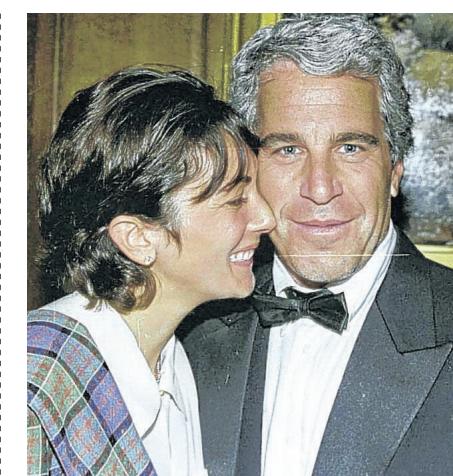


SCÉAL  
IRISH LANGUAGE  
SUPPLEMENTInside  
today

**Advice: 'I feel betrayed by the incomprehensible actions of my siblings, who made the deliberate choice not to inform me of my mother's death. How do I explain this?'**

Trish Murphy  
Health & Family

**FINTAN  
O'TOOLE  
EPSTEIN  
AND THE  
FILTHY RICH**

Opinion &  
Analysis

# Garda suspensions surge as accusations of abuse rise

Increase in allegations of gender-based violence against Garda members

Suspensions required 'to maintain public trust', says Garda Headquarters

**CONOR LALLY**  
Crime and Security Editor

Garda suspensions more than doubled last year, rebounding close to record levels, with a growing number of members now suspended after allegations of gender-based violence. These include coercive control, domestic violence and sexual assault or sexual misconduct cases.

The spike in new suspensions last year to 42, up from 18 in 2024, across ranks, comes after a number of high-profile court cases resulted in the conviction of gardai for a variety of crimes, including intimate partner attacks or abuse.

Last month Garda Trevor Bolger (48) was given a three-month suspended sentence for the 2012 assault of his ex-wife, Margaret Loftus, who was also a Garda member at the time.

Data obtained by The Irish Times from An Garda Síochána shows that of the 42 new suspensions last year, 10 arose from allegations of sexual assault or sexual misconduct. This was the leading cause of new Garda suspensions in 2025, followed by alleged intoxicated driving, which resulted in nine new suspensions last year.

Women's Aid said Garda members, given the "unique powers" they enjoyed, needed to be held to the "highest standards". Chief executive Sarah Benson said it was crucial there was transparency around how the Garda dealt with its personnel when accused of wrongdoing to ensure "their own members were not perpetrators".

**'Serious consequences'**  
There also needed to be "serious consequences" for any member of the Garda who failed to declare when a barring order, or similar, had been granted by a court against them.

The "unparalleled" power gardai have could be used to further perpetuate crimes such as coercive control. This could be done via their access to information about victims

and their reporting of crimes, or even influencing colleagues in ways that maintained their control over their victims, including their partners or former partners.

In reply to queries about increasing suspensions, Garda Headquarters said the "vast majority of gardai act in a highly professional and ethical manner". However, suspensions were at times required "to maintain public trust".

"The starting point for any suspension is an allegation or detection of criminal conduct or misconduct against a member of An Garda Síochána," it said.

#### Active suspensions

It also noted that in the near six-week period since the end of last year, the number of active suspensions had fallen from 107 to 98. The number of suspensions for gender-based violence was currently one fewer when compared with the end of 2025.

Garda Headquarters encouraged anyone who believed they had "been subject to any criminal behaviour or misconduct" to report it to the Garda or Fiosrú, a Garda watchdog agency.

The Garda Representative Association, which represents more than 11,000 rank-and-file gardai, said it could not comment on individual cases. Association general secretary Ronan Slevin said that in some instances suspending a Garda member was "the only option available" to the Garda Commissioner. However, some gardai were suspended for years and later "vindicated".

He believed, in appropriate cases, gardai facing investigation could be reallocated "to duties away from the public", rather than being suspended, pending the outcome of inquiries into them.

The number of new suspensions last year, at 42, was just short of the record levels of 2021 and 2022 when 44 Garda members were suspended in both years.

Of the 107 Garda members suspended at the end of 2025, some 18 related to suspected intoxicated driving cases.



## Starmer left reeling after key ally calls for resignation

**MARK PAUL  
and PAT LEAHY**

UK prime minister Keir Starmer was engaged in a desperate rearguard action to save his premiership last night, following an extraordinary day in Westminster when one of his biggest allies turned on him.

Starmer, whose position is in

peril over his disastrous appointment of Peter Mandelson as US ambassador, met Labour MPs in a room off the House of Commons' famous committee corridor last night to plead for their backing.

The meeting came hours after a co-ordinated round of public endorsements from his cabinet, who all backed him online with similar statements. Their intervention was arranged to counter a simultaneous announcement in Glasgow from Anas Sarwar, the leader of Scottish Labour and a leader of an ally of Starmer's, who called on him to go.

"There have been too many mistakes," said Sarwar, whose party faces defeat for the fifth time in a row in Holyrood parliamentary elections in May. He said he "had to do what

is right for Scotland" as he blamed Starmer's Downing Street "failures" for Labour's electoral difficulties north of the border with England.

Sarwar gave Starmer, whom he publicly backed as recently as last Thursday, advance warning that he intended to

call for his resignation. This gave Starmer's depleted Downing Street operation, which was also hit by resignations yesterday, time to muster the cabinet fightback.

There were growing fears in the UK Labour government, however, that Eluned Morgan,

the Labour first minister of Wales, could also withdraw her public support for Starmer in the days ahead. Polls suggest Labour also faces defeat in the May elections in Wales, where the party has dominated politics for the past century.

In Ireland, a Government spokesman declined to comment on what he said was a matter for British politics. But senior sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, pointed to vastly improved Anglo-Irish relations since Starmer took power at Westminster in 2024.

After years of tension

between London and Dublin as successive Tory governments wrestled with Brexit, Starmer established warm personal relations, first with then Taoiseach Simon Harris and latterly with Micheál Martin.

Annual British-Irish summits have been re-established – the next is due in March in Cork – while co-operation across the two governments has been significantly restored. Sources suggested this was likely to survive any change in leadership in Downing Street.

However, Sinn Féin foreign affairs spokesman Donnchadh

Ó Laoghaire said: "What we are seeing from this Labour government is dysfunction and this is not in Ireland's interests, north or south."

Up to 100 Labour MPs backed Starmer yesterday, including rumoured leadership rivals such as former deputy prime minister, Angela Rayner, and health secretary Wes Streeting, who said people should "give Keir a chance".

→ As Starmer clings on, Reform's Maga-style rally tells its own story: Mark Paul, page 6

## Two new Irish stars rise at glitzy Michelin party in Dublin

**CONOR POPE**

A restaurant carved out of two Orient Express carriages and a small plate specialist in Dublin 4 have become the latest Irish restaurants to be awarded Michelin stars at a glitzy ceremony in Dublin's Convention Centre.

The Pullman at Glenlo Abbey

Hotel just outside Galway City recently reopened after an extensive renovation just under a year ago and while its chef Greek-born Angelo Vagiotis's CV includes Noma in Copenhagen and Terre in Castlemartyr, his achievement in winning a star of his own so quickly must surely stand apart.

"It is a testament to the dedication of our team and good Irish produce," he said.

Forest Avenue in Dublin has had to wait longer for its star, having opened in 2013.

"We have been cooking the

best this year, I feel we are ready, and I am not overwhelmed by the thing and it just feels right and natural," John Wyer said after being handed the chef's whites embossed with the Michelin logo. "I am emotionally and professionally ready for this."

**“We have been cooking the best this year, I feel we are ready”**

Aside from the elevation of the Pullman and Forest Avenue, it was a case of "as you were" for Irish restaurants – with all the current holders of the highest of culinary accolades retaining their status.

There are five criteria used by Michelin to determine a restaurant's worthiness: the quality of ingredients, mastery of technique, harmony of flavours, the

personality of the chef in the cuisine, and consistency across multiple visits.

One star, Michelin says, is "a very good restaurant in its category"; two stars are for "excellent cooking, worth a detour"; and three stars, the top accolade, are reserved for "exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey".

Ireland started the night with five two-star restaurants and despite some anticipation that at least one would make history by being awarded three stars, it wasn't to be.

The two-star holders continue to be Chapter One, Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud, Merrion Hotel and Liath in Dublin, and Terre and Dede in Cork.

Irish cooking is ready for the next step – it's just waiting for Michelin to agree: page 3



Add modern warmth and comfort to your existing timber windows frames.

FiNEO, single glazing thickness with triple glazing performance, helps lower your heating bills, makes your home warmer, quieter and more comfortable.

FiNEO is easily retrofitted into existing timber window frames.

**ENERGLAZE**  
HOME ENERGY UPGRADES

**FiNEO**  
by AGC

For a free quote call (01) 901 1635 or visit [www.fineo-glass.ie](http://www.fineo-glass.ie)

## Weather

Dull, damp and at times wet with scattered rain and drizzle. Highs of 7-11 degrees in variable winds.

**THE IRISH TIMES**  
24-28 Tara Street, Dublin 2.  
D02CX89

**Telephone:** (01) 9203900  
**Online:** [irishtimes.com](http://irishtimes.com)

The recommended retail price of THE IRISH TIMES in the Republic of Ireland is €2.70

**Subscriptions:** Tel: (01) 9203901

**Email:** [subscribe@irishtimes.com](mailto:subscribe@irishtimes.com)

## Home News

**Erosion:** An offshore sea defence consisting of enormous structures will be used for the first time in Ireland to protect an area of the Dublin coastline. Page 2

**Dublin City Council:** The DCC is seeking €114m to kickstart the Taoiseach's Taskforce for Dublin plan. Page 3

## World News

**US:** Ghislaine Maxwell refused to answer any questions from a US Congress inquiry into Jeffrey Epstein's sex-trafficking operation. Page 15

## Business + Your Money

**Scam ads:** Social media companies made €32m from showing scam adverts to Irish users in 2025, according to research. Page 14

**UK pensions:** Thousands of Irish women who lived in the UK may be entitled to a refund after being underpaid. Page 15

## Sports Tuesday

**Rugby:** Ronan O'Gara says 'the narrative now around Ireland is negative' ahead of Italy's visit to Dublin on Saturday. Page 21

**Soccer:** Erling Haaland says Manchester City's 'statement win' over Liverpool is worth much more than three points. Page 19