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## LONG CAMHS WAITING TIMES CANNOT BECOME THE NEW NORMAL FOR INCOMING GOVERNMENT

Mark Ward TD has outlined how the new Government will be judged on their performance in youth mental health. Deputy Ward was speaking after receiving a parliamentary question with the most up to date Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) waiting figures.

Teachta Ward said "2025 is a new year and soon we will have a new government. Let me be clear from the outset that I think the reality of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael returning to government, being propped up by

independents, is the worst outcome for people who are struggling with their mental health, particularly our young people.

"In the last Dáil, I was selected to be the Sinn Féin spokesperson on mental health. I stated that I would work collaboratively with Minister Mary Butler. When we look at CAMHS figures in 2020 and compare them to today it is clear that she failed in her role. "When the previous government was formed young people waiting for first time appointments stood at 2115, today this

stands at 3833, an 81% increase.

"When we look at young people waiting more than a year, this figure has increased by 145% from 223 to 546. "The last government utterly failed children with mental health difficulties.

"While the recent figure will be the new barometer for the incoming government, we cannot forget where these numbers used to be. "Nothing in the programme for government is going to give confidence to young people and their families that things

will improve. "We have to remember that the reform of the Mental Health Act 2001 was included in the previous programme for government and they failed to achieve this despite having the length of time that they did. "The regulation of CAMHS could have been achieved in the last Dáil and will be the bare minimum for this new Dáil. "I have always said that behind each of these statistics is a child with hopes and dreams, and if this government continues to fail in mental health, then more children will be left behind. This cannot happen."

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# SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL SHORTLISTED IN 11 CATEGORIES FOR LAMA ALL-IRELAND COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL AWARDS 2025

South Dublin County Council has been shortlisted for 11 categories in the LAMA All Ireland Community and Council Awards 2025. These awards recognise and celebrate communities and Councils working together, providing a great opportunity to celebrate this work, reward our unsung heroes and acknowledging their phenomenal contributions.

Awards will be presented across twenty-five different categories, including an overall award for Council of the Year, with South Dublin people and projects shortlisted for the

following awards: Council of the Year. National Impact Award: Clonburris - A Transformative Vision and a Model for Sustainable Urban Development. Best Local Authority Energy Decarbonisation Award: Heatworks District Heating Scheme. Best Enterprise and Startup Hub: Work IQ and Innovation Quarter Tallaght. Best Energy Smart Initiative: Community Climate Action Fund. Best Community Wellbeing Initiative: Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme. Best CSR Project in the Community: Think Big Space/AWS in the Community. Best

Environmental/Ecological Project: Mini Woodlands & Stepping Stones Forest. Best Communications: International Protection - Fact/Fiction. Community Volunteer of the Year: Bernie Roche and Emilia Calinska. And Best Business working with the Community: Kennys of Lucan and Toner Transport.

These nominations continue South Dublin's successful history at the LAMA awards, with many shortlisted and winning projects over the years, including most recent wins for the South Dublin Volunteer Centre and Waterstown Park, reflecting the strength of collaboration and partnership with local communities.

Speaking on the nominations, Mayor of South Dublin County Council Cllr. Baby Pereppadan said: "We are thrilled and honoured to have been shortlisted in 11 categories for the 2025 LAMA Awards. This is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and vision

of everyone involved in continually striving to make South Dublin a better place to live, work, and visit. These nominations reflect our ongoing commitment to excellence in public service, and we look forward to celebrating the achievements of our County at the upcoming awards ceremony."

Chief Executive of South

Dublin County Council Colm Ward added: "It is really positive to again see a significant and varied number of shortlisted nominations for South Dublin in the LAMA All-Ireland Community and Council Awards this year, particularly the prestigious Council of the Year award. Such recognition reflects the great work and commitment of staff, Councillors and various partners to deliver

projects with and for local communities that create greater opportunity for all in South Dublin, helping to meet the needs and ambitions of everyone here."

The LAMA All-Ireland Community and Council Awards, now in their 19th year, will take place on Saturday 22nd February 2025 in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork.



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## COUNCILLOR EXPRESSES SERIOUS CONCERN OVER HOUSING MAINTENANCE RESPONSE TIMES IN SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

People Before Profit Councillor Madeleine Johansson has voiced serious concerns over the inadequate response times for housing maintenance in South Dublin County Council (SDCC), particularly in the Balgaddy area. Speaking following the latest meeting of the Lucan/Palmerstown/North Clondalkin Area Committee on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, Cllr Johansson highlighted the ongoing delays tenants face when requesting essential repairs. In response to these issues, she tabled a motion calling on SDCC to ensure that all maintenance requests assigned to a

contractor in Balgaddy are completed within four weeks of being logged. Councillor Johansson criticised the Council's current approach, pointing to a pattern of maintenance requests going unanswered for extended periods, leaving tenants frustrated and struggling with persistent issues in their homes. "There is a clear and unacceptable pattern of maintenance requests not being responded to in a timely manner. Many tenants have to contact the Council multiple times before any action is taken, and in some cases, their requests are ignored entirely. This is not good enough. People deserve

safe and well-maintained homes, and it is the Council's responsibility to deliver that. Tenants should not have to contact councillors in order to get issues fixed." said Cllr Johansson.

While SDCC has outlined response timelines for various categories of repairs, reports from residents indicate that these targets are frequently missed. In 2024, 639 work orders were completed in Balgaddy, but ongoing complaints suggest that many tenants continue to experience unacceptable delays.

Cllr Johansson is urging the Council to adopt a more proactive approach, ensuring that all maintenance issues are resolved swiftly and effectively. "A four-week timeframe for contractor-assigned repairs in Balgaddy is a reasonable request. The Council needs to step up and prioritise the basic needs of tenants who have been waiting far too long for necessary repairs," she concluded.

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# GREEN-SCHOOLS RELAUNCHES ITS ENERGY THEME FEATURING TALLAGHT STUDENTS

Recently, at St Mark's Junior National School in Tallaght, An Taisce Green-Schools officially relaunched its energy theme for primary and secondary schools around the country, thanks to its new partnership with EirGrid, the operator and developer of Ireland's electricity grid.

To date, over 3000 schools have been awarded the energy flag since the beginning of the Green-Schools' programme in 1997, with great interest already received for participation in the coming year. During the 2023-24 school year, schools saved a combined 18 million kWh of electricity, equivalent to 58 million cups of tea, due to their participation in the Green-Schools' programme, proving that interest in energy is strong among Ireland's school children.

Now, with a formal structure in place thanks to this exciting new partnership with EirGrid, the energy theme will encourage

primary and secondary school children to develop their awareness around energy conservation and how to effectively manage this important resource in our schools and homes.

Speaking at the official launch of the partnership at St Mark's Junior National School, Tallaght, Suzanne Collins, Head of Public Relations, EirGrid said "This partnership represents an incredible opportunity to engage young people in a tangible and impactful way, to empower students to lead the charge for positive change in their communities and we look forward to an exciting year of learning ahead."

At EirGrid we believe that addressing energy challenges requires everyone's participation and we're excited to collaborate with An Taisce's Green-Schools' energy theme to make energy conservation a shared priority together," added Collins. Joanne Scott, Green School's Programme

Manager added: "We are incredibly excited to relaunch the energy theme to schools, and we couldn't do it without the support of EirGrid. Our goal is to empower both students and

teachers to take meaningful action in reducing energy consumption, while fostering a deeper understanding of where our energy comes from and how we can manage it more sustainably

for the future." The Green-Schools' Energy programme has an exciting year lined up with a series of four regional workshops planned for early 2025, our first ever dedicated Green Schools' Energy Week

with free online activities and learning about all things energy, and more to follow.

To find out how your school can take part, visit [www.greenschoolsireland.org](http://www.greenschoolsireland.org)



Pictured are students from St Mark's Junior National School in Tallaght relaunching the An Taisce Green-Schools energy theme for primary and secondary schools around the country. Photography: Conor Healy / Picture It Photography.

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# TALLAGHT DISTRICT HEATING SCHEME WINS ENERGY GLOBE AWARD 2024

South Dublin County Council are delighted to announce that the Tallaght District Heating Scheme has been awarded the prestigious Energy Globe Award 2024 for Ireland, recognising its significant contribution to sustainable heating and carbon reduction in the Tallaght area. The Energy Globe Award is an environmental prize, awarded to sustainable projects. Heatworks will now go forward to represent Ireland at the International Awards Ceremony, held annually in Austria. Operating under the not-for-profit utility Heat Works and fully owned by South Dublin County Council, this innovative district heating scheme is the first of its kind in Ireland.

solutions in reducing carbon emissions and supporting sustainable development in Ireland. For more information, visit [www.heatworks.ie](http://www.heatworks.ie).



Pictured Admir Shala District Heating Development Manager, Melitta Schubert Ambassador of Austria to Ireland, Teresa Walsh Director of Services South Dublin County Council, Therese Pender Senior Architect South Dublin County Council and Josef Treml, Trade Commissioner & Commercial Counsellor, Austrian Embassy.

By reusing waste heat from a nearby data centre, the scheme provides efficient, low-carbon heating to a number of public buildings in the area, including South Dublin County Council facilities and TU Dublin buildings. This innovative approach reduces carbon emissions by approximately 1,500 tonnes annually, making a significant impact on the nation's decarbonization efforts.

Looking ahead, the project is set to expand in 2025, connecting 133 affordable apartments to the network and further extending its reach to provide sustainable heating solutions for the Tallaght area. This award highlights the important role of innovative energy

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# SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL CERTIFIED AS A CPD ACCREDITED EMPLOYER FOR ANOTHER THREE YEARS

South Dublin County Council is delighted to announce that the organisation has again achieved the maximum three-year certification as an Engineers Ireland CPD (Continuing Professional Development) Accredited Employer.

SDCC is one of twenty-four Public Sector Bodies that hold this accreditation. Having first received the accreditation in 2009, this continues SDCC's inclusion amongst an exclusive network of organisations that have demonstrated commitment to the professional development of Engineering and Technical staff.

The accreditation process has proven to be very beneficial in driving continuous improvement of SDCC works programmes, ensuring sustainability and developing a comprehensive mentoring / coaching programme. CPD is the commitment and provision of opportunities for ongoing

training and development throughout an individual's career.

Recognising this achievement, Colm Ward, Chief Executive, South Dublin County Council, said "We are delighted to continue our long-standing reputation as an Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer. This significant achievement showcases South Dublin County Council as an employer of choice for Engineers/Technicians and enhances our organisational goal of attracting and retaining the best talent."

As part of the accreditation, an Engineers Ireland Audit Committee provide guidance on how organisations can update their CPD goals. The SDCC CPD Committee will now work to incorporate these recommendations over the lifespan of the accreditation and Lorna Maxwell, Director of Services, Corporate Performance and Change Management stated that "South Dublin County

Council is fully committed to promoting an environment where all staff can enhance their skills with confidence, maximising the benefits of CPD for themselves and the council. This commitment is

clearly shown in the award of this accreditation and will allow for continued development in this area."

Along with the recognition this award brings to the

council, it also allows the SDCC CPD Committee to liaise with Engineers Ireland on potential CPD opportunities, gather industry knowledge and seek advice on how best to support our Engineers/

Technicians in developing their skills.

All these positive steps allow the council to provide the best possible service to South Dublin County and its citizens.



Pictured Colm Ward SDCC CEO, Michael McAdam (SDCC Senior Executive Officer), Lorna Maxwell Director of Corporate Performance and Change Management, Richie McCormack, Robbie Murtagh (County Promotions), Clodagh Butler and Gary Walsh with the Certificate to show that South Dublin County Council has been accredited by Engineers Ireland. Pic credit: Ben Ryan.




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# MASS CANCELLATION OF BUSES ON PRIVATISED ROUTES

Passengers are being let down by private operators of public transport, according to Paul Murphy TD.

Following a week of complaints from constituents about cancelled and no-show buses on the S4, S6 and S8 routes operated by the private company Go-Ahead, the TD for Dublin South West has blamed the 'privatisation experiment' and called for public transport to be run on a public, not-for-profit basis.

"I have been inundated with complaints in the last few days of buses being cancelled or simply not showing up. We are not just talking about a ghost bus here or there, but in some cases half the buses appear to have been cancelled, leaving people late for work. This has been an ongoing issue with these

privately operated routes, but it has gotten ridiculous now." The TD pointed to data from [noshowbus.ie](http://noshowbus.ie) which showed that the Go-Ahead route S6 has the highest rate of reported 'ghost buses', where a scheduled bus simply does not show up at the bus stop as promised. Between October 16th and December 3rd public transport users reported 48 'ghost buses' on the S6 route alone. In a statement, Go-Ahead acknowledged the S6 and other routes "have recently experienced service frequency issues" citing "a combination of factors" including a shortage of mechanics.

However the People Before Profit TD said this excuse is simply not good enough.

"Public transport must be

frequent and reliable, we cannot have people standing in the cold, watching the countdown for the arrival of a promised bus only for it to never show up and they have no way of knowing if the next one will be the same. It's not just GoAhead, I have also heard multiple complaints about the Dublin Coach intercity services, with buses not showing up or breaking down with increasing regularity, and no customer service available to contact out of hours. This is simply not good enough.

He also criticised TransDev, the private operator of the Luas, for "dragging their feet" on proposals for increased capacity on the Luas. In 2023 the National Transport Authority reported it was working to try "increase service frequencies on both luas lines". The initial proposals to increase frequency in the morning and evening rush and on weekends were not accepted by TransDev, resulting in a lower frequency compromise which is due to come into place later this year. For

instance, the initial proposal had been for 5 extra services on the Red Line at weekday morning peak times, but after negotiations only 2 extra are being put on.

"While I welcome the increased frequency, the truth is it is not enough to actually address the overcrowding we see on the Luas. I agree with the initial proposals as an immediate step, in fact I'd like to see even greater increases in frequency, and it is very disappointing to see these proposals watered down."

He has also raised concerns about the Dublin Coach inter-city services, saying he has heard of numerous complaints of ghost buses and breakdowns on this service as well. The socialist TD said that he would be pushing for increased frequency and reliability on public transport routes, and argued that public ownership of public transport would make that easier.

"Public transport should be a public service. Having a whole slew of for-profit

middle men, squeezing profits out of commuters and the state is unnecessary and in fact it is holding back the service. Instead we need to

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# DUBLIN COMMUNITY GARDENING GROUPS WANTED FOR BORD BIA BLOOM

Bord Bia is calling for local gardening groups and enthusiasts to participate at Bord Bia Bloom by designing and delivering their very own green space at the celebrated summer event. The popular Postcard Gardens feature provides community groups, schools, charitable organisations and garden clubs with the opportunity to tell local stories to a national audience through creative garden design. The Postcard Gardens are one of the many horticultural attractions at the much-loved flowers, food and family festival which returns to the Phoenix Park, Dublin for five days over the June Bank Holiday Weekend (May 29th - June 2nd, 2025).

Kerrie Gardiner, Showgardens and Horticulture Content Manager, Bord Bia Bloom said, "The pretty and petite Postcard Gardens are a much-loved feature each year at Bord Bia Bloom and for good reason! These green canvases transport visitors into local communities through storytelling, using the medium of planting to bring concepts to life. Last year's showcase included themes of mini forests, Irish mythology, biodiversity, charitable issues and even mathematical sequencing! We look forward to receiving applications of fresh, new ideas from interested parties of all ages from right around

the country."

Postcard Gardens

As the name suggests, the gardens, which measure just 3m x 2m, are proof that wonderful outdoor spaces can be created at any size. Returning for 2025 as sponsor of the popular feature is Tirlán CountryLife. The 100% farmer-owned group has qualified horticulturists in its garden centres to provide helpful tips and advice to newbie customers and seasoned gardeners alike.

Commenting, Ann Meaney, Chief Marketing & Customer Experience Officer, Tirlán said, "Tirlán CountryLife is delighted to sponsor the Bord Bia Bloom Postcard Gardens for a second year. This partnership showcases our longstanding commitment to sustainability and community engagement. We operate a network of 15 garden centres in communities across the southeast and midlands, all of which have their own in-store horticulturists. Bloom and the Postcard Gardens provides a unique platform for gardening enthusiasts right across the country, along with showcasing the power of community gardening.

We're excited to once again bring our passion for horticulture to life through this incredible event and can't wait to see the

creativity of this year's participants."

Now in its 19th year, Bord Bia Bloom will return to its home in the Phoenix Park, Dublin from Thursday May 29th - Monday June 2nd, 2025. Visitors to this year's event can expect another colourful mix of inspiring show gardens designed by leading garden designers, expert horticultural talks and advice, a vast collection of rare and quality plants from Irish and International plant nurseries, sustainable living discussions along with delicious local food and interactive entertainment for visitors of all ages. Commenting, Laura Douglas, Head of Bord Bia Bloom and Brand Partnerships said "What makes Bord Bia Bloom one of Ireland's most popular festivals is its unique offering. Whatever your age, there are ways to connect with nature and sustainable living; sample some of the country's best food and drink, enjoy live entertainment and soak up the summer feeling in a beautiful setting. "We are always looking for ways to enhance the visitor experience so that attendees feel inspired, entertained and informed and we cannot do this without the help of some key partners. We are thrilled that Tirlán CountryLife is once again supporting our Postcard Gardens this year and with

its strong horticultural presence and expertise, we believe that it will help us to continue to engage new gardeners and deliver

a world-class, immersive experience."

For more information on the Postcard Gardens and

to download an application form, visit [BordBiaBloom.com](http://BordBiaBloom.com). The closing date for applications is Thursday, March 6th, 2025

## STEP UP FOR CHILDREN'S PALLIATIVE CARE WITH 150K IN FEBRUARY

LauraLynn Ireland's Children's Hospice invites people to dust off their runners and challenge themselves to walk 150km throughout the month of February. LauraLynn is asking the public to take on the sponsored challenge, walking, jogging or running about 5.5km per day in February. The challenge is an important fundraiser for the Children's Hospice supporting children with life-limiting conditions and their families.

LauraLynn Fundraising Executive Cathy White commented: "Taking part in the '150k in February' challenge is a great way to get outdoors now that the evenings are getting longer. We are asking people to walk or run and just have some fun while raising much needed funds for LauraLynn.

These funds will allow us to continue supporting children with palliative care needs and their families all

over Ireland." To take part participants register on the LauraLynn website where they will receive a T-shirt, as well as their own sponsorship page.

Funds raised from the "150K in February" challenge will help LauraLynn provide essential care and support to children with life-limiting conditions and their families from across the country.

Whether you walk or run regularly, or are

trying to get more active as part of your new year's resolutions this challenge is for everyone. Participants can share their experiences and photos on social media using the hashtag #TeamLauraLynn and join the dedicated Facebook group to connect with others taking part in the challenge.

For more information or to register go to [lauralynn.ie/150K](http://lauralynn.ie/150K) or contact Cathy at [challenges@lauralynn.ie](mailto:challenges@lauralynn.ie).



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# DAIRE FLOCK TO COMPETE IN THE RENAULT CLIO CUP SERIES EUROPE IN 2025

Daire Flock will be competing in the 2025 European Renault Clio Cup Series, in 2024, Daire entered the revised Clio Cup GB series and made an instant impression with the Irish teenager Flock - winning multiple races and ultimately narrowly missing out on the Drivers' Championship by a handful of points.

Dublin-born racer Flock entered the Junior Saloon Car Championship in 2022 and after gathering a year of learning, he returned to the series in 2023 and reigned supreme in style to be crowned champion. Now set to embark on his fourth year of racing, Flock and Westbourne Motorsport will once again look to make their mark, albeit this time overseas and against some of Europe's very best

Westbourne Motorsport will embark on an exciting

new challenge in 2025 with confirmation that they will enter the Renault Clio Cup Series with exciting young talent Daire Flock. Renowned as being one of the most competitive one-make categories in Europe since launching in 1991, the Renault Clio Cup Series comprises nine events and 18 races at iconic circuits such as Spa-Francorchamps, Imola, Circuit Paul Ricard and Monza. Boasting almost two decades of Clio Cup experience on British shores, Westbourne's entry into the European Championship marks a significant moment in the West Sussex squad's illustrious history.

Daire Flock, Westbourne Motorsport Driver said "It's a brand-new challenge with learning circuits and coming across new competitors and how they drive. "I'm setting my sights this year on being in contention for the Rookie

Championship, by the end of the season I would like to achieve consistent front end results plus overall podiums. "All this couldn't be possible without the backing from my sponsors, family and Westbourne Motorsport who are supporting me in my dream."

James Colburn, Westbourne Motorsport Team Principal commented "This announcement is both hugely exciting and significant for the team. Expanding into Europe is something that we've had our eyes on for some time however there was never really the right opportunity - until now. "Last year we were one of the first teams to sign up to the new Clio Cup GB series and we came oh-so close to winning the title with Daire.

While we could have stayed for a second season, the natural choice in Daire's



progression was to make the switch to the European stage.

"Daire has been a part of the Westbourne team since he commenced racing and we are extremely proud of what he has achieved in such a short space of time. He's going to be racing at all new

tracks to him and us but I've no doubt we'll be in the mix. "We are already looking at an extensive testing program to give Daire and the team the best opportunity to become acquainted with the circuits at the opening rounds so we are on the front foot."

As Daire Flock prepares

for the 2025 season, DF Motorsport invites fans and sponsors to follow and support this exciting journey in European motorsport, for more information, sponsorship opportunities and updates visit [dfmotorsport.co.uk](http://dfmotorsport.co.uk) or follow [daireflock22](https://twitter.com/daireflock22) on social media.

# QUARRYVALE PARK UPGRADE OFFICIALLY OPENED BY MAYOR, CLLR BABY PEREPPADAN

The 29th January 2025 marked the official opening of Quarryvale Park, following

an extensive upgrade, by the Mayor of South Dublin County Council, Cllr. Baby

Pereppadan. Speaking at the event, Cllr Pereppadan said: "Quarryvale Park has

been transformed into a welcoming, secure, and thriving neighbourhood park

designed to meet the growing needs of the community.

"I would like to extend my gratitude to the Public Realm Section of South Dublin County Council, who worked alongside Nicholas de Jong Associates Landscape and Urban Design Consultants to carry out the planning, design, and project management. A special thanks also goes to the project contractor, Breffni Group Ltd, for their excellent work in bringing the project to life".

The upgrade includes new and improved park entrances, a teen space featuring a full calisthenics workout area, a natural playground, relocated kick about area and new illuminated pathways. In addition, we have added soft landscaping and biodiversity enhancements including the planting of mature trees and meadow grass areas.

The combination of these various elements is the creation of an engaging space providing improved amenity and recreation opportunities within a greener environment for the surrounding community".

Cllr. Pereppadan also took the time to thank the local community and elected members for their support and contribution towards the design and construction of the space before cutting the ribbon to officially open the park.



Pictured: Mayor of SDCC Cllr. Baby Pereppadan, Colm Ward SDCC CEO and Teresa Walsh (SDCC Director of Service) with Mark Ward TD, Shane Moynihan TD, Cllr Niamh Fennell, Cllr Jackie Sheehy, Cllr Madeleine Johansson and Cllr Eoin O' Broin.

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# NATIONAL €1M COLLABORATION & INNOVATION FUND TO ADDRESS UNMET LITERACY NEEDS

The Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Programme Office, supported by SOLAS, has announced its call for community partners across Dublin and Dun Laoghaire to apply for key funding to address local and national unmet literacy needs through its €1 million Collaboration and Innovation Fund 2025. The €1 million fund will enable community partners across the Greater Dublin and Dun Laoghaire region and Ireland, to access important funding to reach adults with unmet literacy, numeracy, digital and financial literacy needs and to create literacy-friendly communities.

The call for applications to the fund is made following the recent release of the

latest literacy figures from the Programme for International Assessment for Adult Competencies (PIAAC), published by the OECD, with findings from the survey providing an overall picture of current literacy needs across the Irish adult population. Findings show, that in Ireland 1 in 4 adults struggle with everyday maths, 29% of adults are at Level 1 or below for adaptive problem solving, and 1 in 5 adults aged between 16-65, are at or below Level 1 in literacy, indicating that literacy is an important issue in society.

This means that around 700,000 adults in Ireland struggle with reading and understanding everyday

text, and may have difficulty completing common daily tasks like filling in a form, reading instructions on medicines, adding up a bill, and helping kids with homework.

Over the last number of years, the ALL Collaboration and Innovation Fund has supported around 150 innovative projects in communities across Ireland.

In the Dublin and Dun Laoghaire region, 2024 ALL Collaboration and Innovation funding supported the successful rollout of a Podcasting course for members of the Travelling community, an example of an effective and collaborative partnership by Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group and Blanchardstown's Adult Literacy Service. This targeted initiative supported members of the Travelling community who may have left school early or who had low literacy skills, presenting a unique opportunity for learners to improve their literacy skills and explore other means of communications of interest to them and their community.

Participants learned how to develop and create their unique 'Inclusion' podcast, while gaining greater access and support from

their local literacy service and enhancing their digital literacy skills.

Oral broadcasting also enabled learners to share their voice, portray their culture, and share unique stories and community events through the creation of a podcast.

This initiative also helped to give voice to how some people in the Travelling community can feel excluded because of their culture, history, and external influences. The initiative was a huge success with learners expressing an interest in progressing to other courses offered by Adult Literacy Services at Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB).

Nuala Nedjati, Regional Literacy Coordinator, at DDLETB said In 2024, several successful and transformative projects were delivered across the Dublin and Dun Laoghaire region, thanks to the ALL Collaboration and Innovation Fund. This funding helped to support learners with unmet literacy needs in Swords, Balbriggan, Blanchardstown, Tallaght, Lucan, Clondalkin, Dundrum, Loughlinstown, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin 15. Funding also enabled local literacy services to target hard-to-reach and vulnerable adults, while

offering a remarkable way to promote local Literacy services, and break taboos around unmet literacy needs. Through effective cross-community partnership and collaboration, we have been able to build on relationships and reach more people effectively, enabling learners to build confidence with literacy and participate more fully in society. I encourage more partners in Dublin and Dun Laoghaire to work together to create community initiatives that can help reduce the number of people with unmet literacy, digital literacy and numeracy needs and to apply to the fund by 5pm on Friday, 7th February."

Yvonne McKenna, Director of

the ALL Programme Office at SOLAS said "Through the ALL Collaboration and Innovation Fund we can move towards our goal of ensuring that all adults in Ireland have the literacy to meet their needs, and ensure we have a more literacy-aware and literacy-friendly society in Dublin and beyond. The Collaboration and Innovation Fund will help a range of learners including older adults, Travellers, migrants, lone parents, and early school leavers gain access to key supports to benefit their needs to participate more fully in society."

Find information on how to apply to the Collaboration and Innovation Fund at [adultliteracyforlife.ie/](http://adultliteracyforlife.ie/).



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## TEN THOUSAND ON TROLLEYS AS GOVERNMENT PLAYS STROKE POLITICS

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has criticised the incoming government for having lost perspective and being more concerned with pretending Michael Lowry is not in government and taking a two week holiday rather than solving the crises in health and housing that the people demanded be fixed during the election.

Teachta Crowe said “2025 has started much as 2024 ended. House prices are spiralling and thousands of people have had to endure lying on a hospital trolley. The CSO report that house prices rose by 9.6% in Dublin in the 12 months to November and almost 10,000 people have been recorded as being on a trolley in our hospitals since 1 January.

“Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have lost all sense of perspective. Instead of getting down to the business of fixing these crises, which they had a very real hand in creating, they decided instead to pick a fight about Michael Lowry being in government and opposition at the same time.

“The incoming government needs to get real and stop playing stroke politics. The people need solutions in health and housing. We cannot afford house prices that rise 10% year on year. We cannot allow 10,000 people a month to languish on trolleys when they need medical care.”

## DOHERTY ELECTED VICE CHAIR OF NEW EUROPEAN HOUSING COMMITTEE

MEP for Dublin, Regina Doherty, was recently elected as a Vice Chair of the new European Parliament Housing Committee. In this key influential leadership role she will shape the committee’s agenda to ensure its work delivers practical solutions to the housing challenges faced in Ireland and across Europe.

Speaking after her appointment, Doherty said “The people of Dublin made it loud and clear to me during the elections that they wanted Europe to do more on housing. The role as Vice Chair will enable me to ensure that Europe delivers concrete and actionable solutions to the housing challenges we face in Ireland.

“I will soon begin meeting with key figures from the construction industry in Ireland to explore how the EU can best support Ireland in increasing the supply of much-needed housing. Alongside my European

colleagues, we will take the best practice solutions from right across Europe to address Ireland’s housing challenges and implement effective strategies that deliver real results.

“It’s crucial for the committee to push for increased investment in up-skilling and re-skilling

our professionals in the construction sector. There are areas we have shortages of tradespeople like electricians, plumbers, and engineers and this must be addressed.

“The committee must also focus on dedicated housing to meet the needs of our ageing population, providing

older people with the option of right-sizing. “The housing crisis is not just limited to Dublin or Ireland, it’s prevalent in varying degrees right across the European Union.

The European Union exists to make its citizens lives better and increasing home ownership is soon to be a big part of that.”



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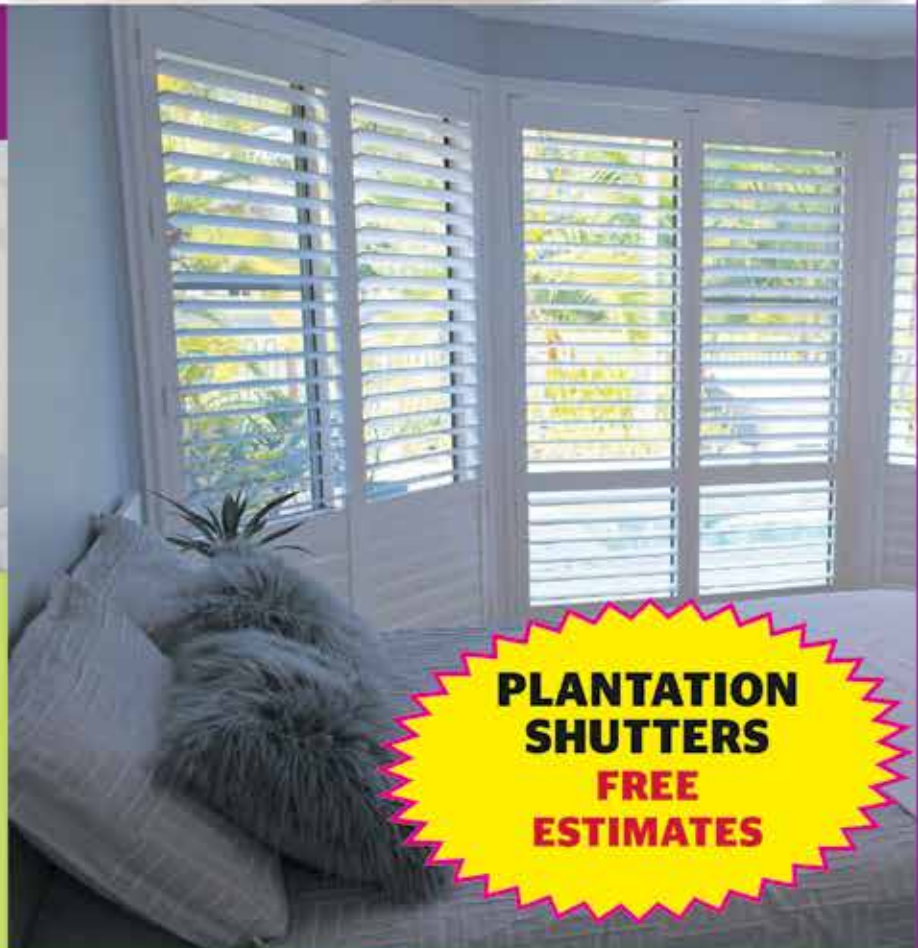
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