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Weekend

No. 63,570 €4.20 (£2.20 in N Ireland)

Out-flanked



Former Munster and Ireland rugby captain Peter O'Mahony celebrates with Griffith College Cork graduates as he receives a professional excellence award. Picture: Darragh Kane

INSIDE

The rise of online scams
'My son cried over fake online post'
The Big Read

In the running

'There are people who think women have no place in politics'

Weekend

Tiny front, big impact

5ft wide front-of-house reveals a clever design

Property

Chicago calling

Lots of reasons to visit this fun city

Travel

State to fund weight-loss drugs

Louise Burne
Political Correspondent

Around 80,000 people out of the 1.2m classified as obese in Ireland will likely avail of State-funded weight-loss injections if the drugs are approved for medical card holders or under the HSE's drug payment scheme.

Donal O'Shea, the HSE's national clinical lead for obesity, said a health technology assessment — evaluating the medical, social, ethical, and economic implications — of the weight-loss wonder-drug Mounjaro is to be published in the coming weeks.

It is the "precursor to making a decision about who will get it", he said.

80,000 people living with obesity may benefit

Similar drugs are provided under public schemes for people with diabetes. Several manufacturers have been granted permission by the European Medicines Agency for them to be used for weight-loss treatment.

The companies are seeking HSE reimbursement that would potentially make the drugs free for medical card holders or capped at €80 per month under the drug payment scheme for weight-loss patients.

The Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk applied for HSE reimbursement for its Wegovy injection, for adults and adolescents, in March 2025.

As the drug is not yet covered by the public scheme for weight-loss patients, Wegovy is listed, for the first three dosages, at €240 per month on one pharmacy website, increasing to €320 and €355 for higher dosages.

Eli Lilly has applied for HSE reimbursement for

Mounjaro for both weight loss treatment and diabetes.

With a valid prescription, several pharmacies currently list Mounjaro's starting price at €275 per month.

This rises to as much as €595 per month for the highest required dose.

Health minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill said that the application for Mounjaro under the reimbursement scheme could be approved by the end of the year.

Prof O'Shea told the *Irish Examiner* that the health technology assessment on Mounjaro will likely limit who can initially get the injections due to the

huge costs involved for the HSE of providing the treatment.

"I'm concerned about the lengths people are having to go to access what are effective, safe treatments," said Prof O'Shea.

"The HSE is about to publish its [health technology assessment] on Mounjaro. This is the precursor to making a decision about who will get it.

"It's likely to come in somewhere quite along the lines of its availability in the UK, which is for people with a BMI [body mass index] over 35, plus complications.

"That will have it available to maybe 80,000 people in Ireland. The

bottom line is you have 25% of the population living with obesity. That's 1.2m people.

"They simply can't begin by letting it be open to everybody, just on a cost basis.

"We have to make sure we start using it in, initially, the high-risk group and then widen out its use."

Prof O'Shea added that he "desperately" wants the treatments available, but that it has to be "brought in at a point where it won't break you financially".

Fewer remote working roles available

Ronan Smyth

The post-pandemic trend of companies offering remote and hybrid working options to employees is on the wane, with recruitment firms reporting less than 15% of new roles offer the chance to work from home.

Earlier this week, billionaire Denis O'Brien criticised the remote hybrid working model, saying that it was a "mistake" which has impacted efficiency across most of the Government.

Mike Morrissey, director at recruitment firm Ca-

reerWise, said there is "more of a demand" from companies for their staff to be present on site, and while they are still seeing people looking for hybrid working options, these opportunities are dwindling.

He said: "Will that continue? I would expect that it will, because of what is going on from a productivity perspective with companies being challenged by tariffs and the cost to produce goods being a lot more to get to the US market.

"Companies will have to try to reduce their cost

base and one way of doing that is by asking employees to do more."

Recruitment firm Morgan McKinley's global foreign direct investment director Trayc Kevans said they have definitely seen remote and hybrid working options reduced as an offering for potential employees, particularly in the financial services and technology firms.

"There has been a big drop in remote-first opportunities, probably less than 15%, I would say, of all positions being advertised and

offered certainly through an agency format.

"The conversations we're having with employers, it has been very much taken off the table for loads of reasons," she said, though she added that some small and medium-sized companies still use the option of hybrid work as an incentive to attract talent from bigger firms.

Ms Kevans said one of the main reasons they are hearing from employers is that in-office work is a "retention tool" in terms of cultural engagement.

Mr Morrissey said he has noticed a marked increase in the amount of contract work employers are seeking.

"What companies are growing more is their contracting because we've seen that part of our business grow significantly," he said. "Since the start of the year, we would have grown our contracting base by at least 16%.

"Whereas on the permanent side, we would have seen a reduction in those roles being available."

Business: 20

Trump ups pressure over Epstein files

US president Donald Trump has cranked up his intense pressure campaign on congressional Republicans to oppose the full release of the justice department's files related to Jeffrey Epstein, before a crucial House vote on the matter next week that many Republicans are expected to support.

The release on Wednesday of scores of Epstein's emails has shone a spotlight on the president's history of involvement with

the notorious sex trafficker, including revelations that he knew more about Epstein's conduct than he previously let on.

Mr Trump declared that he would instead ask the justice department to investigate Epstein's ties with Democrats, not Republicans, singling out Bill Clinton, Larry Summers, and Reid Hoffman.

Mr Trump also referred to the "Epstein hoax" and called it a "scam".

World: 10



The Lee Fields flooded by yesterday's rain. Picture: Anne Marie Cronin

Weather 'PTSD'

One of Ireland's most trusted amateur weathermen says he is inundated with people suffering from "weather PTSD" and has called for more public flood warnings from authorities.

Alan O'Reilly of Carlow Weather says Ireland needs a precise flood alert system as a matter of urgency, with Met Eireann only issuing flood advisories to local authorities.

News: 4

Flatley's €1m court security

Lord of the Dance star Michael Flatley has been ordered by a judge to pay €1.1m upfront as security for costs in advance of his €30m court action over works carried out at his Cork mansion.

The Flatley legal team had asked the Commercial Court not to award the full €2.8m sought by the other parties and to limit security for costs to one third.

Ms Justice Roberts set the costs at €1.1m, which must be lodged into court before the main action over the works at Castlehyde in Fermoy can be heard.

News: 3

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