

IRISH PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS PROVE VERY COSTLY

With a 50 per cent increase in personal injury cases lodged in the High Court and Circuit Court over a ten-year period, the growing cost of claims is not sustainable and is a major societal issue which must be addressed by Government as a matter of priority, according to Kevin Thompson, CEO of Insurance Ireland.

A total of €387 million was paid by local authorities in compensation claims from 2012-2017, according to stats released by a recent RTE Investigates series. And Insurance Ireland has said the series, *Accident Prone: Personal Injury Claims in Ireland*, shows the societal impacts of increased injury claims and the urgent need for a strong policy response.

Kevin Thompson, CEO of Insurance Ireland, (pictured here) said, "There can be no doubt now that the increasing costs of personal injury claims are having severe societal impacts on individuals, businesses and local authorities.

"The rising costs are a real concern with local authorities paying out €387 million in compensation claims from 2012-2017, money which comes at the expense of local services."

He added that the trends are stark with 'RTE Investigates'

reporting a 50 per cent increase in personal injury cases lodged in the High Court and Circuit Court from 2007 to 2016, in addition to a 42 per cent increase in applications to the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB) from 2007 to 2017. Thompson noted that the research shows how high Irish awards are, "with up to €54,000 paid for a minor ankle fracture in Ireland versus €14,000 in the UK."

While the impacts on motor insurance of high claims costs are well known, this research raises important questions



THE REPORT'S KEY FINDINGS

- The number of PIAB applications increased by 42% from 2007 to 2017, from 23,345 to 33,114. Even after adjusting for population growth over that period, this was an increase from 2007 to 2017 of 26%, in terms of applications per capita.
- In 2007, 13,854 personal injury cases were lodged in the High Court and Circuit Court. In 2016, there were 20,740, a 50% increase from 2007. Adjusting for population, the trend is still upwards, from 3,268 cases (per 1,000,000 people) in 2007, to 4,355 in 2016, a 33% increase
- A minor finger fracture could result in an award of only around €4,700 in the UK, but is potentially worth up to €16,600 in Ireland.



about the cost of injury claims and whether society can sustain these increases, according to the Insurance Ireland chief executive.

"To address it, the benchmarking of Irish awards with other countries by the Personal Injuries Commission needs to be followed through on with a decisive policy response. Ultimately, the growing cost of personal injury claims is not sustainable and is a major societal issue which must be addressed by Government as a matter of priority."