

Tax break for kidney donors who save lives

Scheme sends 'important message'

By **Jennifer Bray**
Health Correspondent

KIDNEY donors are to be given a new tax break under measures announced by the Departments of Health and Finance.

Michael Noonan announced the tax relief measures yesterday in the Finance Bill. They will exempt reimbursable expenses of living kidney donors for income tax purposes.

Health Minister Leo Varadkar welcomed the tax break and said a range of additional financial supports, including reimbursement for loss of wages, would be announced within weeks.

Of the tax break, Mr Varadkar said: 'This is an important measure for the generous people who



Very important: Joe Brolly

man from Cavan who was about to donate a kidney to his brother. He was facing into almost three months off work.

'I met him and his wife at Beaumont Hospital. He had all the stress and worry around the operation but, on top of that, he was thinking that he needed to get back to work quickly because the family needed an income stream.

'So, clearly, this is not only the right thing to do but it will save the government a fortune too.

'Everywhere else in Europe, this is standard.

'This measure has been in the place in the North for quite some time, where there is a state-of-the-art living donor system.

'Increasingly, the Government is learning how cheap it is to have these transplants completed. The simple sums are this: it costs about €30,000 per transplant but €75,000 a year to keep someone on dialysis.

'If you have someone on dialysis for ten years, that's a huge amount,' he said.

'The waiting list in the south now is 800 people who need a transplant. In the North, it is only 100.'

Mr Brolly said he would meet Mr Varadkar in the coming weeks to outline a series of further recommendations, including that the kidney donor programme have its own funding stream.

Mr Varadkar said yesterday: 'I look forward to the continuing success of the Living Kidney Programme at Beaumont Hospital.

'I hope Mr Noonan's measure and my own forthcoming policy will help the Living Kidney Programme to increase the rate of living kidney donors over the next few years, and ultimately reach 100 living kidney transplants per annum.'

jennifer.bray@dailymail.ie

'Clearly, this is the right thing to do'

donate one of their kidneys.

'It will exempt the reimbursable expenses of living kidney donors for income tax purposes in three areas: loss of income, accommodation and travel costs. The aim is to ensure that donors do not lose out financially when they donate a kidney.'

'Anyone donating a kidney must take a certain amount of time off work in order to recover. This can have an impact on their ability to earn a living.

'This new measure will make sure that living kidney donors see the full benefit of a generous range of financial supports that I will be announcing in the near future.'

Mr Varadkar's department said

yesterday that the package of supports would 'acknowledge the vital contribution of living kidney donors and minimise any financial hardship incurred by them'.

The reimbursement process will be managed by the HSE and will set out procedures, rates and upper limits for each reimbursable item, including procedures in relation to the reimbursement of loss of earnings for employed and self-employed donors.

Campaigner and GAA star Joe Brolly described the measure as 'very, very important'.

He said: 'On the night of the All-Ireland football final, I visited a

€70k for garda who faced gunman after bank raid

By **Saurya Cherfi**
and **Ray Managh**

A DETECTIVE has been awarded almost €70,000 compensation after a gun was pointed at him following a bank robbery eight years ago.

Detective Garda Robert Reilly tailed two heavily disguised armed robbers to a car park and ordered them to drop their guns.

But a man got out the robbers' car and threatened to shoot Garda Reilly, who was himself armed, the High Court heard.

Garda Reilly, believing his life was at risk, dived for cover and discharged a shot, lodging a bullet in one of the car doors.

Reinforcement officers arrived and the men were eventually taken into custody, and later arrested over the robbery at AIB



Award: Garda Robert Reilly

in Crumlin, Dublin, on June 3, 2006.

Mr Justice Bernard Barton said Garda Reilly had relived the incident on numerous occasions as the officer had to attend court hearings when the men were applying for bail.

Garda Reilly, who had later

started to ruminate on the incident, had developed post-traumatic stress disorder for which he had needed counselling and medication, the Garda Compensation hearing was told.

His condition had improved.

Judge Barton said Garda Reilly, of Swords, Co. Dublin, had been promoted this year and was hoping to become an inspector in the coming years.

The judge, awarding him €68,636 damages, said Garda Reilly had learned that a decoration for bravery had been recommended, but he had never received any formal award following the 2006 bank robbery.

The High Court heard Garda Reilly had been threatened after he answered a radio call for assistance following a report to gardaí by a member of the public.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

The year is drawing to its close, so let there be light!

A VEIL of darkness stretches across the sky. It is only two in the afternoon yet dusk seeks to steal what is left of the day. We have entered the season of shadows, a time of little light and seemingly endless night.

I know some people who say it is horrible, that it causes depression and disorder. We get up, go to work and travel home in the dark. It is cold, damp and lifeless - a time in which there is no growth.

It is a far cry from the late autumn sunshine, from the bright nights and radiant mornings. Our wood pigeons have migrated elsewhere, their trees having shed their listless leaves. All is silent now except for the rain as it knocks violently against the window pane.

The secret of a happy life is to find poise in every situation. 'Poise': that beautiful word meaning inner calm and composure. Without it, we cannot live in harmony with ourselves or the world.

As darkness envelops our lives, we need to find the inner light that is powered by poise. To do so is to recognise that, however much we may rage against the dying of the light, we cannot prevent its progress. For the next six weeks, the shadows will continue to lengthen until the sun all but abandons the sky.

It is hard to maintain poise when you return to a cold and dreary house. Still, there is nothing that cannot be illumined by ceremony. Even in the midst of the gloom, we can find light in those little rituals that offer a defence against the darkness.

As dusk descends into night, draw the drapes and light a fire. There is nothing as enchanting as a fireside glow. That alone is enough to banish the seasonal blues.

This is our time to turn inwards, to rediscover beauty at the heart of the home. It is a season for enjoying our loved ones, for savouring what we too often neglect when the sun hangs high in the sky. It is a time when warmth is found in the depths of the human soul.

The candle should light our way through this season. For the Dooleys, this precious flame is a symbol of belonging. As I light those little lamps each evening, we are reminded that this is where we belong, that we are bound here together forever.

If people pray, eat and love by candlelight, it is because the flame signifies constancy in the midst of change. While the wax changes size and shape, the flame somehow stays the

same. It reminds us that, despite the ever-changing seasons, there is an inner light that will not succumb to the shadows.

To fill a house with such light is such a simple thing yet it serves to distinguish a house from a home. That is why, when our boys hear the match strike, they race to the kitchen. For them, it is the moment when a cold, empty room becomes a warm winter wonderland.

In doing this, we drive away the darkness and find solace in each other. We let the home shine with human light, one that cannot be overshadowed by the night. It doesn't matter what is going on outside, for the sun is now shining in our souls.

To live by the seasons is to accept that there is a time for both light and shade. It is to adapt to the constantly changing conditions of nature, to see beauty in every phase of natural growth and decay. It is to seek peace and poise even when the world seems intent on robbing you of both.

To be at peace in this season is to remember that there are many sources of light. The fire and the candle flame illumine our homes. However, there are other forms of light that cannot be extinguished and which we too often lose sight of.

THERE is the light that shines perpetually from the eyes of your beloved. There is the light that radiates from the gentle smile of a child, the sweet glow that fills the room as you gather with those you cherish to chat, wine and dine. There is the light that fills a person's life whenever they receive consoling words of comfort or kindness.

In these dark days, it is as though we are being forced to look for that light. It is as though we are being given an opportunity to find a flicker that will never fade. It is as though we are being invited to bask in the light of life.

That said, it won't be long before the days begin to stretch again. Slowly but surely, the shadows will subside as the first buds of spring shoot through the soil. It is then that we shall quench the fire and the flame until this time next year.

For now, however, let us not despair. Wherever there is life, let there be light. Let it shine from every hearth and heart; let it pour from every smile and every soul.

In that way, we can be sure that, however dark and dull our days, they shall remain aglow with the one light that can never die.

mark.dooley@dailymail.ie