

# The Echo

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## For heroes called on Christmas

Who have needed blood transfusions, families, truly know how important donors are to our community and our

than anyone else, they appreciate and grateful for what blood donors do. For instance, who have relatives in need depending on donated blood to be able to have an operation or other treatment, and how crucial is the role of the

is an exaggeration to say that blood donors are the backbone of our community and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

The Blood Transfusion Service yesterday called donors to make a special effort to lead up to and over the Christmas Year period. This is especially important with donor availability being a challenge with donor availability to the level of illness in the community. Nearly 20% of all appointments being weekly. Of course this is not an easy time of year, when everyone is so busy and the need is great, and we know that donors have always responded to that

words of said Paul McKinney, Director of Services and Logistics for the Blood on Service, put things in perspective: "We need blood donors' help. We know that our donors have been amazing support. Donating blood is a selfless person who gives it but is a priceless person who receives it. For the next three weeks we will need to make over 10,000 appointments to safely support the health service this Christmas and the New Year".

It is worth saying this is even more relevant for donors with O-, B-, and A- blood, "for us to continue to see very high demand in hospitals."

Service is arranging extra clinics on December 18, Tuesday 27, and Friday 30 special neonatal clinics in Dublin 23 to collect blood for young babies, who only receive compatible blood which is less than five days old since collection. On any given day 200 patients receive transfusions in Irish hospitals, and the demand for blood over Christmas, is constant. "We are asking donors and are urging them to give a gift this Christmas, the gift of life," said McKinney.

Receive a text from the IBTS to make an appointment please do so and make sure you do an identity test on www.giveblood.ie before making sure you can give blood on this

do make an appointment please try to do so as we are having large amounts of cancellations at short notice", McKinney added.

We would also like to thank donors for their support in what has been a very busy year for everybody and we hope you can help support into 2023". Further information can be found on www.giveblood.ie

## A new Cork City Council scheme aims to help individuals and businesses access information on how they can curb their energy use, says the council's Asset Climate Action Lead, Brian Cassidy

EVERY year, a significant proportion of home energy is wasted.

Whether it's heating a poorly insulated home, using energy-hungry appliances, or having an inefficient energy source, these factors are all contributing to households using more energy than needed and wasting more money on energy bills.

Instead, imagine if this energy was saved? The impact this could have on keeping our money in our pockets, as well as the difference it could make in cutting harmful carbon dioxide emissions, is significant.

With housing energy emissions accounting for a staggering 25% of all energy used in Ireland (as well as 25% of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions) home energy upgrades play a vital role in improving domestic energy efficiency and our national and international environmental outcomes.

With more than €8 billion in supports available through the Government's National Retrofitting Scheme, the current levels of grant funding for homeowners to implement home energy upgrade measures is unprecedented.

From taking crucial action on climate change and the biodiversity crisis to protecting against rising energy costs, and with the additional bonus of having warmer and cosier homes, there's no time like the present to get started.

But yes, it can be hard to know where to start.

That's where Cork City's Home Energy Upgrade Office (HEUGO) comes in. Individuals and communities can access free and independent expert advice and guidance, an 'in person' service at Cork City's HEUGO unit located on Grand Parade in the city centre.

The first of its kind in Ireland, this innovative collaboration between Cork City Council, the International Energy Research Centre (Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork) and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, has seen growing numbers access its services.

The initiative builds on Cork City Council's determination to become a climate neutral city. It is the culmination of four years involvement in the European inter-regional learning project INTENSIFY.

The HEUGO supports homeowners from across the city and wider region on everything from seeking guidance on installing attic insulation (estimated to save up to €600 per year on home heating bills) to the installation of renewable energy systems and much more.

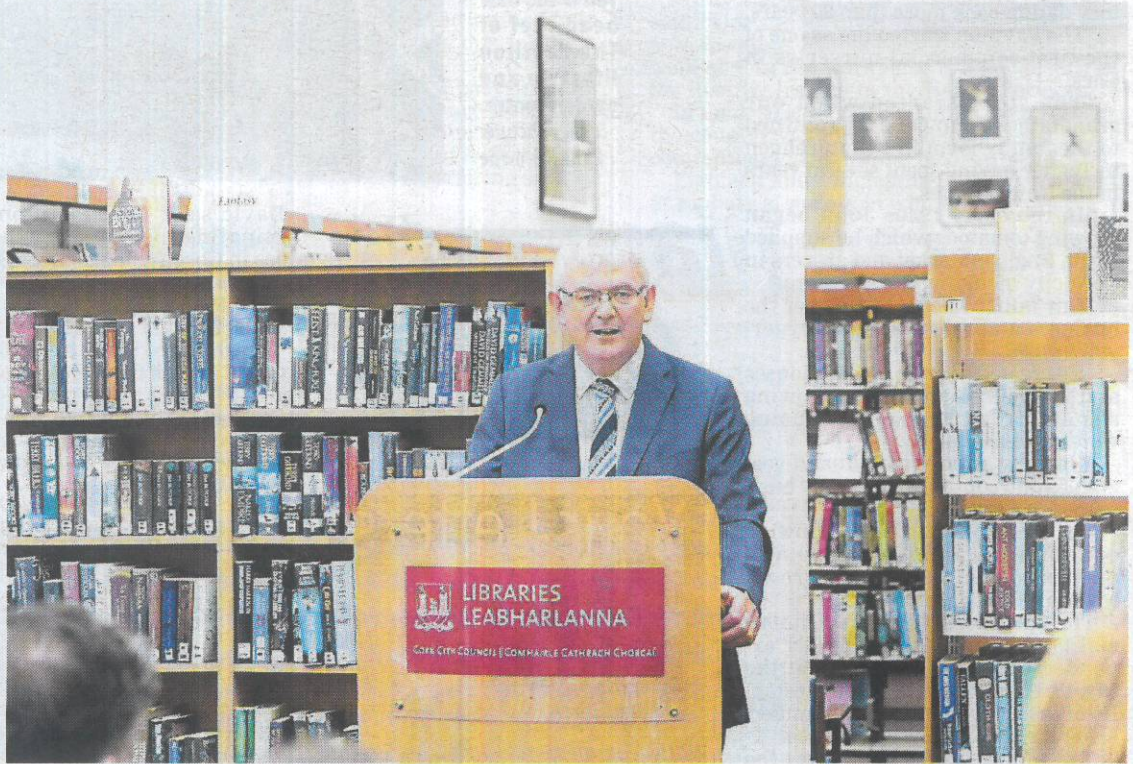
There is a range of grant funding available through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and this means there has never been a better time to take action on energy usage.

Householders can avail of 50% of the cost of a complete home energy upgrade solution for a typical home and up to 80% of the cost for attic insulation through an Individual Energy Upgrade Grant.

Alongside the recently announced planning permission exemption for rooftop solar panels, and the opportunity to sell surplus renewable energy back to the grid through the Microgeneration Support Scheme, upgrading home energy efficiency and transitioning energy systems makes good sense. And we can see that Cork homeowners and communities are seeing the opportunity for change.

The HEUGO also supports the creation of

# Saving energy to help your pocket and the planet



Brian Cassidy at the Cork City Council Home Energy Upgrade Office (HEUGO) launch in July

energy communities in the city.

Whether you are part of an energy community or interested in joining one, the HEUGO can assist by guiding a community or connecting individuals that might otherwise not have been aware of a shared ambition to reduce energy usage.

Working as part of wider group brings many benefits such as combining costs and saving on upgrade measures and will have an overall greater impact on the environment.

The benefits can go further than front doors too. Communities can consider the upgrade of a community building or the installation of a public electric car charger.

At home and abroad, biodiversity and ecosystems are rapidly deteriorating under the strain of rising carbon dioxide emissions and the escalating climate crisis. The good news is that homeowners and communities have the power to make a difference.

If a typical Cork home moves from a C3 Building Energy Rating (BER) to a B2 BER - government target for Irish homes - an annual reduction of 4,000kg of carbon dioxide emissions is made possible.

The achievable reduction in emissions brings into clear focus the substantial role of home energy upgrades in securing a healthy and safe environment and future for all.

The HEUGO office supports the Government's Climate Action Plan by empowering the public with the knowledge to upgrade their home.

It also contributes to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, ratified by Ireland in 2015. Almost half the Sustainable Development Goals are related to energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions.

■ Dedicated to supporting the public, the HEUGO\* is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

■ Funded through UP-STAIRS, a H2020 project, INTENSIFY, an Interreg Europe project, Cork City Council, and the SEAI, the HEUGO services are available at no cost.

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