

**New Services  
for people with  
disabilities**

plus **Lower  
Insurance Costs**

**All on Board  
for Luas**

plus **Safeguarding  
the Rights of  
Tenants**



**Beacon Clinic  
Project Opens  
in Sandyford**

plus **Area action  
plan**

## PDs turn their energies to the health service

**'Given the level of public funding for healthcare, we will no longer accept  
inefficiencies in the delivery of health services to our citizens'**

**T**he Progressive Democrats are delighted that the Tanaiste and our Party Leader Mary Harney TD has taken on the challenging role of the Minister for Health.

Mary Harney is a capable and courageous politician who has achieved a great deal. From banning smoky coal in Dublin, to reforming our taxation system, encouraging jobs and inward investment to reforming the insurance industry. She has a record of getting things done.

Our Party's determination to improve our health service will require radical change, as well as additional funding. Government spending on health next year will be €11 billion, up €1 billion. The reform programme will be driven with one priority in mind; the patient. The delivery of a quality health service for all patients in this country is the number one priority of this Government and the number one priority for the Progressive Democrats.

Hospital waiting lists have been cut dramatically over the last number of years through the success of the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF), where the state pays for the public patient's treatment after six months on a waiting list. To date, over 21,000 patients have been treated. Waiting times for patients will be reduced further with an €20 million



*Dublin South TD, Liz O'Donnell 'Reform of the health service will be driven with one priority in mind: the patient.'*

additional funding for the NTPF in 2005, giving it a total budget of €64 million.

Over-crowding in A&E, a shortage of acute hospital beds, and the extension of the medical card scheme are all issues that are being tackled by the Tanaiste. 300 new public beds will be available in public hospitals. A new medical card initiative will enable up to 230,000 additional people from lower income households to go to their GP, free of charge – 1.38 million people will now have access to free GP care. In addition, the parents of children with

illnesses that persist from year to year will no longer have to experience the anxiety of having to reapply for a medical card each year.

A ten-point action A&E Action Plan is being rolled out to improve Accident and Emergency services, including fully staffed Acute Medical Units in major hospitals. This action plan will help patients and their families well beyond the Accident and Emergency departments. Many of these actions will help older people particularly. Patients will be assisted into nursing homes or home care settings; they will be seen in new Acute Medical Units; they will be able to see a GP out of hours; and they will get their tests faster.

### The Waiting is Over

- Are you or is someone you know on a public hospital waiting list for an operation?
- Have you been waiting for treatment for six months or longer?

The National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) can arrange for treatment for public patients in hospitals in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the UK. 21,000 patients have been treated to date/

**Call the NTPF today to see if you qualify  
Lo-Call 1890 720 820**

## Lukedoc launched



Liz O'Donnell TD at the launch of Lukedoc, the out-of-hours GP service covering Rathmines, Rathgar, Rathfarnham, Templeogue, and Terenure, with Martin Gallagher, Chief Executive of the Eastern Area Health Authority and Dr. Tim Gleeson, Chairman of the Lukedoc project.

## New Services for People with Disabilities

**B**udget 2005 builds on the core principles of the Progressive Democrats. It ensures the continuation of a strong and vibrant economy that will generate the resources for sustainable social progress. It marks an important milestone in the delivery of the commitments set out in the Agreed Programme for Government, particularly in the area of disability services.

The investment of €2.8 billion in disability services in 2005 is a powerful statement of this Government's commitment to this sector. In addition, a multi-annual investment programme of €900 million will support the development of high priority disability services over the period 2006-2009. This funding will enable us to take the actions which have been sought by families of people with disabilities going back many years:

- 4,500 more residential and respite places
- moving 600 persons with intellectual disability out of psychiatric hospitals and other inappropriate settings.
- 1.2 million extra hours of home support and personal assistance
- 400 new places in community based mental health facilities

## Driving down the cost of motor insurance

Have you seen a fall in your insurance costs? Thanks to the reforms of the Tanaiste, we are all paying lower motor premiums.

The PDs ... driving down the cost of your motor insurance!



## The Budget and What it Means for You

**T**his year's Budget is both balanced and fair. It means extra money for old age pensions, for social welfare recipients, and for those on lower incomes by taking them out of the tax net. It marks a huge commitment to people with disabilities. It gives a helping hand to first-time buyers, and a fairer taxation system for all. Budget 2005 benefits everyone.

### Key measures included in Budget 2005:

- A €12 increase for old age and related pensions
- A €14 increase for social welfare recipients
- Increase of €14 per week in minimum rate of maternity benefit, and for those above the minimum rate, increase the rate payable from 70% to 75% of reckonable earnings
- Child benefit to be increased by €10 (1st and 2nd Children) and by €12 per month (3rd and subsequent children)
- Increase in Respite Care Grant to €1,000 with an estimated 9,000 new claimants to benefit

- Employee (PAYE) tax credit increased by €230 to €1,270 per year
- Personal tax credits increase by €60 single/€120 married to €1,580 single/€3,160 married
- No stamp duty for first time buyers of second hand homes up to a value of €317,000 and a reduced rate on purchases up to €635,000. It is estimated these changes will save first time buyers up to €11,000
- Increased tax relief for those in rented accommodation

**The Progressive Democrats in Government – Delivering for you.**

## Keeping ODA a Top Priority

**I**n 2000, Ireland became the first country to ever publicly set a target date by which to meet UN aid targets, by pledging to meet the UN target of 0.7% of GNP on ODA by 2007.

As Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for Overseas Development Assistance and Human Rights at the time, this was a proud achievement and one which I have continued to champion. Recent estimates went a long way to achieving the target but constant advocacy is required to achieve the UN goal.

However, since 1997 our aid programme has quadrupled and will be €535 million for 2005. After considerable negotiations, a three-year guaranteed budget has now been secured. It involves a minimum increase of €190 million over three years bringing the amount spent on aid to €665 million by 2007.

Our current level of ODA spending has put Ireland at No.7 in the list of leading donors in international efforts to reduce poverty and inequality and to respond to humanitarian disasters in developing countries.

A central part of our Aid programme

means Ireland is committed to the long-term development of six of the poorest countries in Africa: Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

In conjunction with a number of Irish and foreign Agencies and Missionary Orders, the fund allows for work to be carried out on increasing the capacity of these countries to run their own affairs and deliver basic services to their people.

The focus is on health, education, sanitation and other basic needs. Work is carried out in a systematic way to lessen poverty and increase economic development. The scourge of HIV/AIDS is a major development challenge, particularly in Africa, where an estimated 30 million people are infected.

# Beacon Clinic Opens in Sandyford

For the first time in decades, Dublin will have a superb new modern hospital which will be available to all the people of Ireland to avail of the latest in medical care from some of the best medical staff in the world.

The 180-bed Beacon Hospital in Sandyford was officially launched by the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney T.D. at the end of November

The 175m hospital, due for completion in January 2006, will be operated by Triad Hospitals Inc. and will be a full affiliate of the internationally renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital. It will employ 400 people in year one and 550 when fully operational. The arrival of Beacon Hospital will make a significant contribution to the Government's national health strategy, by reducing hospital waiting lists and participation in the National Treatment Purchase Fund. Though privately funded, up to 50% of the beds will be made available to the public health sector.

The hospital guarantees the highest standards in terms of build, fit-out and equip, but also in the level of care which will be given to the patients who use it. It will use the most modern technology for diagnostic purposes and provide an outstanding level of patient care.



*Pictured at the launch of Beacon Hospital in Sandyford are Michael Cullen, CEO Beacon Medical Group, An Tánaiste and Minister for Health, Mary Harney TD, Deborah Brehe, Chief Executive Beacon Hospital and Deputy Liz O'Donnell TD.*

## All on Board for Luas



The wait is over and the Luas has arrived, cutting a stylish path through Dublin South.

June 30th marked the opening of the Stephen's Green to Sandyford route and the

critics have been well and truly silenced as Dublin's Light Rail System is a huge success. Passenger numbers on the first week were huge as the fares were free, and have remained exceptionally high since. Luas commuters now have a short,

safe and comfortable journey from Dundrum on a modern, clean and reliable service.

Consideration is also being given by the Government to a proposal to link the two Luas lines. A track joining the two Luas lines would run from St Stephen's Green down Dawson Street, around College Green, along Westmoreland Street and over O'Connell Bridge, to link with the red line at the Abbey Street/O'Connell Street junction.

Adequate Park 'n'Ride facilities must now be made available at different Luas stops, to facilitate commuters and reduce congestion going into the heart of Dublin. In addition, an adequate feeder bus must be provided by Dublin Bus to support Luas passengers. Plans are currently being implemented for a 'smart card' system to be used on both Luas lines, and it is envisaged that this will also be used on rail and bus services by the end of next year.

## Safeguarding the Rights of Tenants

As part of the Government's reform of the rented housing market, a new Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) has been established. The Board provides a new dispute resolution service for landlords and tenants. All landlords must register with the board.

If your landlord has not yet registered with the Board, then contact the Board on

01 8882960 or  
email:  
tenantsboard@environ.ie

## Sandyford / Stillorgan Industrial Estates Area Plan

There is a growing need for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council to put in place an area action plan for the Sandyford/Stillorgan Industrial Estates.

There are very legitimate concerns centering on the pace, density and an ad hoc nature of development in the Industrial Estates.

Presently there are a number of dramatic planning applications pending decision under the new development plan and a very large increase in the

working and residential population is envisaged.

What is in effect the development of a town of 10,000 to 20,000 people need more integrated planning and support structures.

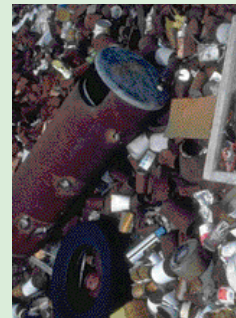
I have sought a meeting with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, together with a delegation representing local resident associations in the area, to discuss concerns and the need for an action plan to be put in place.

## Tackling Litter Head On

We are all aware of the blight of litter on our environment. South Dublin County Council proposes to bring a report on the Draft Litter Management Plan, 2005-2007, to the Council in the near future. It is intended that the plan be adopted in 2005.

Submissions will be invited shortly from interested groups or individuals in relation to the proposed plan. Compost bins are available from SDCC; currently due to demand there is at least a 6-month waiting list.

The Council has set a target of 10 new plastic recycling banks to be situated within the county this year, usually sited adjacent to bottle banks. There is one at Whitechurch shopping centre. The site in the car park of Tymon Park on Wellington Lane is included for early 2005.



## Contact Us



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### Progressive Democrats Delivering for you locally:

- Cutting journey times into the heart of the city centre with the Luas system
- Seeking the provision of an adequate feeder bus service to support Luas passengers
- Actively pursuing the acquisition of a site for a new primary school to cater for the Gallops/Sandyford/Ballyogan
- Promoting the sustainable development and preservation of the unique green space at Airfield
- Campaigning for better exercise facilities for parents and guardians in the vicinity of children's play grounds to offer exercise facilities while children play. PSDCC have agreed to such a proposal, commencing with a facility in the proposed new play ground in Tymon Park this year.
- Opening of Beacon Clinic – state-of-the art facilities for public/private patients in Sandyford. Plans are in place for an A&E extension
- Campaigning for an Area Action Plan for Sandyford/ Stillorgan Industrial Estates
- Working with the community for the building of a new swimming pool in Dundrum
- Working with St. Colmcilles NS to progress building programme

### Progressive Democrats Delivering for you nationally:

- Delivering a better health service – Putting the patient first
- Cutting hospital waiting lists – over 21,000 patients treated to date under the National Treatment Purchase Fund
- Continuing insurance reform programme – Further reductions in your premium
- Continued prudent management of the public finances – keeping taxes low and promoting free and fair competition
- Action for social justice; increasing the minimum wage, social welfare payments, pensions, and support for carers', and people with disabilities
- Recruitment of 2,000 extra Gardaí - Tackling crime at all levels
- Publication of the Critical Infrastructure Bill – Key infrastructure projects delivered on time and to budget
- Developing an integrated transport policy – Reducing congestion in the city
- Caring for our children – major investment in our primary schools, 300 additional Special Needs Assistants
- Doubling of aid to the poorest nations
- Reducing carnage on our roads through the Penalty Points System and the Road Safety Bill
- Ongoing engagement in International and Anglo-Irish Affairs Committee and British Irish Parliamentary Body