

# Winter FOOD DRINK GUIDE

44-page magazine inside today



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**>Lilly Higgins**  
**>Domini Kemp**  
 Plus **Maia Dunphy's**  
**Christmas**



# THE IRISH TIMES

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## Rent rises restricted to every two years under plan

Coalition reaches broad agreement on housing after weeks of negotiations

Kelly's aim to link rents to the Consumer Price Index has been abandoned

**FIACH KELLY**  
 Political Correspondent

Landlords will only be allowed to increase residential rents every two years under a housing plan to be announced by the Government.

The plan, which is due to go to the Cabinet next week, has emerged after weeks of difficult negotiations between Minister for the Environment Alan Kelly and Minister for Finance Michael Noonan.

They have reached broad agreement on a package to increase housing supply and address the issue of rent rises.

Mr Kelly's initial plan to link rent increases to the Consumer Price Index has been abandoned.

But the situation where annual rent reviews are permitted is to be changed, so that rents can be reviewed only every two years. This is expected to continue for the next four years, after which annual reviews may be permitted again.

**“The package includes steps to boost apartment numbers in Dublin**

Government sources said they believed the change would go a long way towards giving tenants a degree of certainty about their rents.

### Rent increases

It effectively means anyone whose rent was increased in the summer will not face another increase until the summer of 2017. Increases will then only be allowed at the market level, and landlords will have to prove the increases are justified by making comparisons with rental properties in the same area.

Following yesterday's agreement, officials are working on a memorandum to be presented to Ministers at their meeting next week. Mr Noonan and Mr Kelly are not expected to meet again before the Cabinet comes together.

The package includes steps

to boost the number of apartments built in Dublin through changes to planning standards that would reduce construction costs by up to €20,000 per unit.

The loosening of the standards would allow for the construction of smaller apartments and reduce the need for apartments to be dual aspect. It would also reduce the number of elevator shafts required and reduce the number of car parking spaces needed, particularly in developments close to public transport links.

At present, the same planning standards apply to student accommodation and family apartments. The new approach is intended to allow for the development of smaller apartments for city living.

### Construction costs

It is also intended to reduce construction costs to ensure apartment building is viable again for private operators.

Development levies for starter homes in Dublin and other pressure areas priced below €300,000 are to be scrapped, although sources said the exact details were still being worked on. The cost will be met from existing funds.

Mr Kelly will be able to override local authority standards as part of an effort to speed up market activity.

A significant element of the entire package, according to sources, is “harmonisation” of planning standards that would bring all “local authorities back to a national level”.

Landlords will be able to claim 100 per cent tax relief on mortgage interest when they rent a property to someone receiving rent supplement or housing assistance payment and they commit to maintaining the rent level for three years. The tax relief is currently capped at 75 per cent.

A spokesman for Taoiseach Enda Kenny said there is “still more work to be done” but added: “There is confidence that the package will boost supply of rental accommodation and housing more generally, which is the only way to slow rapidly rising rents”.



## ‘My father wanted me to do the best I can’



**Carl O'Brien**

The son of a Vietnamese refugee who arrived 35 years ago is set to graduate from RCSI

They arrived, wrapped in Aer Lingus blankets, to a cold and blustery Dublin Airport in the winter of 1981.

To many, they were simply the “Boat People” – desperate ethnic Chinese in flimsy vessels fleeing Vietnam and pushed back out to sea by the Malaysian navy.

Nga Van Thai, his wife and children were among the first of 200 Vietnamese refugees relocated to Ireland.

Only a handful spoke English. The majority were poor, unskilled with little formal education. Some were illiterate in

their own language.

That's why today is an especially proud day for Thai's family. One of his children – Michael Thai Trung King – will be among 24 students to graduate with a PhD from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI).

“I feel very proud,” he says. “My father always wanted me to do the best I can.”

It's a considerable achievement given the barriers he and other children of the Boat People have vaulted. The State's response was – to a large extent – indifference. Funding for accommodation and furniture came through the church collections. Children were expected to pick up English by osmosis.

The public response to refugees – based on the newspaper letter columns of the time – was hardly welcoming. “Did anyone ever stop to think who these people are, and how much money they spent to get on the boat?” asked one letter writer.

Another questioned: “Will they contribute anything to the Irish economy?”

Michael, now 31, was luckier than most. His father – who set up a Chinese takeaway in Dublin's North Strand – had some English and encouraged the language in the home.



**“Typical slurs were ‘chink’ or ‘yellow’. But I didn’t take things lying down**

Michael grew up in Coolock and attended primary school in Darndale. “It could be tough at times,” he says. “Kids were kids. Typical slurs were ‘chink’ or ‘yellow’. But I didn’t take things lying down. I was a little rascal, I guess.”

### Challenge

Secondary school was also a challenge. But he singles out a chemistry teacher for helping nourish his interest in science.

He studied chemistry at the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, where he achieved a first class honours degree.

“The atmosphere was totally different,” he says. “Under-performed at school. There, people

wanted to learn. My friends were very open-minded. They're friends for life.”

Work at a pharmaceutical firm helped fire his interest in drug discovery. As part of his PhD at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, he researched the development of drugs that may lead to treatments for autoimmune and infectious diseases such as arthritis, lupus, MRSA and sepsis.

Michael's father was supportive to the end. When he faced challenges completing the write-up stage, his father gave him the motivation to finish it.

He died on the day Michael submitted his thesis last May.

Today, Michael's mother and sister are due to celebrate with him at his conferring ceremony.

■ **Michael Thai Trung King.** Left: his parents and siblings on arrival in Ireland in 1981. They were among the first of 200 Vietnamese refugees relocated here.

His father won't be far from his thoughts. “Education was everything,” Michael says. “He wanted us to do well. He never told us what to do – just to do well in what we did.”

He is continuing his work as part of a post-doctoral research position in RCSI and hopes his story is an inspiration to others.

“I owe thanks to a lot of people here at the RCSI – they are amazing human beings. And my wider family... With the right support, you can achieve anything.”



## Life Friday

**I was bamboozled.**

**It was a Sunday night; I was only trying to get home for a Horlicks**

**Hilary Fannin**



## Gardaí cannot enter private dwellings for forced deportations

**CONOR LALLY**  
 Security and Crime Editor

New legislation is being prepared after a High Court ruling that gardaí do not have the right to enter private dwellings to arrest failed asylum seekers for forced deportations.

The Department of Justice acting secretary general Noel Waters told the Dáil Public Accounts Committee about 15-20 per cent of deportation

orders result in forced deportation from the State.

However, following a High Court ruling which has not been publicised, gardaí cannot enter a private dwelling for the purposes of detaining a person for deportation.

“It has presented a problem for a number of months for us,” Mr Waters said. “It would mean, in effect, when the gardaí would seek to enforce the [deportation] order that a

person would then say: ‘I’m sorry, you are in my private residence you have no right to come in here and if you do I will go to the High Court.’”

Deportation orders are signed by the Minister for Justice after asylum seekers have their applications rejected and exhaust their right of appeal.

They can leave the State voluntarily when the orders are issued. Failure to do so can result in forced deportation.

## Weather

Rain and drizzle will clear by early afternoon. Highest temperatures of 13-15 degrees.

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## Home News

**Cervical cancer vaccine:** The HPV vaccine given to teenage girls does not cause two syndromes linked to severe pain, fainting and migraines: **page 2**

**Guilty:** A man who attempted to abduct a young girl in Laois has been sentenced to 17 years in prison: **page 7**

## World News



**Egypt:** The Department of Foreign Affairs has advised against all non-essential travel to Egypt, citing a heightened risk of attacks against foreigners: **page 9**

## Business + This Week

**Yanis Varoufakis:** The former Greek finance minister has said Ireland adopted the strategy of a model prisoner in the hope of one day being released.


**Economy:** Ireland's economy will grow by 6 per cent this year, according to the European Commission.

## Sports Friday

**Soccer:** Shane Long may miss the Republic of Ireland's Euro 2016 play-offs with Bosnia and Herzegovina because of an ankle injury.

**Rugby:** Rob Kearney and Ian Madigan play their first game of the season when Leinster face the Scarlets tonight.


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