



New Dawn
'Can't wait for other side of menopause'

Feelgood Page 15

Fear factor
A scary way to make a living

Money&Jobs Page 18



Next step
Is the World Cup Ireland's top priority?

Friday Sport Pages 2-3



PLUS Fertility trackers don't work for all Page 12

PLUS We must break addiction to speed Page 8

PLUS New gaffer must enliven ghost year Page 8

Friday, October 20, 2023

www.irishexaminer.com

No. 62,922

€2.40 (£1.70 in N. Ireland)

Co-sleeping warning at inquests into babies' deaths

Ann Murphy

The assistant State pathologist and a coroner have warned about the dangers of co-sleeping after the inquests of two babies in Cork.

The comments were made during the separate inquests into the deaths of Christopher Delaney and Alannah Murphy O'Callaghan this year.

At both inquests, pathologist Margaret Bolster said the autopsy reports of the infants showed no underlying issues and that both were cared for and well.

Dr Bolster gave the cause of their deaths as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) category 2. She said there are two categories of SIDS — with category 2 including co-sleepers.

"That is because we can't out-rule an asphyxial element in the death, or the bed covering, or the thermal element — the baby overheating in the bed," she said. "And that may trigger whatever complex cause of sudden infant death. We don't know yet — they haven't identified it yet."

Dr Bolster also told the court that the "most dangerous place to fall asleep with a baby is the armchair or the sofa".

"That is because the baby can get trapped between you and the armrest of the chair. In my experience, co-sleeping does increase the risk [of SIDS]."

In both cases, verdicts of death by natural causes were returned by Cork City coroner Philip Comyn.

He said: "The evidence of Dr Bolster highlights something that a lot of parents might forget — that is to be aware of the dangers of co-sleeping with babies or indeed infants. It is clear from Dr Bolster's evidence that the biggest risk of co-sleeping is if you fall asleep on the sofa with the baby in your arms, and then also if the baby is sleeping in the bed with you. It is something we all need to be aware of and be reminded of."

During the inquest into the death of Christopher Delaney, who was 14 weeks and six days old, a statement made by his mother Breda to gardai was read into evidence. She said she discovered Christopher unresponsive in her bed in Edel House on Grattan St, Cork, on the morning of March 4 this year. She ran to Edel House staff with her baby in her arms.

Colette Foster, a staff member at Edel House, said she remembered Ms Delaney saying: "My baby, my baby won't wake up."

Another staff member, Darren Cootes, said Christopher "wasn't moving, he was blue and looked like he had passed away".

Staff attempted CPR while a defibrillator was also used, before paramedics arrived.

Christopher was taken to the Mercy University Hospital by ambulance, where he was pronounced dead.

Alannah Murphy O'Callaghan, of 47 Bishops Avenue, Farranferris, Cork, died on January 7.

The infant, who was born on October 3 last year, had been asleep in a double bed with her two-year-old sister Emma, her mother Cherylanne Murphy, and her father Dylan O'Callaghan.

Dylan awoke at around 6am and discovered Emma lying on top of Alannah. Alannah's parents then became aware that she was lifeless. Neighbour Lorna Carroll-King, a nurse, carried out CPR until the fire service and ambulance arrived.

Alannah was taken to Cork University Hospital, where she was pronounced dead at around 7am.

News: 2



'It will be a miracle if we come back from this,' said Eleanor Dunlea, Lollipop Kids children's clothes shop, one of the businesses in Midleton devastated by Storm Babet on Wednesday.

Picture: Chani Anderson

€10m fund not enough, say business owners

Pádraig Hoare

At least €10m has been set aside initially for homes and businesses affected by flooding in Midleton, Co Cork, but that will likely be increased due to the extensive damage, according to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

A financial package to assist damaged properties and businesses that cannot get insurance will be made available, he said.

It will initially consist of €5,000 to help with the immediate damage, with a further €20,000 also available after that.

"I think we'll have to increase that [€20,000] limit because the level of damage to stock here, particularly to people who bought stock in for Christmas, is very high," he said, adding that there will "have to be checks and balances" regarding the limits.

Business owners told the Taoiseach the figures were not nearly enough, with one angry business owner pointing out that they estimated they had already lost at least €100,000.

When asked how much would be available in the financial aid package overall, Mr Varadkar said he "can't say at this stage".

"There's an initial allocation of €10m to help families and businesses that are affected, and clubs and voluntary organisations, but it is not capped at €10m — that's just the initial allocation that's made," said the Taoiseach.

"What I've asked the council to do is to really carry out an assessment of the damage to the public infrastructure, in particular the roads and bridges, send it into us, and then we'll have to make a special allocation to cover that."

Mr Varadkar added that measures to help homes and businesses across the country which cannot get insurance because of flooding "need to be improved".

News: 4&5
Editorial: 8

'The whole lot is destroyed'

Pádraig Hoare, Alison O'Reilly, and Paul Hosford

"The whole lot is destroyed. It's never been as bad as this. Everything in the house will have to go."

A distraught Tim Whyte, who has lived in Midleton for 74 years, was on his hands and knees yesterday as he surveyed the damage to his home which was among so many properties left in ruins after the torrential flooding which hit Cork on Tuesday.

As he and countless others in East Cork tried to come to terms with the huge damage wrought by Storm Babet, the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, and senior local authority leaders blamed the lack of flood defences in towns such as Midleton on objections and lengthy court battles in the planning system.

Lack of flood defences blamed on objectors and planning system

In Midleton, business and home owners took a break from round-the-clock cleaning of their wrecked properties to tell Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, who visited the town, that an initial €10m assistant fund announced by the Government will not go far enough.

Millions of euro worth of stock has been destroyed in the deluge, while dozens of homes and livelihoods suffered extensive damage.

Midleton town foreman Billy Buckley, a former mayor of the town, told of how he had never experienced such a frightening disaster in 65 years, likening it to a "horror movie".

Businesses across Cork



Rosaleen O'Donnell fears many businesses may 'go to the wall'.

have begged for Government assistance to get back on their feet, with Eleanor Dunlea, owner of Lollipop Kids children's clothes shop, warning that there will be "no Christmas in Midleton" as things stand.

Rosaleen O'Donnell of HS2

hair salon warned that many businesses would not recover without major financial aid.

"Every one of our staff has stepped up in the aftermath, it's about time that our political leaders do the same," she said. "There can't be any bureaucratic red tape holding it up, we can't afford to wait or businesses in Midleton will go to the wall."

Mr Varadkar, who indicated that the initial €10m will likely rise, said he could not put a timeline on Midleton's flood defence scheme, which is due to begin in 2025.

"This one here in Midleton, preliminary works are under way, environmental assessment is under way, and we intend to put in a funding application for next year," he said. "But we can't control whether or not people object, we can't control environmental issues, and we can't control the fact that sometimes it ends up in court."

Tánaiste Micheál Martin described as a "disaster zone", but that many villages and towns across East Cork had also been affected.

He questioned why the National Flood Forecasting and Warning Service had not been used for Storm Babet, noting that Carlow Weather's Alan O'Reilly had raised the possibility that over 100mm of rain would fall. He also said funding must be made available to householders and businesses who had previously drawn down humanitarian funding due to past floods.

In the Dáil last night, local Sinn Féin TD Pat Buckley said Midleton had been

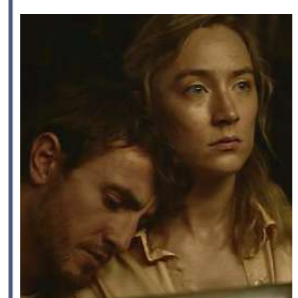
Inside

News

Ashling Murphy may have been alive when gardai reached the scene of the crime and desperately performed CPR, a court heard yesterday. **Page 6**

Analysis

Customs officials face a losing battle as the €10bn cocaine trade leads to a dramatic rise in violent crime in north-west Europe. **Page 9**



Arts

Instant rapport between young Irish stars Ronan and Mescal makes cautionary sci-fi tale 'Foe' more than the sum of its parts. **Page 10**

News: 2

GPs organisation strongly opposes legalising cannabis

Niamh Griffin

Cannabis is a dangerous drug that has "profound and lasting adverse effects on individuals, families, communities and our wider society".

That is according to the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) in its strongest intervention yet in the debate around legalising cannabis.

That intervention also comes ahead of the final meeting of the Citizens' Assembly on Drugs Use which takes place this weekend.

The assembly will then compile a report for the Oireachtas on recommendations to reduce harm caused by illicit drugs use.

In a statement by its medical director, Diarmuid Quinlan, the ICGP said while evidence indicates potential therapeutic benefits, there are "notable public health and health impacts" linked

with cannabis use.

The doctors' organisation also said there need to be campaigns highlighting the "adverse health effects" of the drug.

It also said there needs to be a multi-agency, evidence-based approach, "to further develop and implement policy to address drug use in Ireland".

"The ICGP discourages cannabis use, especially in high-risk populations such as youth, those with a personal or family history of mental disorder, pregnant women, and women who are breastfeeding," the doctors said.

They also called on the HSE and the Department of Health to gather better data on short-term and long-term impacts.

This could include analysis of reasons for going to hospital emergency departments and prevalence of psychiatric and addictive

disorders, including cannabis use disorder.

The ICGP also said that doctors want "accessible, comprehensive, and evidence-based treatment" for people with health problems related to cannabis use.

"The ICGP supports public-health based strategies, rather than incarceration, with respect to individuals possessing small quantities of cannabis for personal use," the statement said.

In relation to medicinal use, the doctors said: "There is a need for further high-quality research into the safety and effectiveness of cannabinoid-based medicinal products."

It is understood the ICGP decided to issue the statement following acceptance of a motion on the topic proposed by three GPs, including Ray Walley, during the ICGP AGM in May.

News: 2

National Children's Hospital set to cost over €2bn

Cianan Brennan

The National Children's Hospital looks set to cost "substantially" more than €2bn when it is finally completed, though the body with responsibility for its construction insists having it finished by late 2024 is now

"achievable".

The project, first greenlit in 2015, was last budgeted to cost more than €1.7bn in 2019.

However, at the Public Accounts Committee yesterday morning, no body from the National Paediatric Health Development Board was

willing to contradict assertions by Labour TD Alan Kelly that the build will "come in substantially over €2bn", although official budgetary projections are not likely to be delivered to Government until next month.

News: 3

ONLINE STORE IS NOW OPEN

Paint Happy!

Pat McDonnell Paints
IRELAND'S BRIGHTEST PAINT STORES

mcdonnelpaints.ie

Dublin | Cork | Galway | Kilkenny | Athlone | Tralee | Limerick