



# MY MOTHER AND ME: THE TRAGIC SECRET

Alan Shatter — IN LIVING

## GOLD-DIGGERS, GUNS AND THE PLOUGHING

Niamh Horan meets Anna May McHugh PAGE 6



## BRENDAN O'CONNOR

Is silencing George Hook really the best answer?

PAGES 4-5

## ALL-IRELAND FINAL SPECIAL

- BROLLY
- O'ROURKE
- BROGAN
- KIMMAGE

IN SPORT



# Sunday Independent

Vol. 112 No. 37 17 September 2017 city final

921,000 Readers

€3.00 (£1.60 in Northern Ireland)

## RTE's Sharon gets equal-pay promise but wants to quit 'Six One'

Niamh Horan EXCLUSIVE

TWO months after the gender pay gap furore, uncertainty still hangs over RTE on who will take over from Bryan Dobson when he moves to *Morning Ireland* on October 30.

Newsreader Sharon Ni Bheolain has been asked to stay on the *Six One News* and has received concrete assurances on equal pay and status.

Both newscasters in the new line-up will share the bulletin and there will be no lead anchor. However, the *Sunday*

*Independent* has learned that Ms Ni Bheolain is anxious to move on after 23 years as the face of RTE News.

It follows our revelation that the pay gap between the female co-anchor and Mr Dobson controversially stood at more than €80,000 a year.

Now questions remain over the future of Ms Ni Bheolain in the newscasting role on the *Six One News*.

The news presenter has made it known she would like to move on.

This weekend a source told the newspaper: "It's well

known that Sharon has been asking for a change."

He said: "She has made it known she would prefer to remain behind the camera for a while to concentrate on features and documentaries."

"She has been in the same position for over two decades,

so naturally she is longing for change."

So far no suitable candidate from RTE's news and current affairs department has agreed to take on Mr Dobson's role.

▶ See page 3

## SPARKLING HOLLY



GLISTENING: Holly Carpenter aims to shine in a new career as a jewellery designer. She tells Barry Egan how she got her mojo back in today's LIFE magazine. Photo: Kip Carroll

## 30 UNDER 30 IN BUSINESS

Next generation of entrepreneurs

Business



## TRIONA'S DIARY

Beating the Big Tempting Apple

Living



## THE RETURN OF DIGS

How to make money from your spare room

Property



## EXCLUSIVE: FAIR DEAL INVESTIGATION — THE FEES IN FULL, PAGES 20-22

# Nursing homes squeeze elderly for €17m 'extras'

Maeve Sheehan, Wayne O'Connor and Mark O'Regan

NURSING homes are charging elderly residents €16.9m a year in extra fees for activities on top of the millions in public money they are paid through the Fair Deal scheme, a *Sunday Independent* investigation reveals.

An undercover investigation into more than 330 private and voluntary nursing homes found that more than two thirds of nursing homes quoted additional charges that ranged from €1 a day in some homes to as much as €325 a week or €16,900 a year in one upmarket facility in South Dublin.

A further third of nursing homes — most from outside the city — said they did not charge additional fees for social activities and services. Ten nursing homes did not disclose their fees for various reasons.

The most detailed examination yet of nursing homes discloses for the first time the

scale of private and voluntary operators who are quoting additional charges, and how much money they are estimated to be making on these additions.

Our investigation follows months of controversy over the contentious extra charges imposed by nursing homes, at a time when the entire system for funding nursing home care is under review.

The nursing homes that charge the highest level of fees are concentrated in Dublin. The most expensive home, in terms of additional fees charged, is Leeson Park in Dublin 6, where service fees start at €125 a week for residents in a shared room, and €325 for a resident in a single room. The nursing home, operated by Silver Stream Health Care Group, offers a menu of additional services in its brochure that include such social activities such as bridge, choir and physiotherapy assessments.

The second most expensive is Kinvara House Nursing Home in Bray, where the

additional fee is €175 per week. Several nursing homes charge €100 a week in service charges, including Mount Hybla in West Dublin and Altadore in South Dublin.

Justin Moran of Age Action Ireland said: "We need to see a strong response from the Government. The figures show enormous variation between the figures charged in different parts of the country."

The *Sunday Independent* can also reveal that the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission is planning on drawing up new guidelines for prices for services charged by nursing homes.

In a statement the authority said the "project" will "examine standard term contracts in residential care services for older people. The purpose of the project is to develop a set of guidelines for providers of residential care services to older people and consumers of those services".

The guidelines will set out the obligations and respon-

Continued on page 2

## Varadkar proposes high-rise at Poolbeg to solve housing crisis

Jody Corcoran

TAOISEACH Leo Varadkar has said that a "large part of the solution" to the housing crisis is high-rise apartment living in city centre locations not "urban sprawl".

In an article in today's *Sunday Independent*, Mr Varadkar suggests that high-rise quality apartments should be built at Dublin's iconic Poolbeg generating station, colloquially known as the Poolbeg Stacks.

Mr Varadkar also comes out strongly in favour of Dublin Metro to run from St Stephen's Green to Dublin Air-

port and onwards to Swords.

In an article in which he outlines a 13-point vision for Ireland in the next decade and beyond, Mr Varadkar writes of redeveloping the country's main cities. He says: "We are currently tackling a serious housing shortage, and I suspect that a large part of the solution lies in redeveloping our cities for high-rise quality apartment living, not further urban sprawl. We want vibrant new neighbourhoods all across the country, such as in Waterford's north quays, Galway's inner harbour and Dublin's Poolbeg."

Separately, he told the *Sunday Independent*: "Poolbeg could have a Luas line also. It's in the National Transport Authority plan for Dublin. I've been to San Diego and Chicago, where there are great examples of how to mix older neighbourhoods with high-rise. Good design is key."

Mr Varadkar, who in his Twitter account biography, describes himself as the "Saviour of the Poolbeg Stacks. No kidding", said that any such development should retain the Poolbeg Stacks, though the power station could be converted. In his article, Mr Varadkar also says he will "encourage balanced regional development" so that cities like Cork, Waterford, Galway and Limerick can grow by 40 to 50pc and that rural Ireland also benefits.

"We will work on Dublin Metro, the Cork-Limerick

motorway, the Galway city bypass, and new roads to Derry, Sligo and Mayo to transform the way people can travel in this country. In addition, we want Dart trains to pick up passengers from places like Leixlip, Drogheda and Clonsilla."

The Taoiseach also says: "Next month, for the first time in 10 years, we will publish a Budget that will balance the books and reduce the national debt. This provides a secure foundation that allows us to be ambitious about the future and begin planning for the next 10 years."

He adds: "Of course we are occupied with current issues and problems, but we also recognise that a longer perspective is needed if we are really to make progress as a country."

▶ Leo's vision, See page 26

Worried about your **Heart?**  
Concerned about **Cancer?**  
Early detection is vital...

Beacon Hospital is covered on **90%** of all Private Health Insurance plans

# Don't Wait. Get Screened.

## Beacon Hospital

### This is Modern Medicine

\*See beaconhospital.ie for further information

Recommended retail price of the Sunday Independent in ROI is €3.00

Vol. 112 No. 37 C



9 770791 687070 37





# HOME CARE IN IRELAND

## Sunday Independent SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

### What is Fair Deal?

THE Nursing Home Support Scheme was introduced in 2008 to help older people finance their nursing home care. It's known as the Fair Deal scheme because it's supposed to be a fairer way of financing elder care.

#### ■ HOW DOES IT WORK?

Older people preparing to go into a nursing home contribute a minimum of 20pc of the cost of their care. The State pays the balance. Once you are assessed as ready to go into a nursing home, you can apply. The Health Service Executive will assess your finances, taking into account your income, pensions, assets, property, savings. If you qualify, the HSE decides how much you contribute. If you don't want to have to sell your home to finance your nursing home care, you can apply for the Nursing Home Loan, which will be repaid out of your estate. You can apply to any private, voluntary or public nursing home.

#### ■ WHY IS IT CONSIDERED FAIR?

Because older people would move into a nursing home, knowing that all the costs of their care would be met and they wouldn't necessarily have to sell the home from under them to finance it. The Government promised that under Fair Deal, no older person would be left with less than 20pc of their income, so they would have enough to fund the odd blow-

dry or flutter on the 2.35 at Doncaster.

#### ■ WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Money. Private and voluntary nursing homes don't get to set their weekly price for residents who come in under Fair Deal. The National Treatment Purchase Fund does. The NTPF, which sources private care for public patients, sets the price after going through the books of nursing home operators. Nursing home operators say the State is not paying enough.

#### ■ HOW COME?

The State stumps up to cover the basics: bed and board, laundry, nursing home care, etc. But the law also requires nursing homes to ensure quality of life by providing therapies, activities and outings, which cost money. Private operators believe that it is unfair that the State requires nursing homes to provide services to residents that it won't pay for. To compound their grievance, nursing home operators claim another injustice is that HSE-operated public nursing homes can get paid up to three times more per resident than private operators.

#### ■ WHAT ARE NURSING HOMES DOING ABOUT IT?

The Government has been reviewing the Fair Deal scheme for more than a year

now. But, in the meantime, most nursing homes are passing the additional costs of "activities" and "social programmes" on to Fair Deal residents. The costs vary wildly from €1 a day to €325 per week, as our investigation has shown. Others don't charge at all. And nobody is actually regulating the charges to ensure they are fair. The charges are not hidden — but they are not quite transparent either. Few publish them in brochures or on their websites. Some nursing homes insist on meeting you in person before they will divulge what additional charges they plan on applying.

#### ■ WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE VULNERABLE NURSING HOME RESIDENTS?

Between a rock and a hard place. Elderly residents and their families who were promised a Fair Deal are the ones left to fork out for the gap between what the State pays nursing homes and what nursing homes say is the true cost of the care. Advocacy groups say in some cases this is leaving elderly residents impoverished. The remaining 20pc of their pension they were told they would have to spend is not so protected after all. A Fair Deal, but not for nursing homes and certainly not for the elderly residents they are paid to care for.

Maeve Sheehan

### Why we had to go undercover to find out extra charges

WHEN the *Sunday Independent* began researching additional charges in private nursing homes three months ago, we found plenty of anecdotal evidence of €100-a-week top-up payments, but few facts.

The charges have become standard practice in many private and voluntary nursing homes. They are charged to Fair Deal residents for services that nursing homes are required by law to provide but which are not covered in the fee they are paid by the State.

Older people and their families are already contributing to the cost of their nursing home under the Fair Deal scheme. We wanted to find out how much more money they are being asked to pay in extra charges on top of their Fair Deal contributions. Nobody knew.

We asked the nursing homes. We contacted a selection of private operators and voluntary homes. One private nursing home, Hamilton Park Care Facility in north Dublin, gave us the information. Nursing Homes Ireland, its representative body, then intervened to respond on its behalf. We did not get the information we were looking for.

We went about seeking the information another way. We presented ourselves as family members enquiring about nursing home care on behalf of an elderly relative who was keen to know what charges he or she may have to pay in addition to their Fair Deal contribution.

There are more than 400 private and voluntary nursing homes in Ireland. We set out to contact as many public and private nursing homes as we could.

By the end of the exercise, we had contacted more than 300 nursing homes. In some cases, owners were away. In other cases, staff were either not authorised to speak about charges or were unaware of the details.

Today, we publish a snapshot of Ireland's nursing homes — the vast majority provided us with information about additional charges. We also included nursing homes that, for various reasons, did not disclose their prices.

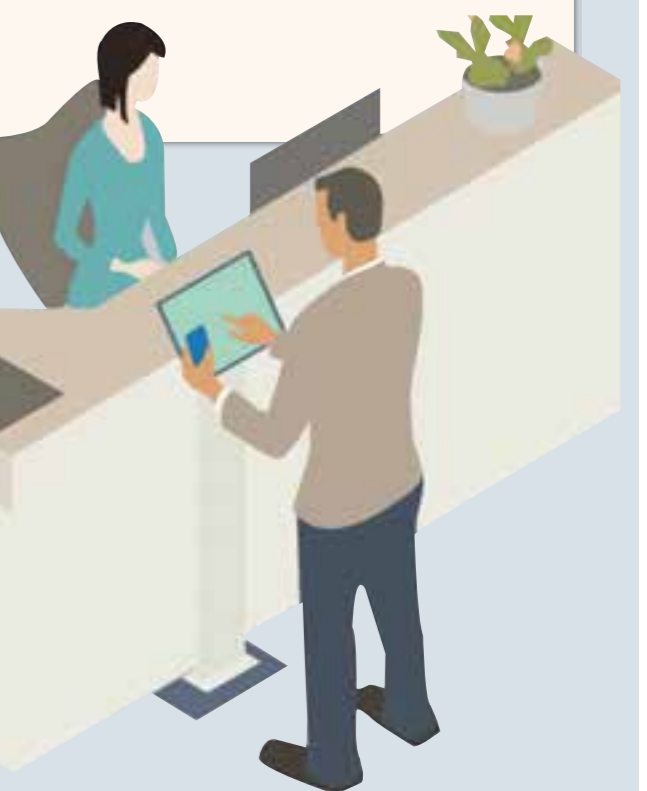
The table opposite is based on information provided to us by the nursing homes and from our own investigations.

From our research, we discovered that when a charge is applied, it is often — although not always — mandatory. Nursing homes described the charge to us in different ways. Some described it as an 'additional service charge', others as a 'social' or an 'activities' charge. It typically covers social activities, therapies such as physiotherapy assessments, massage, music and entertainment, religious services and games. These services are not included in the fee per resident paid by Fair Deal to nursing home operators.

In some cases, nursing home operators told us the charge also covered maintenance or the cost of specialist equipment that the resident may require at some stage during their stay.

On top of the additional charge, residents are usually charged for 'extras' such as hairdressing, personal newspapers and specific therapy sessions not covered by their medical card but residents just pay for what they use.

Maeve Sheehan



Fair Deal fee p/w Additional charge p/w

|                                      |      |         |
|--------------------------------------|------|---------|
| St Louis' Nursing Home, Tralee       | €810 | —       |
| Aras Mhuire Nursing Home, Listowel   | €775 | —       |
| Our Lady of Fatima Home, Tralee      | €895 | ■       |
| Killarney Nursing Home, Killarney    | €860 | €35     |
| Kenmare Nursing Home 'Tir na nOg'    | €805 | —       |
| St Joseph's Nursing Home, Kenmare    | €820 | €20     |
| St Joseph's Home, Killorglin         | €960 | €10 p/m |
| Valentia Hospital, Valentia          | €935 | ■       |
| Ocean View Nursing Home, Camp        | €835 | €45     |
| Kilcara House Nursing Home, Duagh    | €780 | —       |
| Lystoll Lodge Nursing Home, Listowel | €825 | €15     |
| Heatherlee Nursing Home, Killarney   | €795 | —       |

### KILDARE

|                                       |        |         |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Suncroft Lodge Nursing Home, Suncroft | €1,000 | €10     |
| Moyglare Nursing Home, Maynooth       | €1,045 | —       |
| Elm Hall Nursing Home, Loughlinstown  | €1,000 | €35     |
| Mountpleasant Lodge, Kilcock          | €1,121 | ■       |
| Mill Lane Manor, Naas                 | €1,010 | —       |
| Larchfield Park Nursing Home, Naas    | €1,045 | €3 p/d  |
| Craddock House Nursing Home, Athy     | €860   | —       |
| Craddock House, Naas                  | €1,035 | ■       |
| Lourdesville Nursing Home, Kildare    | €870   | —       |
| TLC Centre Maynooth                   | €1,239 | €25     |
| Beech Park Nursing Home, Kildare      | €940   | —       |
| Parke House Nursing Home, Kilcock     | €1,075 | €5 p/d  |
| Maynooth Lodge Nursing Home           | €970   | €30     |
| Oghill Nursing Home, Monasterevin     | €895   | €50 p/m |
| Ashley Lodge Nursing Home, Kildare    | €900   | —       |
| Hazel Hall Nursing Home, Clane        | €1,000 | €7 p/d  |
| Ryevale Nursing Home, Leixlip         | €1,250 | €1 p/d  |

### KILKENNY

|   |      |         |
|---|------|---------|
| Sacred Heart Nursing Home, Johnstown    | €870 | ■       |
| Archersrath Nursing Home, Cellarstown   | €900 | €35     |
| Strathmore Lodge Nursing Home, Callan   | €890 | €15     |
| Gowran Abbey Nursing Home, Gowran       | €895 | €10     |
| Drakelands House Nursing Home, Kilkenny | €895 | €12     |
| Mooncoin Residential Care Centre        | €895 | €30     |
| Tinnypark Nursing Home, Kilkenny        | €860 | €60 p/m |

### LAOIS

|  |      |     |
|--|------|-----|
| Kilminchy Lodge Nursing Home, Portlaoise | €850 | —   |
| Droimnin Nursing Home, Stradbally        | €925 | €20 |

Fair Deal fee p/w Additional charge p/w

### LEITRIM

|                                     |      |   |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| St Phelim's Nursing Home, Dromahair | €880 | — |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|

### LIMERICK

|   |        |       |
|---|--------|-------|
| St Gobnait's Nursing Home, Kilmallock         | €750   | —     |
| Lir Nursing Home, Tournafulla                 | €720   | —     |
| Rosary Hill House Nursing Home, Castleconnell | €770   | €2.50 |
| Milford Nursing Home, Castletroy              | €1,015 | —     |
| Good Counsel Nursing Home, Limerick           | €760   | —     |
| Beech Lodge Care Facility, Bruree             | €890   | €20   |
| Ard Na Ri Nursing Home, Bruff                 | €780   | —     |
| St Paul's Nursing Home, Dooradoyle            | €860   | €20   |
| Roseville House Nursing Home, Ballysimon      | €860   | €35   |
| Thorpe's Nursing Home, Clarina                | €740   | ■     |
| Corbally House Nursing Home, Corbally         | €820   | —     |
| Caheass Nursing Home, Croom                   | €855   | €35   |
| Beechwood House, Newcastle West               | €800   | €50   |
| Killineil Nursing Home, Newcastle West        | €870   | ■     |
| Maria Goretti Nursing Home, Kilmallock        | €775   | €10   |
| Abbot Close Nursing Home, Askeaton            | €860   | —     |
| Adare and District Nursing Home, Croagh       | €850   | €8.85 |
| St Michael's Nursing Home, Caherconlish       | €815   | €20   |

### LONGFORD

|   |      |         |
|---|------|---------|
| Laurel Lodge Nursing Home, Longford           | €900 | €15     |
| Thomond Lodge Nursing Home, Ballymahon        | €835 | €10     |
| Our Lady's Manor Nursing Home, Edgeworthstown | €890 | €50 p/m |

### LOUTH

|                                       |      |     |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----|
| Moorehall Lodge Ardee, Ardee          | €975 | €20 |
| Carlingford Nursing Home, Carlingford | €943 | €25 |

It was not apparent from the brochure whether the charge was weekly or monthly.

|   |      |     |
|---|------|-----|
| Dealgan House Nursing Home, Dundalk       | €990 | €20 |
| St Peter's Nursing Home, Castlebellingham | €985 | —   |
| Blackrock Abbey Nursing Home, Dundalk     | €970 | €20 |
| St Francis' Nursing Home, Dundalk         | €925 | €35 |
| Aras Mhuire Nursing Facility, Drogheda    | €915 | —   |
| Sunhill Nursing Home, Termonfeckin        | €965 | €20 |

### MAYO

|   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| Friars Lodge Nursing Home, Ballinrobe     | €780 | — |
| Ballinamore House Nursing Home, Kiltimagh | €800 | — |

Fair Deal fee p/w Additional charge p/w

|   |      |     |
|---|------|-----|
| AbbeyBreaffy Nursing Home, Castlebar                        | €935 | €38 |
| Hollymount Private Nursing and Retirement Home, Claremorris | €810 | €10 |
| Ave Maria Nursing Home, Ballyhaunis                         | €820 | —   |
| Cuan Chaitriona Nursing Home, Castlebar                     | €920 | —   |
| St Attracta's Nursing Home, Charlestown                     | €937 | €30 |
| Brookvale Manor, Ballyhaunis                                | €845 | —   |
| Blackrocks Nursing Home, Foxford                            | €830 | —   |
| Claremount Nursing Home, Claremorris                        | €860 | —   |

### MEATH

|   |        |           |
|---|--------|-----------|
| Heatherfield Nursing Home, Dunshaughlin                 | €850   | —         |
| St Ursula's Nursing Home, Betsystown                    | €940   | —         |
| Kilbrew Recuperation and Nursing Care, Ashbourne        | €1,030 | —         |
| Hillview Private Nursing and Retirement Residence, Tara | €1,010 | €80       |
| Woodlands House Nursing Home, Navan                     | €965   | —         |
| Knightsbridge Nursing Home, Trim                        | €1,080 | €2.50 p/d |
| Dunboyne Nursing Home, Dunboyne                         | €990   | €25       |
| Millbury Nursing Home, Navan                            | €990   | €100 p/m  |
| Silvergrove Nursing Home Ltd, Clonee                    | €965   | €25       |
| St Colmcille's Nursing Home, Kells                      | €910   | —         |
| Gormanston Wood Nursing Home, Gormanston                | €1,030 | €25       |
| Moorehall Lodge Drogheda Nursing Home, Drogheda         | €980   | €20       |
| Kilmainhamwood Nursing Home, Kells                      | €870   | €35       |

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

22,762

The number of over-65s in nursing homes, according to the CSO

■ Figure unavailable upon initial enquiry. In some cases the nursing home responded by inviting us to the nursing home or to call them. Others were not able to disclose the figure on the telephone or the relevant person was not available to talk to our investigation team. Others supplied a brochure but this did not reveal if there were additional charges.

## Private firms are fighting to cut costs — and get their voices heard

Politicians must listen to major players if they want to end the 'mixed-up economy' in care, writes Mervyn Taylor

TO paraphrase WB Yeats, change "comes dropping slow". The efforts of the *Sunday Independent* regarding nursing home fees are having an impact. Agencies are talking and Minister of State for Older People Jim Daly seems anxious to bring greater fairness to the system. Contracts that we had been told were perfectly adequate are now being reviewed.

There is talk of the Consumer and Competition Authority and Hiqa having a role. Meanwhile, the review of the statutory Nursing Home

Support Scheme, the so-called Fair Deal, continues and a consultation period on the development of a statutory home care system will end soon.

Certain things seem clear after surveying the landscape in early autumn. The nursing home charges issue is not, as some are trying to portray it, a consumer issue. It is a symptom indicating a deeper malaise.

The vast majority of older people want to be supported to live in their own homes but despite

the principles of person-centredness, integration and continuum of care we are now likely to have two separate statutory systems of care.

There is talk of the need for a 'level playing field' but that is not what the public want. They want a system that is clearly biased toward home care and provides good quality support and care in a congregated setting, such as a nursing home, only when it is really necessary.

What is also clear is that without any public debate, and without a single policy recommendation, nursing home care has effectively been outsourced to the private sector and public provision has become critically low.

Back in the days, we used to talk about a 'mixed economy'.

But when it comes to the provision of care it seems more like a 'mixed-up economy'.

The State, through the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF), deals with the public and private sectors differently.

Sage support and advocacy service has consistently pointed to the role of the NTPF as central to the nursing home charges issue.

The NTPF has to act within the terms of the relevant legislation, the Nursing Home Support Scheme Act (2009), and, in simple terms, it faces the dilemma of quantity over quality. It is the NTPF which determines the level of funding that homes get and it is the legislation and regulations which determine what nursing homes can and

cannot get paid for. Essentially it is bed and board. HIQA, quite rightly, raises the issue of quality of life and a stimulating environment but that needs to be paid for... and so do incontinence pads.

That commercial companies seek to maximise profits is hardly news. That they should seek to maximise profits from the care of our brothers, sisters, parents and grandparents is surely pause for thought.

It is time for the Oireachtas Committee on Health to engage with this issue and, if it too is busy, why not have the new Petitions Committee cut its teeth on something that is of vital importance? Call in the NTPF, Hiqa, the Department of Health, the major commercial providers

and tease out the issues.

They might even ask Sage which, as a support service for vulnerable adults and older people, had 46pc of its clients living in nursing homes in 2016.

Equally important, call in some of the nursing home providers who don't see themselves as part of an 'industry' who often aren't members of any lobby group and who genuinely struggle to provide quality of care while doing their level best to absorb as many costs as possible. They, too, are out there and their perspective needs to be heard.

Mervyn Taylor is manager of Sage. Sage will launch a discussion document on nursing home contracts in October



BALANCING ACT: Nursing home providers want to offer the best care possible but they are also in business to make money

