

## Ireland's 32<sup>nd</sup> Dáil

After 70 days of talks, Taoiseach and Fine Gael Leader Enda Kenny appointed his Cabinet. It is historical in that it a mix of members of his own party, members of the Independent Alliance, and unaligned Independents. The new Cabinet is as follows:

- Taoiseach and Minister for Defence – Enda Kenny (Fine Gael)  
Enda finally won the vote for position as Taoiseach 59 to 49. The Journal reports that, “Paul Kehoe has been named as the Minister of State for the Department of the Taoiseach with special responsibility for defence.”
  - Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality – Frances Fitzgerald (Fine Gael)  
TD Fitzgerald has kept her Ministerial role from the previous Government.
  - Minister for Finance – Michael Noonan (Fine Gael)  
TD Noonan has kept her Ministerial role from the previous Government.
  - Minister for Health – Simon Harris (Fine Gael)  
Former Minister of State with responsibility for procurement, the 31st Dail's youngest TD was graduated to Minister for Health.
  - Minister for Social Protection – Leo Varadkar (Fine Gael)  
Former Minister for Health moved laterally into the office of the Department of Social Protection.
  - Minister for Education and Skills – Richard Bruton (Fine Gael)  
TD Bruton previously served as Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation, and replaces Labour's Jan O'Sullivan TD.
  - Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government – Simon Coveney (Fine Gael)  
With the emphasis on the housing crisis, the newly-focused Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government will be headed by former- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Simon Coveney TD.
  - Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform – Paschal Donohoe (Fine Gael)  
The former-Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport took up the post this month with a vow of openness in his dealings.
  - Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade – Charlie Flanagan (Fine Gael)  
Succeeding Labour's Eamon Gilmore, TD Flanagan is the former Fine Gael party spokesperson; and was appointed Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in 2014.
  - Minister for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts & the Gaeltacht – Heather Humphreys (Fine Gael)  
Formerly the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, TD Humphreys' Department has taken on the commitment of the new Government to the regeneration and development of rural areas in line with our urban centres.
  - Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation – Mary Mitchell O'Connor (Fine Gael)  
TD O'Connor has never held any cabinet positions before; she succeeds party-colleague TD Bruton.
  - Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine – Michael Creed (Fine Gael)  
Though previously having held front-bench positions within the party, this is TD Creed's first Ministerial post. He served as party spokesperson on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food between 2007 and 2010.
  - Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport – Shane Ross (Independent Alliance)  
A renowned journalist and author, TD Ross has never held any Government positions before.
  - Minister for Communications, Climate Change & Natural Resources – Denis Naughten (independent)  
Formerly a Fine Gael TD, Naughten held many front-bench positions with the party. This is his first appointment since leaving the party.
  - Minister for Children & Youth Affairs – Katharine Zappone (independent)  
Seantor Zappone is co-founder of An Cosán, a community education programme. This is her first Government appointment.
- Fine Gael's Regina Doherty will be Chief Whip and Máire Whelan remains the Attorney General.

## Programme for Government released

The Programme for Government has been released. Entitled "A Programme for a Partnership Government", the executive summary lays out four of the biggest issues facing our blended Government:

- Meet the target of building 25,000 new homes needed every year by 2020
- Create 200,000 jobs by 2020, including 135,000 outside Dublin
- Spend at least €6.75 billion more on public services by 2021 compared to 2016
- Reduce the percentage of patients waiting longer than six hours in emergency departments from 32% currently to less than 7% by 2021, and reduce average Patient Experience Times for patients attending emergency departments and average waiting times for appointments, procedures and diagnostic tests across the health service.

Reiterated through the document is the idea that gone must be the days of bickering and in-fighting in the national house of government. The Minority Government and the Opposition must work together cohesively to deliver the best results for the Irish people. The Programme states:

"Central to our approach in a new form of government must be the concept of 'good faith and no surprises.' include relaxing whipping rules, sharing ordering of Dáil business and others that are being managed by the Oireachtas Reform group operating under the chairmanship of the Ceann Comhairle. All of this will require further collaborative work with all parties in the Dáil."

Also central to the idea of our new partnership government is the idea of creating a social economy – one in which economic change is met with social change, for the better. Where more money is generated, investment in people and communities should be raised.

- "This "Social Economy" will be built on four foundations:
- (1) Sound Public Finances and a Stable and Broad Tax Base
  - (2) A Supportive Environment for Enterprise and Employment
  - (3) More Investment in Economic, Regional and Social Infrastructure
  - (4) A Just and Fair Society and a More Inclusive Prosperity"

## GPs to cut out the middle man

GPs are in the middle of developing a plan to "cut out the middle man" when it comes to drug dispensing. The goal would be for GPs to dispense medicines directly to patients.

The National Association of General Practitioners (NAGP) has received legal advice, and the GPs are expecting a backlash. Roughly €2.7bn is spent on medication in pharmacies every year. The reason, according to the NAGP, is to put more money into the primary care system. With the Government's commitment to increased services and facilities available to patients at primary care level, this money may be needed.

According to the Sunday Business Post, "GPs would concentrate on commonly prescribed medicines, such as antibiotics and those that target high cholesterol and blood pressure, as they represent the bulk of medicines dispensed by pharmacists". The plan is still in the investigation phase, with the NAGP planning a large-scale feasibility plan.

Opposition to the plan is mainly around safety – the pharmacy provides a second check point that can be crucial. The idea of it being a conflict of interest has also been raised, especially where the doctor stands to make a profit from the medication. Some rural practices already use this process, as a means of convenience for the patient.

## Rent Supply on the decline; rent costs on the rise, say Daft

One of the biggest issues facing the new Government is the housing shortage, in both social housing and private rental sector.

Property website Daft's latest report (Q1 2016) was released last week, and shows the depth of the crisis. Nationwide, rents grew by 2% and topped the €1,000 mark in March, for the first time in eight years. Alongside this, supply fell to its lowest figure on record.

In Dublin, rents now average €1,464, an 8.8% increase in the year to March; this is 1.3% higher than the previous peak in 2008. That is compared to a national average of €1,006.

In Galway, a rise of 12.7% to an average of €900; in Limerick the rents rose by 12.4% to €792. Outside major cities, an 8.7% was observed.

Supply has also been marked as a problem. On May 1, it was at its lowest on record: only 3,100 properties were available to rent on that date. In Dublin, there are only 1,100 available, compared to an average of around 3,800 in the decade between 2006 and 2015.

Ronan Lyons, who authored the report, called the new Government to action on the issue as a top priority.

In the same week, Eoin Ó Broin TD introduced a Bill which seeks to prevent homelessness and limit rent increases. Of particular interest to the TD is the issue of those facing homelessness as a result of vulture funds. Upon the release of the Bill, TD Ó Broin said,

"The risk of rent uncertainty is greater now than ever before. Rent might increase by 10%, but people's wages will not".

## Workplace Stress takes top hazard position

Stress is now, officially, the number one health hazard associated with the workplace, overtaking back pain. Stress is known to increase the instances of absenteeism and loss of productivity.

While everyone feels stressed from time to time, continued and sustained high stress can lead to issues such as depression and anxiety. This is according to Dr John Gallagher, an expert in occupational medicine. He credits situations such as heavy workloads with the rise in mental health issues in the last 10 or 15 years.

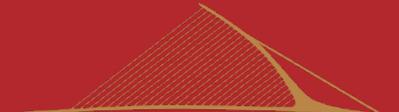
He emphasised the importance of employees taking care of themselves, with regular exercise and eating well, but also practicing a healthy work-life balance.

Former Health Minister Leo Varadkar introduced a Healthy Ireland agenda during his tenure in Government, under which Healthy Workplaces were a priority. Director of the Health and Wellbeing Programme in the Department of Health, Kate O'Flaherty wrote an article on the subject for PAI in August last year. [You can read it here.](#)

Public Affairs Ireland will be running a workshop-style certified course on workplace stress, and the law that underpins it. For more information, contact Podge at (01) 819 8500.

We will also be running a series of Wellbeing in the Workplace Lunch and Learn seminars in our offices in the coming months.



  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
IRELAND

MASTERCLASS  
SERIES

#2:

DIGNITY  
AT WORK

Employers have a legal obligation to ensure Dignity at Work for employees and the consequences of not doing so can result in increased costs and absenteeism, reduced morale and productivity, and damage to organisational reputation. Sound policies and procedures, and good communications and training are critical to ensure dignity at work.

Our morning workshop will help you tackle these issues in your workplace.

It will be delivered by Sile O'Donnell, one of our top trainers, and member of our Academic Council.

It will take place Friday 20 May, 9am to 11pm.

Registration is free for members. Registration for non-members is €125. For more details, or to book, visit [pai.ie](http://pai.ie), email [info@pai.ie](mailto:info@pai.ie) or call us on (01) 819 8500

## This week at Public Affairs Ireland

### On the Blog

#### Transatlantic Trade Talks face mounting criticisms

Tom Ferris

Read [here](#)

#### Independents and the Fence

Laura Mannion

Read [here](#)

#### IMF says “Too slow for too long”

Tom Ferris

Read [here](#)

#### Fourth Generation Economic Regulation

Michael Griffin

Read [here](#)

#### On INIS' Annual Report 2015

Stephen Collins

Read [here](#)

**Interested in one of our courses, but have more than one person to send on it?**

**All of our courses are available for in-house delivery.**

If you have more than four people who would like to attend a course, the more suitable option may be to work with our team to tailor the course, and have our trainers deliver it specifically to you and your team, either in your offices or in ours.

Your in-house training is completely tailored to your particular needs, from start to finish. Our dedicated In-House Executive Muireann is available to help you build the course your team wants and needs.

# This week in Dáil Éireann

## Tuesday 17 May

2.30 p.m.  
Questions (Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality)

3.30 p.m.  
Leaders Questions

3.51 p.m.  
Order of Business

Adoption (Amendment) Bill 2016 - Order for Second Stage and Second Stage  
(Department of Children and Youth Affairs)

7.00 p.m.  
Private Members Business - Central Bank (Variable Rate Mortgages) Bill 2016 (Fianna Fáil)

8.30 p.m.  
Adjournments

9.10 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

## Wednesday 18 May

10.30 a.m.  
Leaders Questions

10.51 a.m.  
Order of Business

Statements on the Irish Language (to conclude within 3 hours)

1.30 p.m.  
SOS (1 hour)

2.30 p.m.  
Questions (Minister for Finance)

3.45 p.m.  
Adoption (Amendment) Bill 2016 - Second Stage (Resumed)  
(Department of Children and Youth Affairs)

7.00 p.m.  
Private Members Business - Central Bank (Variable Rate Mortgages) Bill 2016 (Fianna Fáil)

8.30 p.m.  
Adjournments

9.10 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

## Thursday 19 May

10.30 a.m.  
Order of Business

Motion re: Final Report of the Sub-Committee on Dáil Reform  
(to adjourn at 3.30pm if not previously concluded)

3.30 p.m.  
Questions (Minister for Education and Skills)

4.45 p.m.  
Adjournments

5.25 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

Adjourned Sine Die

# This week's Committee Meetings

## Tuesday 17 May

Housing and Homelessness (Committee)  
CR3, LH 2000 10.30 a.m. (T)

AGENDA: (i) Session A: 10.30 a.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from the  
Insolvency Service of Ireland]

(ii) Session B: 11.30 a.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from the  
Irish Mortgage Holders Organisation]

(iii) Session C: 2.00 p.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from the  
Residential Tenancies Boards]

(iv) Session D: 3.00 p.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from Free  
Legal Advice Centres]

Dáil Reform (Sub) Room 2 (off the Main Hall),  
Leinster House 12.15 p.m.

AGENDA: Private Meeting

## Wednesday 18 May

Dáil Reform (Sub)

Room 2 (off the Main Hall), Leinster House 12.15 p.m.

AGENDA: Private Meeting

## Thursday 19 May

Housing and Homelessness (Committee)  
CR3, LH 2000 10.30 a.m. (T)

AGENDA: (i) Session A: 10.30 a.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from the  
Irish Refugee Council]

(ii) Session B: 11.30 a.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from  
Pavee Point]

(iii) Session C: 2.00 p.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from Tiglin  
Challenge Ireland]

(iv) Session D: 3.30 p.m.

Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Residents from Tyrellstown]