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# €150m shortfall warning for HSE budget

Health agency claims made as €13bn service plan published

Fiachra Ó Gionnaith, Evelyn Ring, and Juno McEnroe

The HSE's delayed 2016 budget plan is at least €150m short of what is needed to meet hospital, staff pay and service demands, forcing government into a political crisis weeks out from the general election.

The HSE detailed the situation in a series of warnings about the "substantial financial risk" facing it next year, casting doubt over the key plan less than 24 hours after it was finalised.

The 172-page HSE service plan document, which outlines how the system's €13bn budget will be used next year, was published by HSE director general Tony O'Brien yesterday after weeks of delays and last-minute cabinet changes.

However, while it includes a "modest but welcome" €817m increase, €720m of this figure has either already been spent on the 2015 supplementary budget or ring-fenced for existing services, meaning just €87m is available for new measures.

The document, which warns "it will not be possible to address all challenges identified", states some service improvements, like €10m for cancer services, €7.25m for disability services, and funding for free GP care for under-12s should negotiations with doctors prove successful, will take place.

However, it also makes clear there are serious shortfalls in funding available which mean the system will struggle to meet targets, with cuts considered "as a last resort".

According to the HSE plan, acute hospitals are underfunded by €150m next year, with a once-off €50m income collection from donors only marginally addressing the situation.

A further €30m in Lansdowne Road pay increases have also "not been funded", while Midway's deal with the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation has also yet to be costed.

In addition, the report raises further concerns over whether enough funding is available for all hi-tech drugs and the Fair Deal

scheme if demands continue to grow, and notes the last-minute Cabinet decision that 50,000 people will no longer need medical cards next year instead of the HSE planned 125,000, will cost €30m more.

Mr Varadkar said yesterday "we are not contemplating any cutbacks", and that hospitals will be asked to make non-service savings to address the shortfalls they face, or can be helped by money being moved from one part of the health service to another.

The health minister said the €30m extra cost of medical cards than planned by the HSE will be balanced out with money moving from the State Claims Agency allocation.

He also said that the Government "needs to honour" the €30m Lansdowne Road bill for staff, "an issue made clear by Public Expenditure and Reform Minister Brendan Howlin during Tuesday's cabinet meeting".

Mr Varadkar said he will not contemplate any cuts but will consider "deferring" some services or potentially using 2017 money.

However, while stressing service cuts will only be considered "as a last resort", Mr O'Brien warned the system is facing a "substantial financial risk".

Responding to questions beside Mr Varadkar and junior minister Kathleen Lynch, the HSE director general said "all people in the room" must understand there is no room for manoeuvre due to next year's supplementary budget plan, as the system can no longer be "sustained, or rescued", by extra money.

Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin last night said the health budget is "fraudulent" and designed to whitewash the health crisis before the election, while the Irish Medical Organisation said "in plain English" there is not enough money to meet demand.

Speaking to reporters last night, the Irish Eirada Kenny defended Mr Varadkar, saying "he is one of the first class ministers in Cabinet" and "doing an excellent job in a very difficult position".

News: 8&9

## 'You can't arrest me. I'm the queen of Limerick'



Canberries singer Dolores O'Riordan arrives at Ennis District Court where she was charged over an incident on a flight from New York.

Picture: PA

Ed Carty and Gordon Deegan

Canberries singer Dolores O'Riordan has pleaded guilty to headbutting and spitting on a Garda following an alleged air rage incident, a court has heard.

The multi-million selling singer told officers during her arrest at Shannon Airport on November 10 last year that she was an icon and the queen of Limerick.

O'Riordan, who has since been diagnosed as suffering bipolar disorder, admitted four offences

including assault and obstructing a Garda during the incident following a flight from New York's JFK Airport.

Ennis District Court was told she accused a Garda of groping her and sexually assaulting her during the arrest, a claim which has since been retracted.

The court heard O'Riordan, who medics have suggested was suffering hypomania, sleep deprivation and paranoia at the time of the incident, threatened to sue arresting officers.

She also told them she paid their wages when they attempted to take her out of first class after flight EI 110 landed at 4.45am.

In evidence read to the court, Inspector Tom Kennedy said the singer-songwriter's behaviour was at first erratic, then unruly, irate, threatening, irrational and aggressive.

"Ms O'Riordan was very belligerent," he told the court.

"She said 'you are not going to arrest me. I am an icon. I'm the queen of Limerick. I pay my taxes, I pay your wages. I'm going to sue you'. Alcohol was not a factor, the court was told.

O'Riordan twice tried to flee custody after being arrested at the airport, once from an ambulance and once while in a patrol car. Garda Shane Dawson said the singer managed to free herself of one handcuff and forced open the door of a Garda car while he wrote up his notes on the airport apron.

When she was restrained after a short chase, she headbutted the officer and spat in his eye, the court heard.

O'Riordan, dressed all in black and wearing black sunglasses on her arrival at

the courthouse, did not give evidence in person.

She was supported for the hearing by her mother Eileen and one of her brothers.

Judge Patrick Durcan ordered O'Riordan to write letters of apology to all those affected in the incident while he considers sentencing.

The 44-year-old mother of three children aged 18, 14 and 10, who now lives in New York and is back working in the music business, will be sentenced at a date to be fixed next year.

News: 5

## Child porn accused to be extradited to face US charges

Eoin Reynolds

An Irishman described by the FBI as "the largest facilitator of child porn in the world" is to be extradited to the US. Eoin Marques, aged 30, with an address at Mountjoy Square, Dublin, is alleged to be the owner and administrator of an anonymous hosting site known as Freedom Hosting.

The US authorities want him to face charges of conspiring to distribute and advertise child pornography and advertising and distributing child pornography.

The State had sought to surrender him to US authorities while Marques sought a judicial review of the DPP's decision not to prosecute him in this country.

At the High Court, Justice Aileen Donnelly delivered judgement on the extradition, saying that it had been issued with due process and did not constitute a violation of his constitutional rights. She also rejected a judicial review that argued that Mr Marques should be tried in



Eric Eoin Marques; DPP does not want to explain his extradition.

Ireland, rather than the US. Mr Marques's legal team had argued they are entitled to know why the DPP was not prosecuting the case but Justice Donnelly rejected this. She said there was nothing in the case that should overturn the longstanding immunity of the DPP from having to give reasons for his decisions.

She said it is her function to set out guidelines for how the DPP should act

in extradition cases, saying to do so would effectively be legislating.

Speaking for Marques, Mark Lyndon BL said the decision will be appealed and asked for a stay to be put on the issue of the warrant. Justice Donnelly said that application should be made to the Court of Appeal but said Marques should not be submitted for at least 15 days to allow time for an appeal.

The charges against Marques relate to images on over 100 anonymous websites described as being extremely violent, graphic and depicted as child rape and torture of pre-pubescent children. The websites in question have "thousands of members" who have posted "millions of images" of child pornography. Some of the children are rape and infants, the FBI claim.

The extradition court previously heard from FBI special agent Brooke Donahue, who described Marques as "the largest facilitator of child porn in the world".

that Joan is doing a really good job."

Asked about Kelly, Nash, and Brendan Howlin, all mentioned as contenders, he said: "I think they are all really good guys. As I say, the more the better. I don't rule myself out. For the moment, all my energies are in getting myself re-elected, but also getting the Labour voice in government. Ambition in people involved in politics is not a bad thing."

## O'Sullivan would not 'rule out' Labour leadership bid

Elaíne Loughlin Political Reporter

Labour's Jan O'Sullivan would consider running for the leadership of the party if Joan Burton stood down.

A number of her party colleagues have already put their names forward as a potential leader, but the current education minister told the *Irish Examiner* she would also like to be considered.

Environment Minister Alan Kelly has made his leadership ambitions clear, as has junior jobs minister Jed Nash.

Limerick TD Ms O'Sullivan sees herself as a party leader, despite being only a year younger than Burton.

She said: "I wouldn't rule myself out, put it that way. I hope there will be plenty of people putting their hands up, but can I stress that there isn't a vacancy and I think

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# Woman awarded €500k for death of partner after op

**Ann O'Loughlin**  
A woman whose partner died weeks after an operation in the Mercy University Hospital, Cork, has been awarded over €500,000 by the High Court.

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# 'No talks' over TD's electoral strength

■ Perry claims Fine Gael general secretary bullied his son, 15

**Ann O'Loughlin**  
Fine Gael TD John Perry has said he never had a discussion with party strategists in which fears were expressed about his electoral strength following recent controversies about him.

He also disputed claims a sister of one of the winning candidates for the Sligo-Leitrim constituency had only been putting ballot papers into a box at the request of two elderly members who had asked her to do so.

## Double vision



Shannon Lonergan, from Co Kerry, left, discovered her doppelganger on the website Twin Strangers after being contacted by Sara Nordstrom, from Sweden, and the pair met in Dublin. Watch them meet up on www.irishexaminer.com. Picture: TwinStrangers.com

## IFA puts chairman in place

**Elaine Loughlin**  
Political Reporter  
The Irish Farmers' Association has put a national chairman in place until elections there should be three candidates in Sligo-Leitrim, the one in Donegal and a third candidate from Leitrim.

He denied he suggested the resignation of president Eddie Downey amid a pay scandal.

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## 'Desperate' mum of five faces eviction on Christmas Eve

**Eoin English**  
A mother of five, facing eviction on Christmas Eve, has pleaded for help finding a new home.

Stephanie McCarthy, who gave birth two weeks ago and whose children are all under seven, said her family is facing the nightmare scenario of having to separate the festive period in separate homeless shelters.

She then took her case to the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) but was later informed the landlord intended to sell the property. She was served with a valid notice of termination and received the required notice, which expires on December 24.

She said they are in receipt of rent allowance and have been searching for a more alternative accommodation for almost three months.

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## Downton star's 'hero' tribute

**Olivia Kelleher**  
Downton Abbey star Michelle Dockery paid tribute to her 'hero' fiancé John Dineen yesterday at his requiem mass — a day after her birthday and a day before the wedding has been his birthday.

The Golden Globe-nominated actress, who plays Lady Mary Crawley in the popular ITV show, said Mr Dineen was a tower of strength during the 15 months in which he was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. She described the native of Ballinora, Co Cork as a man of "great depth and integrity."

## Father who dangled children from fifth floor balcony put on probation

**Jimmy Woulfe**  
A man who dangled his three young children from the fifth floor of a city centre apartment block in Limerick as passers-by watched in horror, has been put on probation.

The man, 55, who cannot be named for legal reasons, pleaded guilty at Limerick District Court to dangle children from the balcony. She said the man has undergone several parenting courses and has also moved to a bungalow.

## Drugs gang duo held after raid

**Drugs gang duo held after raid**  
Two leading figures in a notorious Limerick drugs gang were held after a raid on a city centre apartment block last night, having been caught red-handed preparing heroin deals in a kitchen of a house in St Mary's Park.

The related duo, aged 40 and 43, were cutting up heroin worth about €100,000 for distribution to their network in Limerick and the wider Mid-West.

## Teen admits being ringleader of Oberstown breakouts

**Tom Tuite**  
A 16-year-old boy has admitted being the ringleader of two breakouts from a Dublin detention centre which led to massive searches, security reviews, and a community put in fear.

The boy, who cannot be named because he is a juvenile, is one of four youths who absconded from the Oberstown juvenile detention facility in Lusk in north Co. Dublin in July. He and another teenager also broke out from the 48-bed facility in May.

## Dozens apply for flood funds

**Elaine Loughlin**  
Almost 150 businesses have made inquiries about a €5m government fund set up to help those hit by flooding, although just 37 of those have filled out application forms on the Red Cross website since they were made available on Friday.

Under the scheme small businesses hit by flooding in areas that were unable to get insurance are entitled to an initial €5,000 grant and could apply for further funding of up to €20,000 to help repair damage.

## Laois gardai arrest two after drugs find

**Gardaí in Laois seized cocaine and cannabis worth €40,000 last night.**  
Officers stopped and searched a van in the town of Laois and the drugs were discovered. Two men in their mid 20s were arrested at the scene.

They were last night being held at Portlaoise garda station under Section 2 of the Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act.

## Charities seek rise in child payments

**Charities' leading children's charities held a candlelit vigil at Leinster House last night to demand an increase in direct payments for children with disabilities.**  
The payment has not increased in nearly 16 years and the charities said it is worth only 69.60 per week "which is grossly insufficient to provide clothes, shoes, toys and other essential for child development".

Tanya Ward, chief executive, Children's Rights Alliance, said: "The Government's Working Group Report on the Protection Process recommended that the payment for children living in direct provision be increased from €9.60 to €29.80."

## Paddy Kelly has been missing since last Tuesday

**Paddy Kelly has been missing since last Tuesday.**  
Gardaí in Co Monaghan have appealed for the public for assistance in tracing the whereabouts of a 35-year-old missing since Tuesday.

Paddy Kelly was last seen at Main Street, Castleblaney on approximately 1.20am on that day. He is described as 6ft in height, of slight build, with blue eyes and brown hair.

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The escapes led to massive search operations, staff being suspended, and a security review at the facility — the State's main detention centre for offenders aged under 17.

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## Move from fossil fuels will hike energy costs

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# 10% rise in whitefish allocation welcomed

■ Conservationists cautious over ability of stock to replenish

**Ann Cahill**  
Europe Correspondent  
Fishermen generally welcomed an overall 10% rise in the quantity of whitefish they will be able to catch next year while new conservation methods are showing significant success in increasing fish stocks generally.

The Irish fishing industry praised Agriculture Minister Simon Covey for his efforts over the two-day meeting, while conservationists were not as critical as in the past but still sounded a note of caution over his altered mental state and the incident on the plane took place while she was quite unwell and this was caused by bipolar disorder.

The Irish fishing industry praised Agriculture Minister Simon Covey for his efforts over the two-day meeting, while conservationists were not as critical as in the past but still sounded a note of caution over his altered mental state and the incident on the plane took place while she was quite unwell and this was caused by bipolar disorder.

The report concluded that Ms O'Riordan's prognosis is positive but she will require medication in the longer term.

Mr O'Donnell pleaded with Judge Durcan not to impose a criminal conviction as this could impact on Ms O'Riordan's ability to travel freely and could have consequences on her travelling to see her children in Canada and for her career.

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Judge Durcan adjourned the case for mention to the January 20 to fix a date for sentence.

However, Andrew Clayton of Pev's Ending Overfishing campaign said ministers went beyond what the scientists consider safe, and they need to explain why they choose to jeopardise stocks.

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