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ABANDONMENT OF DUTY TO OLDER AND MORE VULNERABLE CITIZENS

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has said that four years on government inaction on statutory home care represents an abandonment of our duty to our older and more vulnerable citizens that it is often beyond the ability of many families to afford home care.

Speaking in the Dáil recently, Teachta Crowe said “Adequate home care provision allows older people to live with dignity and respect in their own homes. Additional supports also contribute to, and are vital for, independent living.

The Government has often repeated there is a commitment to introduce a statutory scheme to support people to live in their own homes and Government members cite the fact that it is in the Programme for

Government. Like others, I want to see it in legislation and being budgeted for, rather than in meaningless statements in the Dáil or Seanad.

“The Sláintecare report was specific about ending the overreliance on market mechanisms to deliver new healthcare services through the expansion of public nursing homes and home care.

“That Programme for Government is almost due for renewal and we have seen precious few results, despite the usual flurry of activity and noise the Government believes is just as good in many cases. A public consultation was held, and a pilot even tested almost two years ago. We are told time and again that the Department of Health is still researching

funding models. This is all to be published or done in coming months and the next election has to be held by March 2025. There are not many months left for this element of the Programme for Government to be introduced.

“Without access to affordable residential care or care in the home, people are forced into a hospital system that cannot afford to accommodate them and is unsuited to their needs. The awful phrase ‘bed blockers’ is often used. Too many people are stuck in hospital beds when appropriate care can be delivered elsewhere.

“Hospital stays should be an option of last resort when people just need a little help to live a semblance of an independent life in their own homes. It

should not be the only resort. Thousands of delayed discharges of elderly patients are creating bottlenecks in our hospitals each year because people have nowhere else to go. It creates a knock-on effect through the services, leading to cancelled appointments and surgeries because of a lack of beds. It represents an abandonment of our duty to our older and more vulnerable citizens that it is often beyond the ability of many families to afford home care.

“The Government must stop burying its head in the sand on this issue, and finally prioritise older people and those with disabilities to ensure they get the support they deserve rather than simply trying to privatise anything that stays still long enough, just as it did with nursing homes and dental care.”



Are you looking for a new garden shed? See pages 11 to 14 for more information.



Cllr. Shane Moynihan

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TENANTS PAYING €30,000 OVER GUIDE PRICE TO SECURE PROPERTIES

Tenants whose landlords are selling up are routinely paying €30,000 over guide price in a race to secure properties in Dublin before their leases expire, the Q2 REA Average House Price Index has found.

The number of sales in the capital due to landlords leaving the market has risen six points to 25pc in the past three months, the Index revealed. As buying is cheaper than renting in most cases, it is now an option for many departing tenants who are finding it easier to

secure mortgages because of their repayment history.

However, they are paying an average of €30,000 more than asking price to secure properties before time runs out on their leases, according to REA agents. The REA Average House Price Index concentrates on the sale price of Ireland's typical stock home, the three-bed semi, giving an accurate picture of the second-hand property market in towns and cities countrywide.

The actual selling price of

a three-bed, semi-detached house across the country rose by 2.3pc in the past three months to €315,352.

Prices in Dublin city rose by 1.6pc in the last three months, meaning that the average three-bed semi in the capital is now selling at €525,500 - an increase of 5.1pc in the last year. Agents REA McGee in Tallaght and Rathfarnham report that properties are routinely exceeding their value by €30,000 in the band between €250,000 and €350,000. "Properties guiding at €320,000 are routinely selling for €350,000 simply because the buyer is under time pressure due to a notice to quit," said Anthony McGee. "If they are forced into the market, they are maxing out their loan approval to secure somewhere to live within their timeframe."

A feature of the market is that many houses coming to the market are ex-rental stock, needing

upgrading, according to REA spokesperson Seamus Carthy.

"While we are seeing a slight improvement in stock, a lot of what is coming on the market in the capital needs substantial refurbishment,"

he said. "Those intending to purchase a doer-upper are subject to different lending rules and their bank may look for proof that there are sufficient funds in place to renovate. "There are huge issues sourcing people

to do extensive repairs where multiple people are required. "As a result of this, people looking to trade up are opting for smaller extension work in their existing properties where it is easier to source labour."



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ANNOUNCING THE INSTALLATION OF THE AN CHLUAIN BY HOLGAR C. LÖNZE

South Dublin County Council is delighted to announce the Installation of the An Chluain by Artist Holgar C. Lönze, a major new artwork in bronze commissioned by South Dublin County Council under the Monastery Road Improvement Scheme and In Context 5 Public Art Programme, with support from South Dublin County Council's Public Realm Section.

This sculpture is designed to make the hidden archaeological heritage of Clondalkin visible, marking the important 8th century monastic settlement near the salmon-rich Camac River. The placename Clon or Cluain suggests a monastic enclosure, hermitage or sanctuary and Crónán Mac Bécáin, son of Lugaid, who died in 637, is the local saint associated with it.

He is mentioned in the 9th C. Karlsruhe Calendar, a manuscript compiled in Glendalough, where he was

an associate of St. Kevin. Two 3.2m high gable sections resembling a medieval oratory, form a gateway that aligns with a 'door' element which is back-lit with the text of a medieval manuscript that mentions Crónán. The artwork forms a landmark visible from the road while being accessible to pedestrians via a newly created path through a raised area resembling a historic lucht. The sculpture is shaped by hand, in bronze sheet by Kerry-based sculptor Holger Lönze, using the ancient repoussé process of alternative heating and hammering, a sustainable, low-carbon approach to public sculpture with great significance for Irish archaeology.

The brown patina of the door element contrasts with the green/blue of the gables and textured surfaces resemble rippling water of the river. 'The artwork is a contemporary visual link to the important heritage of

the area and contributes to a strong and unique sense of place', says sculptor Holger Lönze.

Monastery Road Improvement Scheme involved the upgrading of pedestrian facilities on Monastery Road to improve general walking and cycling conditions along the route from Clondalkin Village to the Redcow Luas Station. These works included the provision of zebra crossings, raised table top ramps with raised pedestrian crossing on side roads at junctions, bus ramps, widening and renewal of footpaths between Clondalkin Village and Redcow Luas Station, traffic calming on Monastery Road, installation of signalized pedestrian crossings at SIAC and Ibis Roundabouts, installation of a staircase at the Redcow Luas Station end and landscaping all along the scheme.

An Chluain was commissioned by South Dublin County

Council's Land Use Planning and Transportation Department with the support of the Arts Office and Public Realm Section, through the Monastery Road

Improvement Scheme and the In Context 5 Per Cent for Art Programme under funding arising from Watery Lane housing construction scheme. The commission

is funded by the National Transport Authority, South Dublin County Council and the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage.



Pic credit: Ben Ryan

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THE QUALITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE ON A DOWNWARD TRAJECTORY

Mark Ward TD has expressed grave concerns that acute Mental Health inpatient centre providers, are struggling to meet minimum regulatory standards in key areas like staffing, care planning, risk management and premises. Worryingly, 42 instances of sexual assault were reported last year in approved mental health facilities This is up from 12 instances in 2022.

publication of the Mental Health Commission Annual Report., Teachta Ward said. "The Annual Report by Mental Health Commission has expressed concern of continued failure of mental health services to comply with minimum standards. "What really concerns me is that the quality of mental health services is on a downward trajectory. "We have had numerous reports over the last few years from the Mental Health

commission, Maskey etc and they all highlight the same problems that mental health services are failing to meet minimum regulatory standards in key areas like staffing, care planning, risk management and premises.

"The Mental Health Commission inspected 66 registered approved centres. There was a deterioration in overall levels of compliance levels with legal requirements, Overall, the compliance rate of 85% last year was a decrease on the 88.37% figure reported in 2022. "It is clear that governance and management has not kept pace with patient needs, expectations and rights. "Worryingly, 42 instances of sexual assault were reported

last year in approved mental health facilities This is up from 12 instances in 2022.

"I'm calling for immediate Government action to be taking to safeguard some of

our most vulnerable citizens. "The report also calls for meaningful investment for mental health. At present Ireland provides just over 5% of the overall health budget to mental health. The

World Health Organisation recommends a minimum of 10% "Unfortunately, we are seeing the fallout now of years of underinvestment by the Government in Mental Health.

Speaking after the

ASSISTED HUMAN REPRODUCTION BILL



Celebrating following the passage of the Assisted Human Reproduction Bill through both houses of the Oireachtas. Group image including Families with Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly and Senator Mary Seery Kearney and her daughter Scarlett. Pic credit: Bryan Brophy 1IMAGE Photography

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VITAL 'REACH' FUNDING ALLOCATED TO DDLETB TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS

SOLAS, the state agency responsible for Further Education and Training (FET), has announced over €250,000 in funding to Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB (DDLETB), to support marginalised learners to access community education programmes in local communities, through €5 million distributed in the national Reach Fund. The funding allocation will support 2,500 learners across the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire area to access and participate in local community education provision including online learning, literacy and basic skills programmes, providing social supports to the most vulnerable groups in the local communities.

The funding allocated to Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB will be used by local organisations to deliver initiatives with the support of local FET services. One such initiative is the "Family Literacy Digital Skills Project", where the Blanchardstown Adult Education Service has linked with the Home School Community Liaison service of a local school, Scoil Mhuire. This project will address the needs of those parents in schools who have difficulties in accessing and utilising communication 'apps'.

In digital literacy classes, parents will become familiar with all the different software used in the schools.

This will improve the parents' capacity to engage in the school community in relation to their child's education. Initiatives such as this enable learners to take the first small steps towards engaging with the opportunities that exist for them in further education, higher education, and employment.

Speaking on the allocation of Reach Funding across Ireland DDLETB's Minister Patrick O'Donovan (TD said: "The impact of Reach Funding over the past four years is evident. Originally introduced in 2020 to support the most disadvantaged learners throughout the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it now provides important funds to assist Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB, and community education providers to increase their capacity and ensure that they can support the participation of disadvantaged learners within their communities."

Siobhán Lynch Director of Further Education & Training for DDLETB said: "We are delighted to receive over €250,000 in funding to support community education providers in Dublin and Dún Laoghaire. This vital funding will go a long way to support some of the hardest-to-reach people in our local communities. A key focus for the use of the funding is to help build digital infrastructure in our local region and the use

of innovative programmes to support targeted disadvantaged learner cohorts. The Reach Fund often enhances existing community education provision and enables us to continue delivering access to learning opportunities for our diverse communities."

The Reach Fund complements the work done for many years by DDLETB's Community Education services. Community education services were established in 2003, and in that time the work done with community partners has significantly extended

DDLETB's reach and provision in disadvantaged communities across the county.

In addition, ETBs around the country have supported thousands of initiatives to receive Reach Funding since 2020. This has also helped to empower learners, build digital infrastructures to foster inclusion and support learning in the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire region and across Ireland. It has helped to develop safe learning spaces, address the digital divide, build stronger learning communities, and increase the capacity

of community education organisations across local communities.

Andrew Brownlee, CEO of SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, said: "Community education plays a critical and unique role in the FET system, and in local communities in Dublin and Dún Laoghaire, and across Ireland. It offers local, accessible, and welcoming learning opportunities for individuals which can support them to achieve their personal, social, and educational goals. We are delighted to continue to offer Reach funding in 2024

and we have seen first-hand the difference that it is making through DDLETB and across the country to support those who need it the most."

Since 2020, over 2,300 individual projects have been supported through the Reach Fund and demand is growing year on year. This is testament to the incredible work that is happening at local level by ETBs and community partners as they work to tackle barriers that prevent learners from accessing education and support them to re-engage and participate with local provision."

IRISH RED CROSS TALLAGHT BRANCH OPEN EVENING

The Irish red cross Tallaght Branch are hosting an open evening on the 29th July from 7pm until 10pm in their training grounds in Tallaght Hospital, the established branch has been running for many years and they are looking for new members to join their first aid teams and also to help with the local community work and events that they also cover.

No experience or qualifications is required to join, the branch is open to everyone over the age of 18 for the senior unit and ages 12-16 for the junior unit.

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SCANT PROGRESS ON CAMHS REFORMS

Mark Ward TD has called the progress on the Mental Health Commission's recommendations for CAMHS as scant by the HSE and Department of Health. Deputy Ward was speaking after receiving a PQ response

with progress report on the 49 recommendations that were made by the Mental Health Commission 12 months ago.

Teachta Ward said "It is 12 months now since the Mental Health Commission published their 49 recommendations. Recently, I received a progress report on these. "Only 10 of these recommendations have been completed with others briefly addressed. "The first two recommendations, for CAMHS to be regulated under the Mental Health Act 2001, and for the Commission to monitor and do a year report on these recommendations, have not being started.

"I brought legislation to the Dáil in February of this year that would implement both of these recommendations. The Government shamefully kicked this down the road in favour of their own Bill which has not materialised. There is no urgency by Government to fix the crisis in youth mental health. "Another recommendation is to increase the CAMHS

budget which has little new investment by the Minister for Health. "The HSE, this week, have said that CAMHS staff will need to double to deliver the timely interventions that are needed, while the Government are determined to keep the HSE recruitment embargo in place.

"The recommendations made by the Mental Health Commission were brought about because children were being misdiagnosed, over medicated, falling off that cliff edge at 18. We also have children with a dual diagnosis of autism and mental health, falling through the cracks. "CAMHS needs to be a safe place for children to get help, and the vast majority of staff are working to their best of their ability.

"It was, however, worrying that this week a child psychiatrist pleaded guilty to sexually abusing a child under the care of CAMHS. This comes just after the Mental Health Commission's annual report where it

stated 42 people reported sexual assaults whilst in mental health facilities. The Government are failing to provide the appropriate care in our mental health services and this cannot be allowed to continue.

NINA FOR LIFE CELEBRATION



Pictured in Kingswood at the Nina for Life celebration were Jean Haas, the Nina Bear and Charlie O'Connor

THE NEW AGE-FRIENDLY MEETING CENTRE AT ORCHARD LODGE IN CLONDALKIN IS OPEN

Great News! The new age-friendly Meeting Centre at Orchard Lodge in Clondalkin is open. After many groups, for many years, have tried to deliver this amenity it is finally open. The board is very happy with the standard of the build and finishes.

This will be an ideal place for the seniors of Clondalkin and surrounding areas to meet in comfort. If you or your group are interested in an invitation to one of the Open Days, please send us an email to gold.orchardlodge@gmail.com or a text to 083 844 6002.

Thyes Kavanagh, Chair of the board commented "I would like to pay tribute to the many local groups who put forward members to become directors of the Board of Management of the not-for-profit company which will manage the Meeting Centre. As Chair of the board, I would also like to thank all the local political representatives, particularly Cllr.

Eoin O Broin, and Cllr. William Carey- who were put forward to represent the local councillors on the Board. Their input and support has been invaluable".

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INNOVATIVE TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMME LAUNCHED IN TALLAGHT FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE

A new training, education and employment programme has been launched in St. Mark's Youth Club Tallaght for care-experienced young people in the Dublin South West / Kildare / West Wicklow Tusla area. The project will see Tusla working with Include Youth Ireland to provide their 'Give & Take' programme to children in care, and those that have left care, to help them progress into and participate in training, education and employment.

The 'Give & Take' Programme is a youth work intervention that is designed to improve social and personal development, qualifications and employability related competencies. The programme's main goal is to equip young people, aged 16-21, who are currently not engaging in education, training or employment, with the necessary skills and to offer a clear career path for young people.

The programme involves one-to-one work on a weekly

basis with an allocated keyworker over 12-24 months. A support plan is developed, tailored to each young person's individual needs, with a focus on strengths, skill development and support to achieve identified goals.

Speaking at the launch of the 'Give & Take' programme, Patricia Finlay, Regional Chief Officer, Dublin Mid Leinster, Tusla, said, "Tusla's Aftercare Service in Dublin South West, Kildare and West Wicklow supports some of the largest numbers of young care-leavers in the country. It is also an area where there is significant socio-economic deprivation, which for many young people can lead to more frequent non-engagement in education or training.

"The Give and Take programme by Include Youth Ireland we're launching today will have a direct impact on those young people most in need, and who require additional support to enter into and sustain employment

and education or training opportunities."

Diane Hill, CEO, Include Youth Ireland, added, "We are delighted to mark this launch of Include Youth Ireland in the Dublin South West / Kildare / West Wicklow area, in partnership with Tusla. The Give & Take programme is designed to empower and equip young people with essential life skills, qualifications, employability skills and personal development.

This expansion underscores the charity's commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of young people. It is an exciting time as care-experienced young people within these areas can avail of a transformative wrap around support that can enable them to fulfil their potential and thrive in their future."

Include Youth Ireland have partnered with the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education & Training Board (DDLETB) on educational aspects of

the programme, and the DDLETB are also providing a premises for the group work aspects of the programme. The programme is being funded through Dormant Accounts funding. Include

Youth Ireland is a non-profit organisation which has been providing support to care leavers in Northern Ireland for over 40 years.

This is their first initiative

in the Republic of Ireland where they hope to expand their service provision. They will soon be launching a similar project with the Cavan/Monaghan Tusla Aftercare Service, also.



Pictured: Mags Keane, Aftercare Manager, Tusla, Claire Barkey, Youth Development Officer, DDLETB, Diane Hill, CEO, Include Youth Ireland, Patricia Finlay, Regional Chief Officer, Dublin Mid Leinster, Tusla, at the launch of the 'Give & Take' programme in St. Mark's Youth Club in Tallaght.

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'SHOW ME I.D - BE AGE OK' SUMMER CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED AT CIRCLE K LUCAN

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise with responsibility for Retail, Emer Higgins TD, recently launched the 2024 'Show Me I.D - Be Age OK' Summer Campaign at Circle K in Lucan Village, showing her support for the country's largest responsible retail training programme.

The launch of the campaign coincides with the summer holidays and encourages retailers and hospitality staff across the country to maintain high standards of compliance around age-restricted products. These include alcohol, tobacco products, lottery tickets and vaping products.

The theme of the campaign - the second of four quarterly campaigns by Show Me ID - is the extra vigilance required around vaping products, in response to the ban of these products for minors in December 2023. Failure to comply with the new legislation can result in fines of up to €4,000 or up to six months in prison. Retailers are also being advised to prepare for the possibility of underage test purchasers being sent from the HSE to verify compliance with the new laws. This practice was

added to the legislation in April of this year.

Retail and hospitality staff are encouraged to complete the 'Show Me I.D - Be Age OK' online training module, which quizzes users on potential situations they are likely to encounter in a trading environment. This includes questions on what best practice is when somebody looks underage, when a minor attempts to purchase an age-restricted product or when an unacceptable form of identification is provided at the point of service.

Retail staff can easily access the module on a computer, phone or tablet. Upon completion of the module, participants can enter a competition to win a €100 One4All gift card. 'Show Me I.D' will also run a concentrated social media campaign during this period to keep retailers informed about proper sales practices for age-restricted products.

Speaking at the today, Minister Higgins said, "I am delighted to be here at Circle K Lucan Village to launch the Show Me ID Be Age OK Summer 2024 Campaign. This is an important reminder to retailers and

small businesses to be aware of the importance of not selling cigarettes, alcohol, vapes or lottery tickets to those under the age of 18. "It is very important that high standards of sale are maintained. The Show Me ID campaign urges retailers to always ask for ID when they have doubts over somebody's age; all year round but especially important as the summer holidays begin. The ease of access of the module to retail staff - who can complete the module on phones, laptops or tablets - makes it far easier for the retail sector to be fully aware of the importance of following the law and upholding high standards of sale".

Mary McDonald, Regional Director of Operations at Circle K, noted the importance of the training module, stating, "This training module is a really helpful tool for all Irish retailers as it reinforces the importance of upholding high standards of sale across the board regarding age-restricted products. Selling any age-restricted product to minors is illegal and stores that break the law could now face serious consequences - such as those



Pictured: Emer Higgins, Minister of State for Retail, and Mary McDonald, Regional Director of Operations at Circle K Ireland, launch the Show Me ID campaign.

outlined in the recent ban on sales of vapes to under 18s. "At Circle K, we are committed to responsible retailing and have developed the knowledge, systems, and the processes to retail age restricted products in a safe and responsible manner. The 'Show Me I.D - Be Age OK' training module will help to

reinforce our existing strong practices.

"We recognise the significant role our stores play in local communities and we prioritise the protection of minors by upholding high standards and complying with the law. I encourage all retail and hospitality staff

nationwide to visit the Show Me I.D website - on their phone, tablet or computer - and earn their certificate as a responsible trader."

For more information about the campaign and to access the free training module, please visit the Show Me ID website: www.showmeid.ie



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DUBLIN HURLER RONAN HAYES JOINS CRY IRELAND AS NEW AMBASSADOR

Cardiac Risk in the Young - CRY Ireland is delighted to reveal their new brand ambassador, esteemed Dublin hurler 'Ronan Hayes'. The Kilmacud Crokes and Inter-County player joins forces with CRY Ireland to highlight the crucial support the charity provides to affected individuals and families.

Ronan Hayes, with his impressive athletic background and commitment to community welfare, brings fresh energy to CRY Ireland's mission. His involvement aims to raise awareness about sudden cardiac death and inherited cardiac conditions and to support proactive measures

within the affected families.

Speaking on the partnership, Ronan said; "Sadly, I don't think there is a community out there that hasn't been impacted by or knows of someone impacted by Sudden Cardiac Death. Our young athletes are some of the fittest and otherwise healthy individuals in the country, therefore raising awareness around Sudden Cardiac Death and the support CRY Ireland provides to families affected is vital. I am delighted to be partnering with CRY Ireland, to highlight the crucial support they provide to those affected."

Lucia Ebbs, CEO of CRY

Ireland, says; "Ronan's commitment to raising awareness about Sudden Cardiac Death and his influence in the sports community make him an invaluable ambassador for CRY Ireland. We are excited to work together, and Ronan will help us in promoting fundraising campaigns and events and we're very grateful to Ronan donating his time."

CRY Ireland facilitates free access to cardiac assessments to families impacted by Sudden Cardiac Death or those living with an Inherited Cardiac Condition, a Family Support Programme, as well as providing a freephone Helpline. As a self-funded



Photo: John Ohle / Photocall Ireland

registered charity, CRY relies primarily on funds raised through various fundraising events. To learn more or to donate, please visit www.cry.ie.

PALMERSTOWN GREEN-SCHOOL AWARDED AS IRELAND'S TOP PRIMARY CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

An Taisce's latest programme development, Primary Climate Ambassadors, celebrated the second ever annual awards at Richmond Barracks in Dublin recently. Minister of State, Ossian Smyth, congratulated all 22 primary schools from Dublin, Wicklow, Louth, Donegal, Roscommon, Offaly, Carlow, Cork, Clare, Sligo, Galway, Waterford, Tipperary, and Limerick; "I want to thank all of you here today for your dedication to Green-Schools, you are a shining example of leadership as Primary Climate Ambassadors for your community.

I hope you are all immensely proud of what you have achieved." The pilot programme is funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications under the National Dialogue on Climate Action.

Exceptional Green-Schools who have achieved all ten Green Flags over the last 20 years were invited to participate in the pilot. Over 600 students representing 37 schools were trained in basic climate science, solutions, communications and action. Collectively, these students then completed 50 challenges central to climate literacy, mitigation and adaptation including Blooming Brilliant; Grow It Yourself, and the latest addition; I Like to Move It. Grainne

Ryan, Climate Action Manager said "this programme aims to consolidate the historic environmental work your Green-Schools have committed to. We want climate education to empower students and teachers, we wish everyone in Ireland felt the benefits of being closer to nature and we recognise your schools as places of inspiring climate action for the whole community."

Once a climate challenge was completed, teams submitted a short online survey to assess what they learned, what actions they took and how they communicated these to the wider school, home and local communities. Emphasis was placed on creative climate action, via poster competitions, sculpture showcases and raps.

The programme encourages Primary Climate Ambassadors to participate in outdoor classroom activities through building mini ponds, rainwater harvesting and composting food waste. Teams crafted a final video report to encourage the senior primary students to familiarize themselves with editing mixed media.

An online leaderboard was also shared, where schools could earn additional carbon credits with each challenge completed.

The top three schools nationwide included National School, Palmerstown, Ms. Fiona Slaughter and The Green Beans. 1st place was awarded to St. Brigid's Girls'



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BYD DOLPHIN EV IS FULL OF EASTERN PROMISE

By Breda Corrigan

The BYD brand may be a new entrant to the Irish new car market, but the Chinese company started in 1995 as a battery manufacturer and is now the world's leading manufacturer of new energy vehicles and power batteries. BYD employs more than 90,000 engineers - 30,000 of which have either a Masters or Honours degree, with the company granted an average of 15 global patents every day.

BYD has successfully mastered the core technology in the new EV industrial chain, and that means that the power battery, electric motor, electric controller and conductor chips are all made in-house. In fact, over 70 percent of BYD's vehicle components are self-supplied, creating a competitive advantage with regards to build time and margins. BYD's head car designer is the highly-acclaimed 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. The German native leads a team of immensely talented and creative designers who have given the Dolphin a visually appealing European look.

Current Trim Levels.

Presently, the BYD Dolphin is available in Comfort & Design trim levels, with lower-spec Active & Boost trim levels due to join the range soon. Both Comfort & Design variants are powered by the same 60.4kWh Blade battery that produces 201bhp (204PS) and 310Nm of instant torque. In keeping with the demands of modern family life, the only body style available in the Dolphin is a practical 5-door hatchback.

Game-Changing EV Tech.

In terms of size, the Dolphin realistically sits between

traditional B- and C-segment hatchbacks, being slightly longer than the Opel Corsa and Peugeot 208, but marginally shorter than a VW ID.3. The fully-electric BYD Dolphin may be relatively small in stature, but it is a car that the Chinese brand has big hopes for. The value-focused hatchback brings to three the number of BYD models currently available in Ireland, with the Atto 3 and Seal being the other two. Combining BYD's game-changing EV technology with an abundance of standard equipment and its playful 'Ocean Aesthetics' design concept, the Dolphin represents what BYD says is 'the epitome of safe, efficient and practical eco-friendly motoring, priced to make high-tech electric mobility accessible to more consumers'. The Dolphin's rounded profile and side silhouette resemble what its designers call 'the graceful lines of a leaping dolphin'. The Dolphin is available in a choice of single-tone and two-tone colour combinations (model dependent) that also echo the colours inside the car to create a feeling of exclusivity. Measuring 4,290 mm long, 1,570 mm high, and 1,770 mm wide, its 2,700 mm wheelbase and short front/rear overhangs combine to give it a more spacious appearance, optimised for space and passenger comfort.

Highly-Efficient Blade Battery.

The Dolphin's highly-efficient 60.4kWh Blade battery is a lithium-ion phosphate (LFP) battery which is manufactured by FinDreams Battery, a subsidiary of BYD, and it is claimed to be thinner and safer than typical EV batteries. It boasts a range of 427km (WLTP), with a 30% to 80% fast charging speed of 29 minutes. BYD claims that in a nail spike test where the battery is impaled with a nail, the Blade battery emitted no smoke or fire after being pierced, and its surface

temperature reached only 30 to 60-degrees Celsius. In the same test, a three-layered lithium battery would exceed 500-degrees Celsius and subsequently burned. The e-Platform 3.0 modular car platform that underpins the Dolphin offers improved integration of BYD's proprietary Blade battery technology with an improved pure electric frame with doubled torsional stiffness. It also features a more efficient 8-in-1 module for the drive system, along with a direct cooling and heating system for the battery pack to increase thermal efficiency by up to 20%. This platform is also used to underpin the BYD Atto 3, which was launched in Ireland in 2023, and the recently-launched BYD Seal.

Abundance of Safety Features.

Standard across the board is an abundance of safety and advanced driver assistance features. Cutting-edge lighting technology provides a broader beam of light to enhance visibility when driving at night, with High Beam Assist, Adaptive Front Headlights and Follow Me Home lighting as standard. All models come equipped with Forward Collision Warning, Autonomous Emergency Braking, Rear Collision Warning, Rear Cross Traffic Alert and Rear Cross Traffic Brake, Lane Departure Prevention and Emergency Lane Keeping Assist, Adaptive Cruise Control and Intelligent Cruise Control. A panoramic camera gives the driver 360-degree visibility for safe vehicle manoeuvring. Additional driver aids include Blind Spot Detection System, Electronic Stability Control, Traction Control, Hill Decent Control, Automatic Vehicle Hold, and Traffic Sign Recognition with Intelligent Speed Limit Control.

Test Car.

My test car was a Dolphin Design in striking Surfing



Blue and Urban Grey two-tone paintwork. In addition to a genuinely-impressive array of standard features in Comfort trim, key additional standard features in Design trim include a panoramic roof, a smartphone wireless charger and a choice of no-cost two-tone paint colour options. The 201bhp electric motor sends power to the Dolphin's front wheels in a smooth and fuss-free manner, and a 0-100km/h sprint can be completed in just 7.0-seconds, on its way to a top speed of 160km/h (where permitted). The car steers in a reassuringly direct manner and there is plenty of grip from the tyres when cornering. Thanks to the Dolphin's accomplished ride quality, the ergonomic cabin is a pleasurable place to be.

The gear selector is located at the bottom of the centre console and it is a joy to use. You simply flick the selector forward for Drive and rearwards for Reverse, with the Park function activated by way of an adjacent push-button switch. Drivers can choose from Sport, Normal and Eco drive modes which alter the steering weight and throttle response but, no matter what mode is selected, the one thing that remains constant is the sprightly nature of the electric motor. The Dolphin is a relaxing car to drive through congested city streets, but it feels equally

at ease at motorway speeds too.

Light & Airy Cabin.

The cabin in the Dolphin has a light and airy feel, with space for up to five occupants. The stylish dash is dominated by a large, 12.8-inch central touchscreen that rotates between landscape and portrait at the touch of a button. The screen responds to touch commands quickly and the on-screen graphics are reasonably sharp. Ergonomically-designed front sports seats and headrests are made from vegan leather, as are the rear seats and multi-function steering wheel. Front seats have 6-way electric adjustment for the driver and 4-way electric adjustment for the front passenger, both of which have shoulder and back support, optimised with body-hugging wings for a more comfortable, wraparound experience. Passenger space within the cabin is equally impressive, as a six-foot tall occupant can sit behind an equally tall driver in relative comfort. The well-proportioned boot has a capacity of 345-litres behind the rear seats, but this increases to 1,310-litres with the rear seats folded down. The boot has a variable-height floor than can section off storage space for the electric charging cables underneath, and the cabin benefits from over 20

tucked-away storage spaces for enhanced practicality. The Dolphin also comes with a 3.3kW external discharge 'vehicle-to-load' facility which can be used to charge accessories and power external devices.

Verdict, Pricing & Warranty.

The new fully-electric BYD Dolphin is a highly commendable and extremely capable compact hatchback that is great to drive, cleverly packaged, and very well equipped. It has an impressive real-world driving range along with easy charging options at home, or on the road. Its competitive price offering on the Irish market will appeal to eco-friendly motorists keen to embrace lower-cost, emissions-free, all-electric motoring. Buyers in the market for a well-rounded, fully-electric compact hatchback should certainly have the Dolphin on their shopping list. It really is that good. The BYD Dolphin Comfort (60.4kWh) is priced from just €29,318 (inclusive of metallic paint), with the Design specification model (as tested) priced at €31,192. All BYD cars are supplied with a comprehensive 6-year/150,000km vehicle warranty, an 8-year/200,000km battery warranty, and a 12-year/unlimited mileage anti-corrosion warranty as standard.

FAMILIES BATTLING RARE CONDITION 'FORCED TO FIGHT FOR STATE SUPPORT'

The mother of a young Dublin woman battling an extremely painful skin condition has told how the lack of co-ordinated support from the State has made parents 'prisoners' in their children's lives. Liz Collins from Terenure has had to deal with a multitude of agencies and carers in a 20-year battle to secure home nursing care for her daughter Claudia, who endures the most severe form of epidermolysis bullosa (EB).

"Every chapter of Claudia's life brings new challenges, dressings have to be done 365 days a year; it's a horrible place to be, like being stuck in a hole you can't get out of," said Ms Collins, speaking as national EB charity Debra launched its 2025 pre-Budget submission. "EB has shaped our whole lives because it was and still is in control, it is a monster."

Debra, the charity that supports families and

everyone with the painful genetic condition, claims that the current model of service is pushing families to fight unnecessarily for supports. It insists a ring-fenced fund of €600,000 for home nursing care would alleviate some of the heavy burden of the lifelong, incurable disease.

While Claudia, 20, now has a level of home care, her parents do not have a care co-ordinator - also seen as central to joining together the different aspects of care. "Everything is a battle and nothing is straight-forward," said Dublin-based Ms Collins. "Carers often feel like prisoners because the current level of care is fragmented, fragile and not properly co-ordinated."

"Many people strongly make their case for support, they might win and get allocated home nursing hours but sometimes there's no nurses to provide these hours,

so it's outsourced. "The managing of a care package, planning, scheduling and communication is key to properly looking after someone with EB."

People with the condition are missing the essential proteins that bind the skin's layers together, so any minor friction, movement or trauma causes it to break and blister. In Claudia's case (recessive dystrophic EB), skin must be re-banded several times a week to prevent blister infection in a painful process taking hours at a time. Debra is also asking the Government to provide a further €95,000 in the 2025 health budget, to include *€45,000/annum for a specialist outreach nurse who would be able to manage complex wounds and infections for adults in the community, reducing the risk of hospitalisation;

*€30,000 for increased psychological support at



St James's Hospital to safeguard the mental health of EB patients, whose quality of life is affected by constant pain; *€20,000 to provide regional points of contact, support and advice for EB patients in Ireland as

up to 15 sub-specialities can be needed for their care.

"The emotional and physical toll on families is significant, with many carers feeling overwhelmed, isolated and out of their depth," said

Debra CEO, Jimmy Fearon. "We are calling on the Government to prioritise additional acute and regional supports to meet the unique needs of people living with or caring for someone with EB."

TACKLING EXORBITANT ELECTRICITY PRICES

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has said that Government inertia has led to spiralling electricity costs which are costing workers and families an extra €700 a year on average compared to their European neighbours.

Speaking after a recent debate in the Dáil where Sinn Féin put forward its alternative Teachta Crowe said "Ireland has some of the highest electricity prices in Europe. On average, we pay prices that are 60% higher than our European neighbours, a whopping €700 a year more. "This is a direct result of decades of successive Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Green led Governments failing to invest in renewable energy, leaving the State overly reliant on dirty and expensive fossil fuel imports, energy insecurity, and exposed to the mood swings of the international market.

"Renewable energy is bankable energy security. Not only would a greater investment in renewable energy help us reach our carbon emissions targets, but by relying less on the foreign energy market, we could weather any spikes in prices caused by global events such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine or OPEC's recent reduction in production.

"We must also ramp up our retrofitting plans. There must be increased funding and radical reform of the Government's current regressive retrofitting and Solar Photovoltaic Scheme, in order to target those who need it most coupled with an accessible, affordable and efficiently tiered, area-based schemes for retrofitting and Solar PV and a dedicated fund for the retrofitting of solid fuel homes

"Government inaction is at the heart of Ireland's rip-off prices. Sinn Féin in government would tackle the exorbitant price of electricity in Ireland and give ordinary workers and families a break from unacceptable electricity prices."

NEW MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECTED IN SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL



Following the Annual Meeting which took place in County Hall, Tallaght on June 21st, Cllr. Baby Pereppadan(FG) who represents Tallaght South was elected as the new Mayor of South Dublin County Council by his peers for the upcoming Council year. Mayor Pereppadan succeeds Cllr. Alan Edge(Ind) in the role. Cllr. Alan Hayes(Ind) from Palmerstown - Fonthill has also been elected as the new Deputy Mayor for the upcoming Council year, succeeding Cllr. Yvonne Collins (FF). Speaking on his hopes for the coming year, Mayor Pereppadan said "Thank you to my colleagues who have entrusted me with this responsibility. I won't let you down. This position is not just a title. It's a commitment to the residents of South Dublin, to listen, to advocate and to work tirelessly for the betterment of our community. I am looking forward to working across party lines and with staff here at the Council to make South Dublin a more inclusive place to live, work and build a family." Mayor Pereppadan was joined by his friends and family for the Annual Meeting, including his son Cllr. Britto Pereppadan, who was recently elected to the Tallaght Central area.

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G.L

MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful

eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. With grateful thanks to Our Lady for favours received. And thanks to the Sacred Heart for favours received.
M.K

MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. With grateful thanks to Our Lady for favours received.

And thanks to the Sacred Heart for favours received. W.K

MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. With grateful thanks to Our Lady for favours received. And thanks to the Sacred Heart for favours received.
L.R

MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus,

and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. With grateful thanks to Our Lady for favours received. And thanks to the Sacred Heart for favours received.
S.R

MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how

impossible. Never known to fail. With grateful thanks to Our Lady for favours received. And thanks to the Sacred Heart for favours received.
F.R

O most beautiful Flower of Mount Carmel, Fruitful Vine, Splendour of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me this my necessity. O Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my Mother. O Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart, to succour me in this necessity; there are none that can withstand your power. O, show me herein you are my Mother, O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. (3 times) Sweet Mother, I place this cause in your hands. (3 times) I.B

If you would like a Novena published please send a postal order or cheque (Minimum of €10 per prayer) made out to Laura Lynn Children's Hospice, along with your Novena to:

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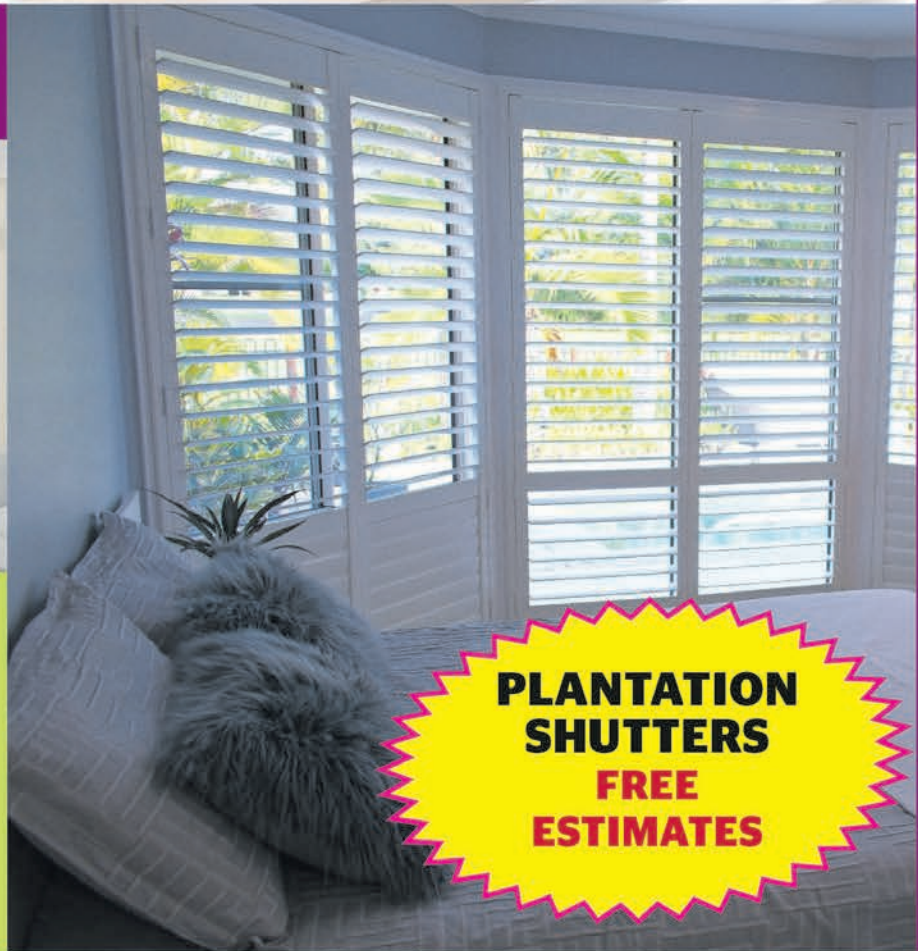
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