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10% of online gamblers bet at work

■ Addictive behaviours on the rise in Ireland, research conference told

Sean Murray

Two in five online gamblers have more than one account, while 10% bet while they are in work, Ireland's gambling regulator has said.

Anne Marie Caulfield, the chief executive of the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland, drew on yet-to-be-published research from the ESRI which found that more than a quarter of account holders receive at least a daily notification encouraging them to bet, while one in six receive daily unsolicited emails or texts to gamble.

"That's something that you will be allowed to opt out of in future under the legislation, where you decide you do not want to receive those notifications," Ms Caulfield told a conference in Dublin yesterday.

"So that's an important justification for the introduction of that," she said, adding: "We may be subject to some legal pushback in relation to some of these restrictions."

Ms Caulfield was speaking at the 35th annual research conference from the St John of God Research Foundation, which heard that behavioural addictions — such as gambling, gaming, and excessive screen time — are on the rise in Ireland.

Studies in recent times have suggested the prevalence of problem gambling in Ireland could be up to 10 times higher than had previously been thought.

The latest research from the ESRI — which was undertaken for the regulator, is currently being peer-reviewed, and is expected to be officially published in the new year — has focused on consumption patterns of gambling.

Ms Caulfield said the headline findings from the

study include that over one in 10 online gamblers have four or more betting accounts.

It found that people who signed up for an account for a specific interest, such as horse racing or football, would then often be offered inducements like "free spins" for casino games offered by the betting site as a form of "cross-selling".

"Three in four made a deposit in the past year. We did find through this study that people found it relatively easy to make a withdrawal, but a little bit more difficult to withdraw than to add to their accounts," said Ms Caulfield.

"Another thing that will come out in the study is the impact it has on the quality of life of the broader family. "An interesting one is that 10% of the gambling is actually happening at work during work hours and sometimes on work devices."

From next month, the Gambling Regulatory Authority will begin the process of licensing all the major players in the online betting space in Ireland.

Next year, it will introduce a national self-exclusion register for people who wish to opt out of gambling.

Also speaking at the conference, Colin O'Gara, a consultant psychiatrist who works in the area of addiction, said there must be adequate protections for people affected along with properly funded treatments across the country.

"We have people coming to us who are very unwell, very upset families," said Mr O'Gara.

"Eight people are affected by the one person in addiction. We have hundreds of thousands of people affected, and the treatment provision is very poor."

Gardaí sought to terminate motorists' charges, court hears

David Raleigh

A garda superintendent contacted four other gardai in an attempt to have motorists' potential or pending fixed charged penalty notices terminated, a Limerick court has heard.

The now retired superintendent, Eamon O'Neill, allegedly told one motorist to nominate another person as being the driver of the vehicle in which they were involved in a suspected road traffic offence, so as to avoid receiving penalty points.

Mr O'Neill and four other gardai have pleaded not guilty to a total of 39 offences of attempting to pervert the course of justice.

Yesterday, Carl Hanahoe, prosecuting, told the jury: "What all of the offences have in common, the prosecution say, is the interference or involvement of Eamon O'Neill."

Mr Hanahoe claimed the other four accused became involved in allegedly attempting to "interfere in the

course of justice" through Mr O'Neill's involvement.

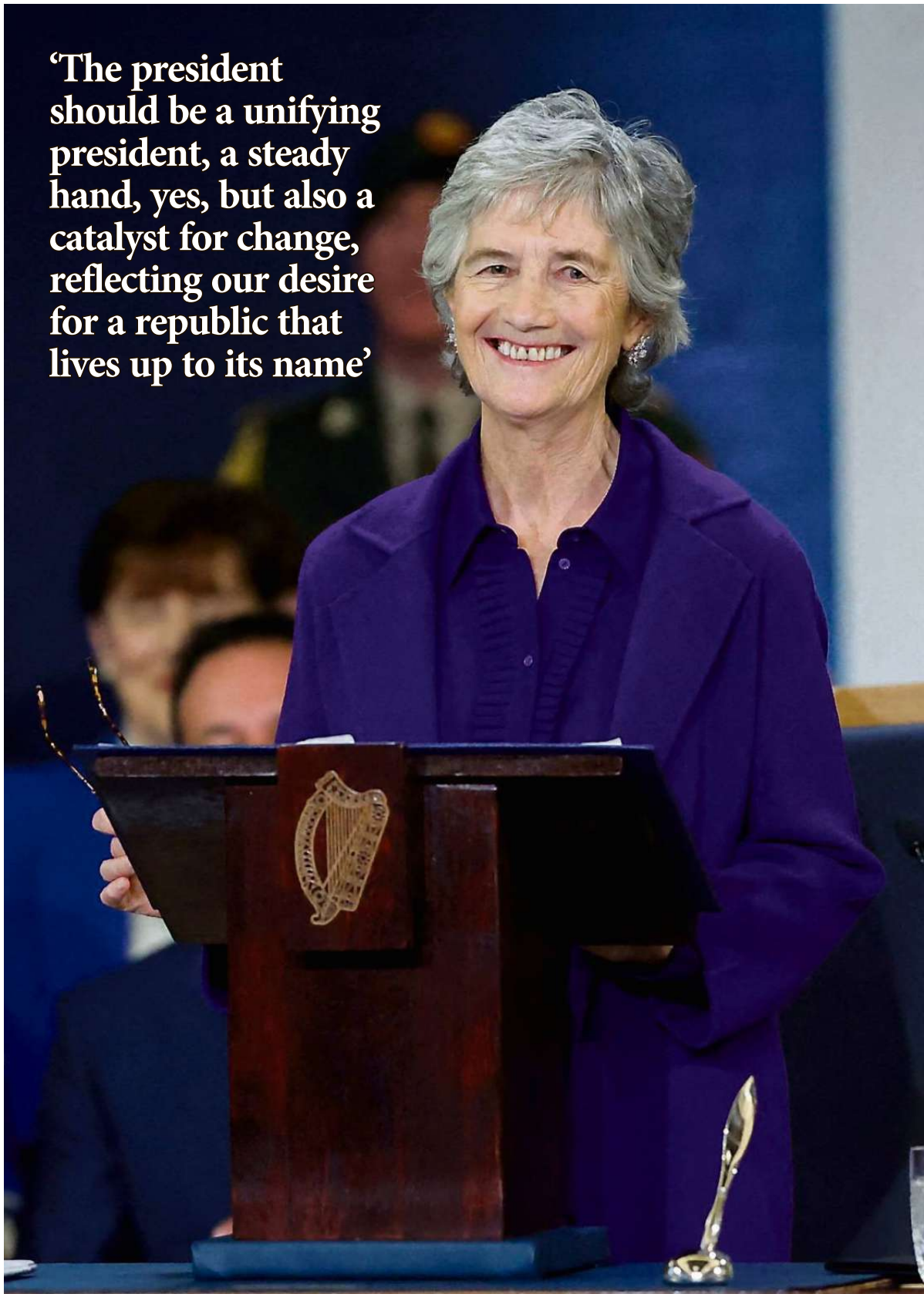
He referenced a number of charges against Mr O'Neill, in which motorists who were allegedly detected committing road traffic offences — including speeding, holding a phone while driving, driving without insurance, or not wearing a seatbelt — then allegedly contacted Mr O'Neill, who in turn allegedly contacted the other accused in an attempt to terminate the motorists' potential or pending fixed charge penalty notices.

He alleged that the "vast majority" of the alleged attempts to pervert the course of justice involved a "personal connection between the motorist and Supt O'Neill".

Mr Hanahoe said: "It ought not to matter what connection you have — that should not determine whether or not you take the penalty points or influence the prosecution of the offence. That is what the prosecution's case is all about."

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'The president should be a unifying president, a steady hand, yes, but also a catalyst for change, reflecting our desire for a republic that lives up to its name'



Catherine Connolly during her inauguration ceremony as Ireland's 10th President in Dublin Castle yesterday. She took the oath of office 'humbly and proudly' in Irish. Pictures: Clodagh Kilcoyne/PA

Connolly inaugurated as 10th President of Ireland

Paul Hosford, Louise Burne, and Tadhg McNally
Political Staff

Catherine Connolly said she has "never believed more in the spirit of this country" after being inaugurated as the 10th President of Ireland.

The Galway West woman took the oath of office in Irish, calling for the language to be allowed "bloom" under her presidency and speaking about how she would work to unify and represent all Irish people.

During her speech, Ms Connolly stood "humbly and proudly" as the 10th President of Ireland. "The people have spoken and have given their President a powerful mandate to articulate their vision for a new republic, a republic worthy of its name, where everyone is valued and diversity is cherished, where sustainable solutions are urgently implemented and where a home is a fundamental human right," said Ms Connolly.

"The change that led to this joyful day began with a small group of elected representatives and volunteers facing what appeared to be insurmountable challenges. "We were led to believe that it was too big a leap, that their ideas were too far, too left, at odds with the prevailing narrative in shared conversation."

"However, it became evident that the dominant narrative did not reflect or represent people's values and concerns."

Ms Connolly reaffirmed her belief in a united Ireland, saying the Constitution sets out to achieve that aim but that it could only be achieved by consent.

"I am particularly conscious of Article Three of the Constitution, which sets out in detail the firm wish of the Irish people, the Irish nation, to have a united Ireland, albeit with the conditions set out very clearly in that article. As President, I will foster an inclusive and open dialogue across the Island, in a manner that highlights and recognises our similarities and respects our differences."

Ms Connolly said that, given Ireland's history, "the normalisation of war and genocide has never been and will never be acceptable to us as a sovereign independent nation".

She also paid tribute to Ireland's "cherished tradition of neutrality and an uninterrupted record of peacekeeping since 1958".

In her speech, Ms Connolly, who succeeds Michael D Higgins, focused on the Irish language. "Irish will not be spoken in a low voice in the Aras. It will have first place as a working language and it will be spoken (by me) throughout the country, with hope, poetically and musically. Of course, Irish will be spoken authoritatively by me, and without any hesitation, when it is necessary. "Tir gan teanga, tir gan anam," she said. ("A land without a language is a land without a soul.")

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High-visibility policing for Cork City

Liz Dunphy

Cork will be the next city to implement increased high-visibility policing, similar to the recent initiative in Dublin.

Garda Commissioner Justin Kelly said the Dublin city centre high-visibility

policing initiative has been a success.

He said that gardai are considering where to expand the programme within Dublin, as well as deciding to replicate it in other cities and large towns.

"Cork City will be next," Mr Kelly told the Oireachtas

justice committee.

Efforts will also focus on further suppressing rural crime, he said.

A key measure includes the appointment of Fermoy-based Superintendent Michael Corbett as Ireland's first rural crime lead.

News: 2

Homes to rent less than half of pre-covid supply levels

David Kent

The number of homes available to rent across the country has more than halved when compared to pre-pandemic levels, as the cost of renting continues to surge.

The latest Daft.ie report also forecasts that pressure on the rental market will not ease anytime soon.

While rents have risen nationally by just over 4% from this time last year, they have spiked by 9.3% in Cork city and 11.4% in Waterford.

The hikes have been exacerbated by a fall in the supply of properties and rooms available to rent. The average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment nationwide between June and September was €2,080.

The figures come as the Government unveils its new housing plan, which is due to be approved by Cabinet today and published tomorrow.

Senior government sources have sought to play down the plan in recent weeks, saying that significant elements have already been announced by housing minister James Browne.

This includes sweeping reforms to rent pressure zones, changes to apartment guidelines, and a slashed Vat rate on the sale of apartments, as unveiled in Budget 2026.

On the day the Government was formed, CSO data showed there were just 30,330 houses built in 2024 — far short of former housing minister Darragh O'Brien's promise to deliver 40,000 homes last year.

In the third quarter of this year in Cork City, the average rent for a two-bedroom

apartment stood at €1,982 per month, while it was €1,511 in Co Cork.

In Dublin, the price has risen to over €2,500.

Across the country, market rents are on average now 33% above their pre-covid levels and 67% above their Celtic Tiger peak.

There are also rises for those looking to rent rooms in homes, with the average rent for a double room in a house standing at €788 in the third quarter.

Room rents are now on average 32% higher than the pre-covid level and 74% above their Celtic Tiger peak.

Supply remains an issue for renting both homes and rooms.

On November 1, there was a total of 1,901 homes for rent nationwide — down 21% on the same date a year previously and 44% of the 2015-2019 average.

Overall, availability is less than half of the 2015-2019 average.

The report's author, economist Ronan Lyons of Trinity College Dublin, said there are some positives to be found in the figures, particularly around inflation.

"Nationally, an inflation rate of 4.3% in market rents in September is close to the average of 2024 and 2025," he said.

"While it's a small win, steady inflation below 5% is — given recent increases — an improvement."

"However, supply remains tight, and indeed worsening, with one quarter fewer homes available to rent on November 1 than a year before."

"Thus, upward pressure on rents is likely to remain."



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