

## KASPress Ireland



### News Summary

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

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### Politics

- Taoiseach Enda Kenny has committed to holding a forum on liberalising Ireland's abortion laws as pressure is piled on politicians in the Republic after the North's assembly was ordered to legislate for terminations.
- Taoiseach Enda Kenny said the Irish Government would support Mr Cameron where it could as he seeks to renegotiate the terms of Britain's membership of the EU.

Mr Kenny said it was unlikely a deal would be agreed on the prime minister's demands until at least February.

- Taoiseach Enda Kenny has assured ministers that the Dáil will return in January in a move that has killed off the prospect of an early General Election.
- Ireland will use no fossil fuels by the end of the century, according to a new Government energy policy paper.

The White Paper on Energy was published by Minister for Communications and Energy Alex White on Tuesday.

- The Coalition voted to suspend Labour Party TD Michael McNamara from the Dáil after he refused to take his seat following a disagreement in the chamber with Ceann Comhairle Sean Barrett.

- Taoiseach Enda Kenny has said he hopes nurses will vote in favour of the package which led to the deferral of their threatened strike.
- The Government looks set to defy calls to levy households to help those who have been unable to get flood insurance.

That is one of the key recommendations of the Oireachtas environment committee which published a report on Thursday into the issue of flooding and insurance.

- Taoiseach Enda Kenny had added €1m to Fine Gael's General Election warchest from the party's annual raffle. Set up by Mr Kenny after the party's electoral meltdown in 2002, the Fine Gael Superdraw is the country's most lucrative political fundraiser.

### Economy

- The Labour Party is upping the ante on Fine Gael in the war over low-paid voters, by pledging to increase the minimum wage by more than €2 per hour if re-elected to government.
- AIB will pay the State €1.62 billion on Thursday in a move that will allow the Government to balance the exchequer books for the year for the first time in almost a decade.

The bank's shareholders on Wednesday gave the green light to a reorganisation of AIB's capital to allow it to begin repaying its €20.8 billion taxpayer bailout, while also clearing the way for a stock market flotation next year.

- Planned new health service initiatives could be put on hold and hospital building programmes might have to be deferred if the Health Service Executive fails to live within its budget next year.

The HSE needed a €600 million supplementary estimate this year after overrunning its budget. There have been overruns in most years recently.

- Tourism Ireland has estimated that by December 31st, 7.9 million people will have visited Ireland during 2015 - beating a previous record set in 2007.

Minister for Tourism Paschal Donohoe said that he wants to add another 50,000 jobs in the industry by 2025.

- Dublin-based software firm Asavie has announced plans to create 106 jobs in Dublin over the next two and a half years.

The company will be hiring for a variety of roles including posts in engineering, sales, product management, marketing and support.

- Irish families lost around 10 per cent as a result of the combined effects of policies introduced in budgets between 2009 and 2016, new research shows.
- Greenhouse gases from energy, transport, agriculture and buildings continue to fall - but not at a fast enough rate to meet EU targets to decarbonise the economy.
- The country's most vulnerable households are significantly more likely to be in long-term arrears on their mortgage payments, a Central Bank report reveals.

The research throws light for the first time on the long-overlooked plight of the large numbers of households still facing high levels of mortgage distress eight years after the banking and property collapse.

- The Labour Party leader, Tánaiste Joan Burton, sparked outrage within Fine Gael by dismissing their proposals for a 'Working Family Payment' as "corporate welfare" that would be "extraordinarily expensive on the taxpayers".

She suggested that Enda Kenny's alternative to the 'living wage' of €11.50 an hour would create "very large difficulties" and let large companies off the hook when it came to wages.

## Society

- A Government plan to be published on Wednesday aims to increase the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds at third level.

At present more than 90 per cent of students from affluent parts of the capital such as Dublin 6 and Dublin 4 graduate to third level, compared to about 15 per cent in disadvantaged areas.

- An expert group report, to be published shortly, recommends the introduction of a new income-contingent loan system for college graduates.

Under this system, college would be free at the point of access and graduates would begin to pay back tuition fees once their income reaches a minimum level

- Lecturers in institutes of technology have voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action over a range of issues, including funding and staffing cuts.
- Calls to the Samaritans have jumped by 30% in the last year — as more and more people in distress contact the charity.

The figure is contained in the charity's 2014-2015 impact report which reveals that Samaritans branches across the country responded to 623,579 calls to its free helpline, 13,272 emails and 7,705 texts in the 12-month period from October 2014 to September 2015

## Headlines

- [17.12.2015] [Kenny to meet Cameron on Brexit](#) [Irish Independent]
- [17.12.2015] [Labour: We'll hike minimum wage by €2 an hour](#) [Irish Independent]
- [17.12.2015] [Enda Kenny promises forum on liberalising abortion laws](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [17.12.2015] [AIB to pay €1.62bn to State as first repayment of bank bailout](#) [Irish Times]
- [17.12.2015] [HSE warned on budget overrun consequences](#) [Irish Times]
- [16.12.2015] [Taoiseach kills off widespread speculation of early election](#) [Irish Independent]
- [16.12.2015] [Ireland to be fossil fuel free by end of century, under plan](#) [Irish Times]
- [16.12.2015] [Ireland's greenhouse gases fall - but not fast enough for EU](#) [Irish Independent]
- [16.12.2015] [Bizarre scenes in Dáil as TD suspended after he refuses to take seat in chamber](#) [Irish Independent]
- [16.12.2015] [Irish software firm to create more than 100 jobs in Dublin](#) [Sunday Business Post]
- [16.12.2015] [Tourist visits to Ireland in 2015 rise to new record](#) [Irish Times]
- [16.12.2015] [Irish families lost 10% since the economic crash](#) [Sunday Business Post]
- [16.12.2015] [Enda Kenny: No levy to pay for flood insurance](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [15.12.2015] [Nurses urged to vote in favour of package which averted strike](#) [Irish Times]
- [15.12.2015] [Lecturers in institutes of technology vote for strike action](#) [Irish Independent]
- [15.12.2015] [Plan to increase access to third level for disadvantaged students](#) [Irish Times]
- [15.12.2015] [Emigration may affect student loans proposal](#) [Irish Times]
- [14.12.2015] [Jan O'Sullivan would not 'rule out' Labour leadership bid](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [14.12.2015] [Calls to Samaritans soar 30% in past year](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [12.12.2015] [Most vulnerable likely to face long-term mortgage arrears](#) [Irish Examiner]
- [11.12.2015] [Burton brands FG jobs plan 'corporate welfare'](#) [Irish Independent]
- [11.12.2015] [Kenny adds €1m to election war chest](#) [Irish Independent]