

Country fact sheet

Ireland



Key findings

Currently, there is limited evidence of news deserts in Ireland. However, despite the seeming positive situation, local media face numerous challenges.

The most immediate risk of news deserts is observed in the rapidly growing suburbs of Dublin, particularly in **North County Dublin**, where newspapers closures have left a void in media coverage, rendering the area a news desert.

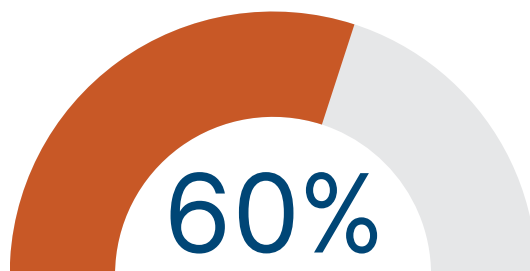
Local media decline: a 'threat to communities'

Historically, there has been a deep connection between local media and the communities they serve.

Local media are among the top-five most trusted news outlets, with **70% trusting local radio** and **69% trusting local newspapers**.

Maintaining this trusted connection between local media and communities is vital at a time when the composition of communities is changing as a result of population growth, immigration, and housing developments.

High prices drive youth (and jourmos) away from communities



A 2022 survey shows that **60% of people under the age of 35 cannot afford** to live in the community they would like to live in. This has major implications for local journalism.

Main causes of local media struggle

- Declining salaries for journalists
- Decrease in news coverage
- High cost of accommodation and living

Journalists in Ireland benefit from legislation that guarantees minimum wages, regulates open-ended contracts, and sets rules for dismissal procedures, unemployment benefits, and leave entitlements. However, amid soaring accommodation and living costs, the **working conditions for journalists are not favourable**.

Rising concerns about media ownership concentration



26 of the 61 local titles (print and online) represented by the Press Council are owned by just two companies: the UK-based Iconic Newspapers and the Dutch-based Mediahuis.

There are **relatively few independently-owned radio stations**. Wireless Ireland owns six stations, *Bauer Media* owns five, and *Radio Kerry Group* owns three. There are also some cross-media ownerships between print and radio.

SLAPPs on the rise



Legal intimidation is having a widespread impact on the entirety of Irish media, ranging from small-scale podcasts and magazines to major broadcasters.

Online abuse against journalists is prevalent.

Declining circulation of local print media

Local media operate in a complex landscape, characterised by changing consumption habits, economic pressures, and the ongoing impact of external factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic.



A notable **drop of 55%** in circulation since 2008 indicates a substantial change in readership patterns.



Local newspapers heavily depend on **local businesses**, which contribute to more than 90% of advertising revenue.



The pandemic led to an average **revenue decline of 22%**, partly offset by government advertising specifically related to Covid.

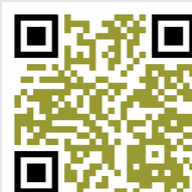
More efforts needed for social inclusiveness

Beyond Irish, there is no obligation to broadcast in the languages of minority groups. However, non-profit community media tend to be more proactive in this realm.



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