Irish Daily Mail

FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025

€2.60 (£1.10 NI)

It's Friday!
STARTS ON PAGE 22

BRENDA POWER

Put an end to weasel words when talking about depraved family killers like Alan Hawe

SEE PAGES 14-15

HSE CHIEF'S €562K PENSION BONANZA

Gloster to get €190k a year AND lump sum when he retires at 60

By **Sarah McGuinness**
Political Correspondent

HSE CHIEF Bernard Gloster will walk away from the role with a €562,000 pension lump sum and annual payments of almost €190,000, the Irish Daily Mail can reveal.

Under the pension scheme, which all staff who joined the HSE before 2013 are entitled to, Mr Gloster – who has served almost four decades in the health service – will receive a one-off payment of one-and-a-half times his €375,000 salary.

He will also be paid an annual payment of half his salary for every year of retirement – a sum that eclipses the pay of Ministers of State. Opposition TDs have praised Mr Gloster's tenure in public service but are taking aim at the 'double standard' in wages for frontline healthcare workers and gold-plated pension schemes for senior civil servants, with one calling his pay-off 'outrageous'.

'The Government has allowed such

Turn to Page 6

SHOWBIZ EXCLUSIVE

The real inside story of how Brooklyn and Nicola bonded with Sussexes over dinner

SEE PAGES 16 & 17

Massive pension

Continued from Page One

largesse to develop over and over again. It needs to stop,' Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín said.

Mr Gloster announced earlier this week that he will retire in March 2026, describing the move as a 'significant personal decision'. Thanking staff in the health service, the 59-year-old said that he 'wanted to bring certainty to the future leadership of the organisation'.

'I continue to be privileged to serve in this very important role and for the coming months I will be working hard with the board, the minister, and the department to advance many improvements and responses to challenges,' he said.

Mr Gloster joined the health service roughly 38 years ago. He was appointed head of the HSE in December 2022 having served as chief executive of Tusla since 2019. He will become the second consecutive HSE boss to exit the role after just three years, with his predecessor Paul Reid also cutting his five-year contract short.

The HSE confined to the Mail that Mr Gloster is a member of the HSE Superannuation Scheme, which applies to all staff who joined the health service prior to 2013.

As Mr Gloster began working in the health service prior to 2004, he is entitled to retire with full pension benefits once he reaches 60.

A spokeswoman for the HSE said that as of the beginning of March, Mr Gloster earns a gross annual salary of €394,232.

'In Mr Gloster's case this salary has been adjusted downward by

'A very dedicated public servant'

5% to €374,520.40 to reflect that he is a Class D PRSI contributor and a member of the HSE Superannuation Scheme and accompanying Spouses', Civil Partners' and Children's Pension Scheme,' the spokeswoman said.

She added: 'The CEO is not in receipt of any allowances.'

This will equate to a lump sum of €561,780 and annual payments of €187,260. A well-placed source noted that there is 'no negotiation' in terms of pensions in the HSE and that staff, including executives, are awarded 'nothing extra' outside of the scheme to which they sign up.

Mr Reid, who Mr Gloster succeeded, joined the health service as chief executive in 2019 following 30 years in the private sector and was not a member of the HSE pension scheme. This meant Mr Reid – who earned a total of €430,000 annually in pay and benefits – received annual pension contributions of €50,000 while in the health service.

Tony O'Brien, who led the HSE before Mr Reid, resigned in 2018 over the CervicalCheck scandal. Financial statements from the HSE show he was paid almost €100,000 in severance upon leaving the organisation.

Mr Gloster was perceived as well-liked within political circles, with TDs across benches of the Government and Opposition describing him as 'a very dedicated public servant'. But the details of his pension have been described as 'breathtaking'.

Mr Tóibín has calculated that Mr Gloster's entire pension pot will amount to a total of €4.5million over the next 20 years. 'There is no doubt that Bernard Gloster has done the State some significant service and I wish him well in his retirement. But this pension is eye-watering,' he said.

Leaving: HSE boss Bernard Gloster

'The lump sum figure of over half-a-million euro is outrageous.

'It is hard to see how any public servant should get such a lump sum.'

Mr Tóibín added: 'There should not be such a contrast between those who work on the front-line and HSE management. The Government has allowed such largesse to develop over and over again. It needs to stop.'

Cian O'Callaghan, deputy leader of the Social Democrats and the party's finance spokesman,

'Such levels of disparity'

also acknowledged the 'hard work' of Mr Gloster in 'such a difficult role'.

'And I do agree that hard work should be reflected in workers' compensation,' he added.

'But many people at home work very hard for far, far less money.

'It is hard to justify and understand how there are such levels of disparity.'

The cost-of-living crisis was raised by Sinn Féin in the Dáil this week, with Taoiseach Micheál Martin ruling out a cost-of-living package in this year's budget.

'So many people are struggling to get by at the minute. This Government is now refusing to bring in a living wage – as they once promised... It's hard to comprehend the double standard here,' Mr O'Callaghan said.

The announcement of Mr Gloster's retirement came amid intense scrutiny of compensation being awarded to public servants and staff in semi-state bodies.

Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael received much backlash over the creation of more junior and 'super-junior' ministries upon the

SOC DEMS MOVE GIBNEY OUT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

By **Brian Mahon**
Political Correspondent

THERE is 'relief' in the Social Democrats that foreign affairs spokeswoman Sinéad Gibney has been moved on, party sources indicated.

Yesterday, the SocDems confirmed they were making Patricia Stephenson, a senator for the party, their foreign affairs spokeswoman, and making Ms Gibney, who is a first-time TD from Dublin-Rathdown, spokeswoman on enterprise, trade and employment; arts, media, communications and culture; and defence.

Ms Gibney has recently refused to say whether or not she would leave the Social Democrats if they readmitted Eoin Hayes into the parliamentary party. Sources in the party have also noted that she has a stronger position personally on the triple lock regarding neutrality than the official party line.

'She is the purest of the pure'

One source said there was 'relief' that Ms Gibney had been taken out of foreign affairs, and added that Ms Stephenson has significant experience in the area from her professional life before politics. Ms Stephenson worked in international development, including spending six years in East Africa.

Another source said of Ms Gibney: 'She is the purest of the pure who thinks the world should be a wonderful place where there is peace and love, and there is an element in the party that is a bit more pragmatic.'

They said that some in the party needed to move 'slowly' in the direction away from the triple lock, 'but she puts up a very convincing argument'.

'The party is so pious and holier-than-thou at the moment,' they said.

One TD who declined to comment on the rumblings in the party noted that it was now time to get down to work, but acknowledged that Ms Gibney did not have to leave open the door to leaving the party when asked by the press.

The TD also insisted spokesperson positions were 'provisional' until committee roles were assigned, which has happened only in the past few days.

'Patricia has ten years' experience in this sector and is really well suited to the role,' they said.

They added they had 'no comment' on Ms Gibney's remarks last week that she would continue to paint her nails in the Palestinian colours as an act of solidarity.

'I understand there are people frustrated or not getting what they want. But we need to get on with the work now. We have to show a bit of maturity now. Others have different opinions.'

Another source in the party said they were 'disgusted' at Ms Gibney's comments about her nails. 'Who cares about your fingernails?' they said. 'That gave me the ick.'

Speaking about the new positions, the acting leader of the Social Democrats, Cian O'Callaghan, said: 'Senator Patricia Stephenson, who sits on the Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee, will take on the role of spokesperson on foreign affairs and trade.

'Significant experience'

'Patricia has a huge level of experience in this area. Before being elected to the Seanad, she spent almost a decade working in international development, including six years living in East Africa. Patricia is also a former EU diplomat, having worked for the EU delegation to Uganda in the governance and human rights department. Patricia is also one of the Irish delegates to the Council of Europe.

'Sinéad Gibney, who will sit on the Oireachtas Committee on Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht, is taking over responsibility for this portfolio.

'Sinéad also has significant experience in this area. Having spent eight years working in the tech sector, she is extremely familiar with how these companies operate. Reform of social media, and improving regulations placed on social media companies, will be a focus of her work on the committee.

'Sinéad's experience as chief commissioner for the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission also means that she has a huge degree of relevant expertise in digital rights, language rights, culture, AI and a range of other relevant areas,' he added.

He also insisted that there was no reason for the mini-reshuffle other than that committee jobs had now been filled.

Mr O'Callaghan is also taking on the public expenditure portfolio due to the Oireachtas committee reflecting both the DPER and finance portfolios as well.

Ms Gibney did not respond to a request for comment.

Outspoken: Social Democrats TD Sinéad Gibney

‘is hard to justify’

formation of the new Coalition.

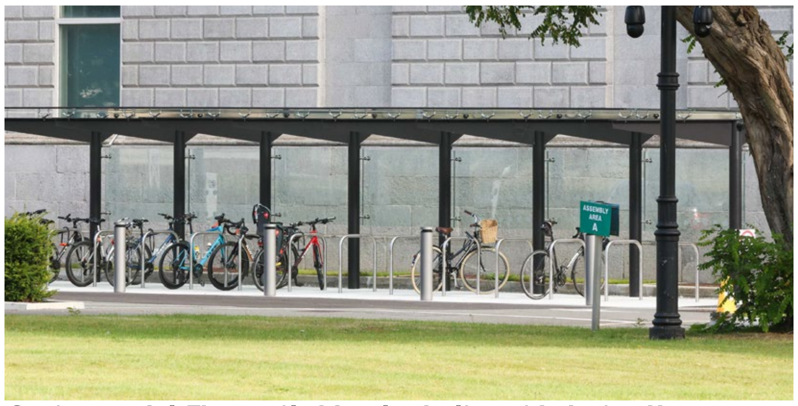
Earlier this month, outgoing Nama chief executive Brendan McDonagh pulled out of the race to become the Government’s new housing tsar following uproar over the possibility of him retaining his €430,000 pay packet.

Mairéad Farrell, Sinn Féin TD and chairwoman of the Oireachtas Finance Committee, has said she will seek to question Nama executives on whether Mr McDonagh will retain his salary when he returns to his previous role at the National Treasury Management Agency, from where he was seconded, later this year.

Meanwhile, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) heard yesterday that Children’s Health Ireland (CHI) came to a ‘settlement’ with its former CEO for her to keep her €177,000 salary when taking over a new strategic role. The PAC was told Eilish Hardiman continues to be paid her salary in her new role as CHI strategic programme director after former health minister Stephen Donnelly declined to approve her retention for a third term as CEO.

Comptroller and Auditor General Séamus McCarthy said that CHI – which is battling numerous scandals over children’s operations – had been ‘reluctant’ to divulge the nature of the settlement with Ms Hardiman, and even its very existence. He noted that typically such a settlement will have a non-disclosure agreement attached, ‘and that it’s really for CHI to provide what further information they can’.

news@dailymail.ie



Controversial: The costly bicycle shelter at Leinster House

OPW neglected value analysis of €335k bike shed before go-ahead

By **Brian Mahon**

NO ‘value-for-money assessment’ was carried out before forging ahead with the controversial bike shelter at Leinster House, a review of the project has found.

Deloitte was commissioned by the Office for Public Works (OPW) to review the project after it came to light late last year.

It found that there was an ‘absence of some fundamental good practices’ in the OPW, which led to the spending of €335,000 on the bike shelter.

The report also found that a proposal by the OPW to locate the bike shelter in front of the 1966 block beside the Members’ Dining Hall was discounted after a security review by the Oireachtas and gardaí.

This was despite a bike shelter being used underneath the Agricultural building, which is less than 200 metres from the site of the new bike shelter.

The report found: ‘On June 21, 2021, a proposal to install a covered bicycle parking shelter with capacity for 36 bikes beside the railings at the western end of the National Gallery was proposed to, and approved by, the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (HoC) without costings being provided. Throughout this time (December 2019 to June 2021) when options were being proposed to the HoC, the option of doing nothing, as required by the Public Spending Code, was not formally presented to the HoC by the OPW.’

The Deloitte report said: ‘A value-for-money assessment was not conducted for the bike shelter project and currently is not standard practice for elective capital expenditure less than €500k.’

The report also found that the OPW did not communicate the estimates of the cost to the HoC. ‘The estimated cost for the project, prepared in April 2023, was €350,000. The OPW did not communicate this estimate of costs to the HoC.’

While many of the established and good practices were followed, the report added: ‘However, our internal audit review has identified the absence of some fundamental good practices in how certain elective capital works (including the bike shelter) below the €500k threshold are being initiated, approved, managed and delivered. The most fundamental of these control gaps is the absence of a value-for-money assessment which would have allowed informed OPW personnel to evaluate the cost-benefit of building a covered bicycle shelter in the requested location within the Leinster House campus.

€500,000
Cost threshold for a value-for-money assessment

‘While we understand from our discussions with the OPW that they were primarily focused on delivering to the HoC, the reasons for the costs associated with the bike shelter project should have been documented in a value-for-money assessment which should have been performed within the OPW as part of a robust options appraisal process.

‘We understand that some of the reasons for the cost levels included alignment of the bike shelter with the fabric of existing structures and maintaining the important city centre space to a high standard.

‘Regardless of the reasons, a value-for-money assessment should have been performed and the outcome of this value-for-money assessment (in effect a formal and documented sense check on cost vs benefit) together with lower-cost alternatives, and the option of doing nothing, should then have been presented back to the HoC as part of a robust options appraisal.’

The report added: ‘There is currently no governance structure within the OPW for ensuring Value For Money (VFM) assessments are performed for capital projects with a projected budget below €500k.’

Public Accounts Committee member and Social Democrat TD Aidan Farrelly said: It is shocking, but not surprising, that the audit published today by Deloitte confirms there was no value-for-money evaluation carried out on this project, which cost taxpayers a whopping €335,000.’

Watchdog to examine ‘high’ Galway rents

THE rental watchdog will investigate ‘concerning’ trends of ‘persistently high’ rents in Galway.

In its second quarterly bulletin for 2025, the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) flagged ‘unusual patterns of rental inflation’ and concerns around the registration of tenancies in Galway.

Rents in the county rose for eight consecutive quarters at a time when rental inflation was moderating across the country. The RTB said it will ‘engage directly with renters, landlords and other stakeholders in the county this June to investigate the trend further’.

The warning comes as rents for new tenancies in Ireland grew by an average of 5.5% to €1,680 in the year to the fourth quarter of 2024. Rents on existing tenancies rose 4.6% in the same period to €1,440. Average rents for new tenancies in Dublin city have increased to €2,120, while prices in Galway city and Cork city are €1,730 and €1,605 respectively. The RTB said the latest data marks a ‘moderation’ on the rates of rental inflation seen in 2023, when price growth soared to 9.1% for new tenancies and 5.9% for existing tenancies.

But it warned that new tenancy price rises remain ‘persistently high’ in certain counties, citing eight consecutive quarters of ‘high growth’ in new tenancy rent levels in Galway.

RTB director Rosemary Steen highlighted that Galway was only included as a Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ) in the last 12 months and that ‘there may be a lack of understanding around the rental laws that apply’.