange are being advertised on daft.ie with rents ranging from €1800 to €2700 per month. The site of

the development was in the ownership of South Dublin County Council until 2018 when the lands were sold by a majority of councillors to

a private developer in return for 30% social housing.

People Before Profit TD Gino Kenny said: "It's outrageous

to see apartments that are built on what used to be public land being rented out at extortionate rents. I don't know anyone who can afford to pay €2700 for a 3-bed family home.

This land could have been used to provide much needed social and affordable housing and instead it's being used by private companies to profiteer out of the misery of the tenants. People Before Profit opposed the sell-off of

this land and voted against it in the council."

Darragh Adelaide, People Before Profit representative for Clondalkin added: "I live very near this development and I'm one of thousands of young people stuck living with my parents because of the housing crisis. There's no way that I could afford to pay €1800 for a 1 bed apartment. I'm disgusted that this public land is being used to bleed tenants dry."

OVER 500 OLDER PEOPLE WAITING ON HOME CARE PACKAGES

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has said that there must be a much greater emphasis put on ensuring that older people get the home help packages they need to live independently as possible for as long as possible. Figures released by the HSE show that there are 501 older people on the CHO7 waiting list for a home help package, 296 of whom have been waiting longer than six months.

Teachta Crowe said "Home help packages are essential in allowing

older people to live as independently as they can for as long as they can. Without them, families are placed under enormous pressure to care for their older relatives and in some cases, a family may not live locally or an individual may not have family at all.

"I was shocked to hear from the HSE that there were 501 older people waiting on a home help package in the CHO7 area, which includes Dublin South West. Worse still, 296 of them have been waiting longer than six

months. "We must do better by our older citizens and ensure that they have access to home care promptly. Leaving them waiting on supports could have a detrimental impact on some individuals and it isn't right and it isn't fair. "Ireland has an aging population.

We are lucky that our loved ones are living longer but this presents its own challenges. We must be proactive and plan for greater demand into the future rather than scrambling and failing to provide for what is needed today."

MOYNIHAN WELCOMES UPGRADED SAFETY CROSSING AT ROWLAGH SUPERVALU

Cllr Shane Moynihan, Palmerstown-Fonthill has welcomed the Council's

upgrade of the pedestrian crossing at Rowlagh SuperValu. The Council recently completed upgrade works at the busy crossing which has substantially improved it from a safety point of view. 'The pedestrian crossing at Rowlagh SuperValu is one of the busiest in the North Clondalkin Area. However, there have been persistent concerns raised around its safety with me, most recently when I was calling to residents in Rowlagh earlier this year.'

Shane discussed the dangerous crossing with Council Engineers in April and the outcomes of this resulted in upgrades or amendments being recommended to the beacon layout, the raised table and the existing barriers. 'The feedback I have received from users of this crossing

about these upgrade works has been overwhelmingly positive and I am happy to see those with mobility difficulties and older people able to cross the road in a much safer manner.'

Since being elected, Shane has advocated for safer crossings at busy areas to improve things for pedestrians. Areas where he has been successful in securing better crossings include opposite Hermitage Park in Lucan, on the Neilstown Road, opposite Collinstown Park and now at Rowlagh SuperValu. Moynihan concluded 'Improved pedestrian crossings make our roads and footpaths safer for people who walk, drive and cycle. I would encourage people to let me know of crossings they feel are unsafe so I can raise with the Council.'



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