Cost of running a home is lower this year

AA Home Insurance have just released the findings of their latest survey on the cost of running a home. Every year for the last four years, AA have looked at the cost of maintaining and owning a home in Ireland. This year, for the first time in the period, the figure fell when compared to the previous year.

A homeowner, as defined by the survey, is a first-time buyer. This year, the average homeowner will spend €16,210.49 on household expenses, including mortgage repayments. In 2014, the cost was €16,432. This is due to falls in average mortgage rates, which are down 6.7% on last year.

These figures, however, do not represent those that bought their houses during the boom years. They are what the survey calls the “negative equity generation”, who are, in general, paying much more for mortgage repayments. They will pay, on average, 66.54% in repayments than someone buying a home in the latter part of this year.

The survey also takes in to account spending on things such as broadband, maintenance funds, heating, and electricity. These figures are correct as of September/October this year, and are, across the board, around 4% lower than this time last year.

Water charges are a new addition to costs this year.

One extra day’s training for teachers in 2016

Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O’Sullivan TD, has announced that there will be one additional day of closures each year for the next three years for primary schools. This day will be used to train teachers for the introduction of a new language curriculum.

The new language curriculum will see both English and Irish have the same teaching structures applied to them. September 2016 will focus on implementing new oral skills, while the subsequent two years will focus on reading and writing skills.

The programme will be introduced from next September, and will effect schoolchildren from Junior to Second class.

Speaking of the teachers, Minister O’Sullivan said “It is important that they receive the continuous professional development necessary to deliver this new language curriculum to our young children.”

A curriculum for children in Third through Sixth class is currently being developed. It is expected to be delivered in September 2019.
West Ireland gets Action Plan for Jobs

A “West Action Plan for Jobs” will be launched today, Monday 16 November. It will cover the Mayo, Roscommon and Galway area. It is valued at €250m, and is the fifth of eight proposed regional plans aimed at creating and sustaining jobs.

In the area covered by the Plan, 27,400 jobs were lost in the period between 2008—2011.

It is believed that the Plan will deliver growth of between 10% and 15% in the subsequent few years. Targets involved include an increase of 25% in both number of start-ups and survival rates of new businesses. Sectors such as agri-food and pharma will be targeted as job-makers.

Special attention will be given to Gaeltacht regions, and job creation within, in areas such as mariculture and food. The Wild Atlantic Way scheme, which has proved to be a success, will also be built upon.

Action Plans for Jobs have been employed already in the Midlands, South West, South East, and the Mid-West of the country.

More people homeless this winter than ever before

Ireland’s homelessness crisis is getting worse, in Dublin in particular. In October this year, 72 families with children sought help from homelessness charity Focus Ireland. Since October 2014, the number of children on the streets has doubled; from 680 to 1,425 (in emergency accommodation).

The number of families with children, and childless adults, has risen almost every month in the last twelve months.

Focus Ireland has said that demand for their services has risen by 44% in the last two years.

Taking these figures in to account, Alan Kelly TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and Paudie Coffey TD, Minister with Special Responsibility for Housing, Planning and Coordination of the Construction 2020 Strategy are due to host a Summit on homelessness today, Monday 16 November in the Custom House from 2.30pm to 4pm.

The Summit will also address the issue of preparedness for the winter. This comes following the death of Jonathan Corrie last December. Mr Corrie was discovered on Molesworth Street in Dublin 2 last December. It is believed that he froze to death while sleeping rough in the city.
Coming Up at Public Affairs Ireland

Training

Problem-Solving and Decision Making
Tuesday 17 November
9am to 4pm
PAI Main Office

Report Writing
Monday 23 November
9am to 1pm
PAI Main Office

Certificate in Public Law
2 day course
Tuesday 24 November
Wednesday 25 November
9am to 4pm, daily
PAI Main Office

On the Blog

Migration Patterns, into and around the OECD
PAI Editor Shauna Nimmo
Read here

Northern Ireland would suffer most from Brexit
PAI editor Shauna Nimmo
Read here

Multi-unit Developments Act 2011
Michael Williams
Read here

Will a new Investor Court System be introduced
as part of TTIP talks between the EU and USA?
Tom Ferris
Read here
Tuesday 17 November

2.00 p.m.
Questions (Minister for Social Protection)

3.15 p.m.
Leaders Questions

3.36 p.m.
Questions (Taoiseach)

4.36 p.m.
Order of Business

Motion re PQ Rota Change
(Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) (without debate)

5.06 p.m.
Topical Issues

Electoral (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 2015 - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages
(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)

Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2015 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage
(Department of Health)

7.30 p.m.
Private Members Business - Technical Group

9.00 p.m.
Afternoon business continued

10.00 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

Thursday 19 November

9.30 a.m.
Questions (Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform)

10.45 a.m.
Social Welfare and Pensions Bill 2015 - Report Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Social Protection)

Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2015 - Report Stage Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

Choice of Court (Hague Convention) 2015 (Seanad) - (Order for Report, Report and Final Stages)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Criminal Justice (Mutual Assistance) (Amendment) Bill 2014 (Seanad) - Order for Report, Report and Final Stages
(Department of Justice and Equality)

Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2015 - Second Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Health)

Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 (Seanad) - Second Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Justice and Equality)

12.00 noon
Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.
Order of Business

Supplementary Estimates (Referral to Committee without Debate)
Morning Business Continued

3.00 p.m.
Statements on Developments in Mental Health Services under this Government
(Department of Health)

4.42 p.m.
Topical Issues

5.30 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns

Wednesday 18 November

Dáil Éireann
9.30 a.m.
Questions (Minister for Finance)

10.45 a.m.
(Department of Social Protection)

(Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)

Electoral (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 2015 - Report Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)

Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2015 - Second Stage (Resumed if not previously concluded)
(Department of Health)

Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 (Seanad) - Second Stage
(Department of Justice and Equality)

12.00 noon
Leaders Questions

12.21 p.m.
Order of Business

12.51 p.m.
SOS (1 hour)

1.51 p.m.
Topical Issues

2.39 p.m.
Morning Business Continued

7.30 p.m.
Private Members Business - Technical Group

9.00 p.m.
Afternoon business continued

10.00 p.m.
Dáil Adjourns
This week in Seanad Éireann

**Tuesday 17 November**

- 2.30 p.m. 
  Commencement Matters
- 3.30 p.m. 
  Order of Business
- 4.45 p.m. 
  Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2012 - Committee Stage 
  (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)

Seanad Adjourns

**Wednesday 18 November**

- 10.30 a.m. 
  Commencement Matters
- 11.30 a.m. 
  Order of Business
- 12.45 p.m. 
  Childcare (Amendment) Bill 2015 – Report and Final Stages 
  (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
- 2.00 p.m. 
  Tributes to former Senator Jack Fitzsimons
- 2.45 p.m. 
  Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015 – Committee and Remaining Stages
  Motion for the early Signature of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015 – without debate 
  (Department of Finance)
- 4.30 p.m. 
  Private Members Business
- 6.30 p.m. 
  Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2012 - Committee Stage (Resumed) 
  (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government)

Seanad Adjourns

**Thursday 19 November**

- 10.30 a.m. 
  Commencement Matters
- 11.30 a.m. 
  Order of Business
- 12.45 p.m. 
  National Cultural Institutions (National Concert Hall) Bill 2015 – Committee Stage (resumed) and Remaining Stages 
  (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)
- 1.30 p.m. 
  Legal Services Regulation Bill 2011 – Committee Stage 
  (Department of Justice and Equality)

Seanad Adjourns
This week’s Committee Meetings

**Tuesday 17 November**

**Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Joint)**
CR2, LH 2000 1.30 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

**Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Joint)**
CR3, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: (i) The Beef Data Genomics Program [Representatives from the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF)]; and
(ii) Organic Farming Scheme [Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine]

**Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht (Joint)**
CR4, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: Policy issues arising from the Cemetery Management Bill 2013 and related matters (Mr. David Pierce, Pierce Monuments; Mr. John Sweeney, Craft Monuments; Mr. Jerry Brennan, Headstones Ireland; Mr. John Green, Chairman, Mr. George McCullough, Chief Executive, The Dublin Cemeteries Committee; Ms. Mary Hurley, Assistant Secretary, Community Division and Mr. David Dalton, Principal, Community Division at the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government; Ms. Colette Reilly, Assistant Principal, Competition and Consumer Policy Section at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; and Ms. Deirdre McHugh, Head of Advocacy The Competition and Consumer Protection Authority]

**Finance (Select sub)**
CR4, LH 2000 4 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: Finance Bill 2015 [Minister for Finance]

**Human Rights relative to Justice and Equality Matters (Joint sub)**
CR2, LH 2000 4.30 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

**Thursday 19 November**

**Health and Children (Joint)**
CR2, LH 2000 9.30 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: Session A: 11.15 a.m.

Update on disability issues [Minister of State for Mental Health, Primary Care and Social Care (Disabilities and Older People)]; and

Session B: 11.15 a.m.

**Session A: 11 a.m. in Committee Room 3**

**Finance (Select sub)**
CR4, LH 2000 10 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: Finance Bill 2015 (resumed) [Minister for Finance]

**Public Accounts**
CR3, LH 2000 10 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee; and
(ii) 2014 Annual Report and Appropriation Accounts of the Comptroller and Auditor General:

- Vote 11: Office of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform
- Vote 12: Superannuation and Retired Allowances
- Vote 18: Shared Services
- Vote 41: Office of Government Procurement
- Chapter 4: Vote Accounting and Budget Management
- Chapter 5: Management of Government Grants
- Chapter 6: Payroll Accrual for National Accounts
- Chapter 7: The National Lottery Fund

[Officials from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Office of Government Procurement]

**Inquiry into the Banking Crisis (Joint)**
CR1, LH 2000 10.30 a.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

**Transport, Tourism and Sport (Select sub)**
CR2, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: Harbours Bill 2015 (resumed) [Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport]

**Wednesday 18 November**

**Foreign Affairs and Trade (Joint)**
CR1, LH 2000 9.30 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: Climate change in relation to the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, Paris [Stop Climate Chaos]

**Justice, Defence and Equality (Joint)**
CR2, LH 2000 9.30 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: Session A: 9.30 a.m.

(i) Rural Crime (Mr. Eddie Downey, President, Irish Farmers’ Association)
(ii) Engagement with Mr. Anthony H. Enson, Chairperson Designate, Property Services Appeals Board; and

Session B: 2.30 p.m.

**Public hearings on Employment Equality (Abolition of Mandatory Retirement Age) Bill 2015** [Age Action Ireland; The Law Society of Ireland; Irish Business and Employers Confederation; Irish Senior Citizens Parliament; and members of the public]

**Transport and Communications (Joint)**
CR4, LH 2000 9.30 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: (i) Engagement with Ms. Ellvena Graham, Chairperson Designate, ESB; and
(ii) Prospects for electric powered vehicles in Ireland [Representatives from the Irish Electric Vehicles Owners Association]

**Finance (Select sub)**
CR3, LH 2000 11 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: Finance Bill 2015 (resumed)

**Human Rights relative to Justice and Equality Matters (Joint sub)**
CR2, LH 2000 4.30 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

**Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Joint)**
CR1, LH 2000 11.30 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: Motion re: Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund Regulations 2015 [Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine]

**Education and Social Protection (Joint)**
CR3, LH 2000 1.30 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: Provision for children with special needs at second level school [Special Needs Parents Association (SNPA); National Council for Special Education (NCSE); and National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPDI)]

**Foreign Affairs and Trade (Select)**
CR1, LH 2000 2 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: (i) Economic Partnership Agreement between the West African States, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), and the European Union and its Member States; and
(ii) Economic Partnership Agreement between the CARIFORUM States and the European Community and its Member States [Minister of State with Special Responsibility for ODA, Trade Promotion and North South co-operation Development]

**Public Service Oversight and Petitions (Joint)**
CR3, LH 2000 4 p.m. (T)
AGENDA: Report of the Joint Committee on the extension of the remit of the Ombudsman to include the Direct Provision System [Officials from the Department of Social Protection]