

Tom Dunne

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Richard Hogan

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Sexual violence impacts 26% of adults

■ 39% of women report sexual abuse compared to 12% of men

Liz Dunphy

More than one in four adults experience sexual violence, with women, young adults, bisexual people, gay men, and those with higher levels of education reporting higher rates than other groups.

Just over a quarter (26%) of people in Ireland have experienced sexual violence as an adult, joint research by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Cuan, the statutory domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV) agency, found.

Almost 40% of women (39%) reported sexual violence compared to 12% of men. Sexual abuse is more prevalent among younger adults, with the highest rates among those aged 25-29, with risk of sexual abuse decreasing with age.

Bisexual people reported the highest levels of sexual violence at 55%.

More than 80% of perpetrators were male.

Most perpetrators are known to victims, with partners, friends, acquaintances, neighbours, and family members more commonly identified as perpetrators than strangers.

Many incidents of sexual violence committed by someone other than an intimate partner occurred in homes or in social settings like pubs and clubs.

Of those who reported sexual violence as an adult, 25% experienced intimate partner violence, 40% suffered non-intimate partner violence, and 35% reported experiencing both intimate partner and non-intimate partner sexual violence.

The majority of those who disclosed sexual violence were aged between 18 and 24 when it first happened.

Of the seven types of sexual violence examined, non-consensual touching of breasts/genitals was the most common type reported (21%), particularly among women (33%).

This was followed by attempted other sexual contact (14%) and attempted sexual intercourse (12%).

The new research published today is part of the Joint Research Programme on Adult Sexual Violence in Ireland by the ESRI and Cuan. It will be launched by

justice minister Jim O'Callaghan.

The study draws on data from the 2022 Central Statistics Office (CSO) Sexual Violence Survey.

Elish Kelly, lead author of the study, said that the research provides important new evidence on the factors associated with sexual violence victimisation.

"While sexual violence affects people from all backgrounds, the findings show that risks are higher among particular subgroups of the population, including women, younger adults, bisexual individuals, and gay men," she said.

CEO of Cuan, Stephanie O'Keeffe, said that to prevent sexual violence and to provide and target supports to those who are victims of such violence, a better understanding of the patterns of victimisation is needed.

"Demand for services continues to rise as awareness grows and more people find the confidence to seek help.

"This reflects the impact of awareness-raising efforts but also reinforces the urgency of continued investment and strengthening of the services available to those who need them."

The study highlighted the need for data to track people over time to better understand how victimisation experiences affect them throughout their lives.

Cliona Saidléar, executive director of Rape Crisis Ireland, said that sexual violence is an individual trauma and tragedy, but it is also a systemic problem.

Sexual violence is gendered, she said.

That bisexuals and the more educated suffer higher levels of sexual violence than other cohorts may point to this systemic misogyny, she said.

"One of the functions of sexual violence is to discipline, to 'keep us in our place,'" Ms Saidléar said.

"Non-conformity with the traditional patriarchy — to visibly not conform to gender stereotypes or to be a highly educated woman — can draw a particular ire from perpetrators who want to maintain control in a misogynistic, gendered world, she said.

"Sexual violence is ultimately a punishment."



Emergency services at the scene of a collision between two trains in Urda, Spain, yesterday. The trains were travelling in the same direction on the line between Madrid and Seville, colliding at about 8.30am. It is the second deadly rail tragedy in Spain this year.

'All of Spain' in mourning after deadly rail crash

Sam Jones and Ashifa Kassam

The Spanish prime minister has declared three days of mourning after at least 68 people were killed and dozens more injured in a collision between two high-speed trains in central Spain.

The trains were travelling in the same direction on the line that stretches from Madrid to Seville yesterday when one of the trains ran into the tail of the other that had stopped, knocking several carriages off the track.

The tragedy marked the second deadly train accident this year in Spain.

"All of Spain is in mourning," prime minister Pedro Sanchez said from the scene

in the region of Castilla-La Mancha. It is "unacceptable for a country like Spain to suffer two high-speed train accidents in the same year, as we have", he said.

Footage broadcast by the regional channel CMM TV showed a derailed train with at least one carriage remaining on an elevated section of track. Twisted metal, broken panels, and wreckage could be seen strewn across an embankment beneath the line.

Spain's transport minister, Oscar Puente, said such rear-end collisions were "highly unlikely" as he suggested that the accident may have been caused by human error made in "inexplicable" circumstances.

He said the LZB signalling

system, which automatically halts a train if the line ahead is occupied, had gone down at about 8.30am local time due to a computer malfunction. As a result, an estimated six trains had been halted along a stretch of around 63km, he said.

The task of monitoring the rail lines then fell to a 24-hour command centre in Madrid. The centre instructed at least two of the trains to continue as normal, despite the fact there was still a "stop signal" in place on the line, said Puente.

The Castilla-La Mancha regional government said the death toll had risen to 68 as rescue teams continued to search through the wreckage of the derailed carriages.

Castilla-La Mancha's leader, Emiliano Garcia-Page, said more victims were likely as "it has not yet been possible to reach the bottom of the carriages".

Another 107 people needed medical treatment in hospital, including 15 who were in serious condition.

The transport minister confirmed that the collision involved a train from Spain's state-owned Renfe company and the private rail company Iryo — the same two companies whose trains were also involved in a crash in Adamuz in January in which 46 people were killed.

In yesterday's disaster, the Iryo train was travelling ahead on the tracks and had been sitting stationary when

the Renfe train was told by the control centre to resume its journey. The Renfe train then travelled about 25km before colliding with the Iryo train about 17 minutes later.

The speed at which the Renfe train was travelling remains unknown, the transport minister told reporters, though the section of rail on which it was travelling allows for speeds of up to 200km/h.

The prime minister said the causes of the accident were under investigation. If it emerged that it was due to failures in the security system or negligence, these shortcomings would be addressed with the "utmost severity", he added.

World: 7

Tánaiste 'did not' ask O'Donovan to resign

Louise Burne

Political Correspondent

Tánaiste Simon Harris has confirmed he called media minister Patrick O'Donovan shortly before he took ill at an EU presidency event, but insisted that he "absolutely did not" ask him to resign.

Mr Harris, who has just returned from two weeks' paternity leave, refused to divulge the nature of the conversation, but insisted that it was a routine call.

A spokesman for the Tánaiste repeatedly refused to answer questions from the *Irish Examiner* yesterday about which other ministers Mr Harris made "routine" phonecalls to while on paternity leave.

It comes amid ongoing uncertainty about when Mr O'Donovan will return to work after taking ill at an EU telecommunications ministers meeting in Limerick earlier this month. He spent several days in ICU.

While a memo increasing the statutory borrowing limit for An Post from €75m to €620m was brought to Cabinet yesterday by Taoiseach Micheál Martin, this was only because Mr O'Donovan had signed off on it before becoming unwell.

A Government spokesman said this was due to an "urgency" to get the plan signed off before the end of the year.

He denied this meant Mr O'Donovan would not return to work this year.

On his way into Cabinet, the Tánaiste confirmed that he had called Mr O'Donovan on the day he had fallen ill, but denied it was fractious.

When asked if he called on Mr O'Donovan to consider his position, Mr Harris replied: "Absolutely not".



Patrick O'Donovan.

News: 2

Holiday lets in high-demand areas could house 46,000

Gráinne Ní Aodha

Short-term lets in areas of high demand could house almost 50,000 people if brought back into use as long-term housing, an independent analysis has found.

Consultancy firm Indecon, appointed by the Housing Agency to analyse short-term lets, found there are 28,342 available in Ireland, 32% of which are in Dublin and 87% in areas of high housing demand.

Of the short-term lets in areas of high demand, 16,870 were for commercial tourism, which could house 46,224 people if all were brought back into use for long-term housing.

Using comparisons to other countries' efforts to regulate short-term lets, Indecon said a baseline scenario of between 3,100 and 5,500 units could be re-

turned to the housing stock if the short-term let sector is regulated.

In cases where there is a higher impact, around 9,500 units could be reintroduced.

A ban on commercial tourism short-term lets would see a higher number of units returning as housing stock, it added.

"Should all 16,870 identified commercial tourism short-term lets in higher demand areas return to the longer term housing sector, a total estimated 46,224 people could be accommodated," the report said.

"The potential housing capacity ranges between 6,300 and 26,100 people under the varying scenarios."

It noted "significant uncertainty" around the impacts of any regulation in Ireland, and their impact "will depend on the strength of enforcement".

The Government intends to regulate short-term lets through its Short-Term Letting and Tourism Bill 2026 and an accompanying planning statement.

Concerns have been raised internationally that short-term lets such as Airbnbs have removed long-term housing stock from the market and contributed to rising rental and housing costs.

The Government's bill would introduce a national register requiring anyone letting out a property for up to 21 consecutive nights a year to sign up, while a draft planning statement indicates short-term lets in 25 areas with populations above 20,000 will be restricted. It comes as figures show the Department of Housing spend on homelessness supports since 2020 is on track to reach €2.4bn.

Religious body to buy historic church

Catherine Shanahan
Property Editor

St Vincent's Church in Sunday's Well on Cork City's northern hills is sale agreed for more than €400,000 after a deal was reached with another religious body to purchase it.

The church, historically linked to the Vincentian

Fathers, was the subject of a bidding war, with four religious bodies involved at one point.

The purchasers have so far declined to publicise their name as the congregation has not yet been informed.

However, the *Irish Examiner* understands it is a Christian church organi-

sation with a long-established base in Cork City.

The speed at which the landmark sandstone building went sale agreed is in sharp contrast to a protracted engagement with University College Cork — reported as the buyer of the Gothic-style premises in 2019. UCC withdrew from the sale process last May.

Within a month of the premises coming to market in September, agents Lisney had logged "about 50 enquiries" and had carried out 40 viewings. No offers were received from developers or alternative purpose users.



St Vincent's Church was the subject of a bidding war.

Lisney agent Ger O'Callaghan said that while they saw value in the property, a lot of clients were "concerned about getting permission for change of use and conditions that might attach".

Commercial Property: 15

Murder trial begins in Cork

A 32-year-old man who denies murdering a Tipperary pensioner admitted to gardai that when burgling the man's garage, he pushed the 80-year-old to get out of the way.

When gardai told him that the pensioner had died in hospital, the accused, Seán Harding, aged 32, of Marian Terrace, Tipperary Town, said: "I am after killing someone. I didn't mean to kill him."

His murder trial began at the Central Criminal Court sitting in Cork yesterday.

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