

## KASPress Ireland



### News Summary

**29.01.16 – 04.02.16**

Welcome to **KASPress Ireland**, our weekly summary of relevant and interesting news from the Irish press.

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### Politics

- The political parties have kicked off their general election campaigns after President Michael D Higgins dissolved the 31st Dáil and Taoiseach Enda Kenny set February 26th as polling day.
- Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams has warned that if Britain voted to leave the European Union, it would have “very profound implications” for Northern Ireland.
- According to recent polls, several high-profile coalition ministers are in real danger of losing their seats.
- In the latest Sunday Business Post/Red C tracking poll Fine Gael is down by 1 point on 29 per cent, Fianna Fail declines by two points to 17 per cent, the same level it achieved in the 2011 general election, while Sinn Fein is steady at 19 per cent. Support for independents and small parties rises by two points to 25 per cent. Most of the support in his bloc goes to independent candidates (16 per cent), with marginal movements among the Anti-Austerity Alliance-People before Profit group (3 per cent), the Social Democrats (2 per cent), the Greens (3 per cent) and Renua (1 per cent).
- Fine Gael is planning to provide extra resources for candidates it believes are capturing public support ahead of the general election. Party strategists are confident Fine Gael can win 62 seats out of an outgoing total of 68 TDs.
- A chorus of “wolf criers” are predicting the economy will encounter trouble in the years ahead because they failed to predict the last crash, Minister for Public Expenditure Brendan Howlin has claimed.

- Minister for Health Leo Varadkar has said abortion should be allowed if there is significant risk to a woman's long-term physical health – not just in cases of fatal foetal abnormality.

## Economy

- Fine Gael has announced a 'rainy day' fund for capital investment in case economy slows down.
- The unemployment rate dropped to 8.6% in the past month, according to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office.
- Television and broadband provider Sky has announced that it has awarded process management company Abtran a contract to support its customer service operations, which will create 130 jobs at its Cork-based centre.
- Irish sports media platform Pundit Arena has attracted the support of a number of big-name investors as part of a €650,000 investment that will see the company double its workforce.
- Hedge fund activity in Ireland will grow in the next couple of years as the number of funds increases and expands into new areas including loan origination, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- Taoiseach Enda Kenny wants 70,000 emigrants to come back home by 2020 but those who emigrated may meet resentment from those who stayed behind to deal with the crash, as employers favour candidates with foreign experience.
- Irish firms are ill-prepared to navigate the big technology changes coming their way and only a few have a plan in place to cope with 'digital disruption', according to a survey.

## Society

- Hundreds of thousands of families paying for medicines under the drug payment scheme could see huge savings under Fine Gael proposals to limit costs.
- Childhood friends of Terry Wogan have paid tribute to the broadcaster, remembering him as "one of the lads".
- Teachers are threatening to close half the country's second-level schools for a day before the end of the month.
- Thousands of students faced disruption on Wednesday as a strike by 4,000 lecturers at the country's 14 institutes of technology went ahead as planned.

- The HSE says it has been informed of two unrelated cases in Ireland of Zika virus infection. The two adults are currently well and fully recovered, the HSE said in a statement.
- An investigation is to be carried out by the Government into allegations of sexual abuse at a foster home in the South East.
- Health Minister Leo Varadkar has confirmed Fine Gael is no longer promising free GP care for all if re-elected to government. Instead, the party will attempt to extend the free visits to children below 18 years of age, with more funding going instead to the care of people with ongoing diseases such as diabetes.
- A new assessment by the Central Statistics Office has found that Ireland's health spending is much higher than previously thought. Ireland's spend on health is the second highest in the OECD as a proportion of gross national income (GNI), the new figures show. But, While patient outcomes have improved, survival rates for many big killers such as stroke and various cancers (ovarian, cervical and breast) are lower than the EU and OECD average.
- The rule that says religion must underpin the daily life of primary schools has been dropped after 51 years.

## **Headlines**

- [04.02.16] [Terry Wogan's school friends pay tribute to 'one of the lads'](#) [Irish Times]
- [04.02.16] [Fine Gael promises to halve drug payment bills for families](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [04.02.16] [Fine Gael opens its election campaign with economic plan](#) [Irish Times]
- [03.02.16] [Strike threat for half of country's secondary schools this month](#) [Irish Independent]
- [03.02.16] [Election 2016: Parties set out stalls as three week campaign begins](#) [Irish Times]
- [03.02.16] [Classes at institutes of technology stop as lecturers strike](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [03.02.16] [Unemployment rate falls to 8.6%, CSO figures show](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [02.02.16] ['The State failed to protect vulnerable people in our care'](#) [Irish Independent]
- [02.02.16] [Move to fill 130 Cork jobs at Abtran](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [02.02.16] [Two cases of Zika virus reported to HSE](#) [Irish Times]
- [02.02.16] [Free GP care for everyone is no longer on table, admits Varadkar](#) [Irish Independent]
- [01.02.16] [€650k investment sees sports website, Pundit Arena, double workforce](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [01.02.16] [Adams warns of implications for North of Brexit](#) [Irish Times]
- [31.01.16] [Fianna Fail down as coalition holds steady ahead of election](#) [Sunday Business Post]
- [31.01.16] [Several ministers in real danger of losing their seats](#) [Irish Independent]
- [31.01.16] [Kenny's emigrant pledge to drive up rent and risks sparking resentment](#) [Irish Independent]
- [31.01.16] [Hedge fund activity to grow in Ireland](#) [Sunday Business Post]
- [31.01.16] [Ireland top spender on health service but with poorer results](#) [Sunday Business Post]
- [30.01.16] [Fine Gael to give extra resources to certain candidates](#) [Irish Times]
- [30.01.16] [Brendan Howlin criticises recovery 'wolf criers'](#) [Irish Times]
- [29.01.16] [Irish firms lack 'digital disruption' planning](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [29.01.16] [Minister scraps 51-year-old religion rule for primary school](#) [Irish Independent]
- [29.01.16] [Varadkar backs abortion when woman's health is at risk](#) [Irish Times]