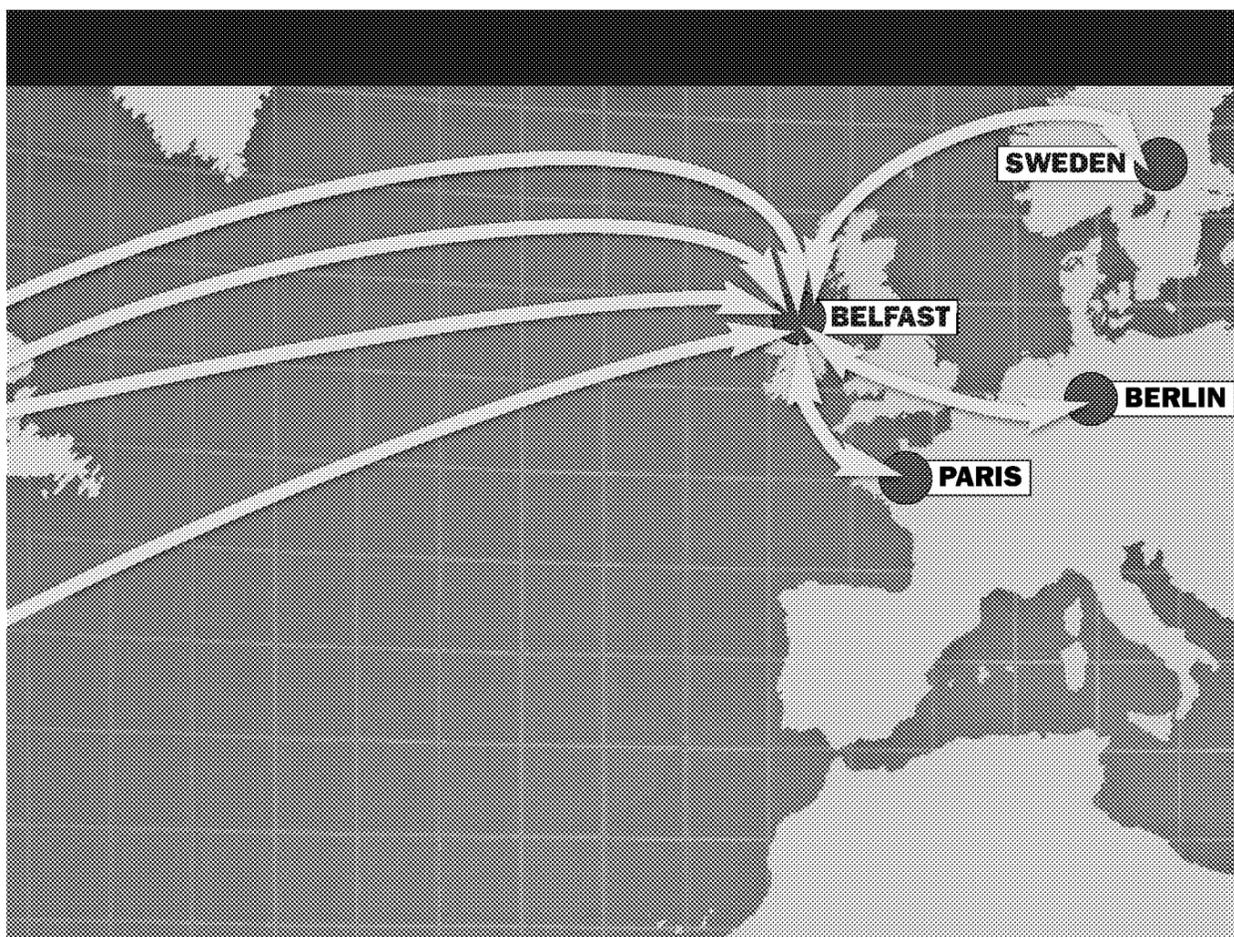


HEALTH BOSSES' TRAVEL EXPENSES

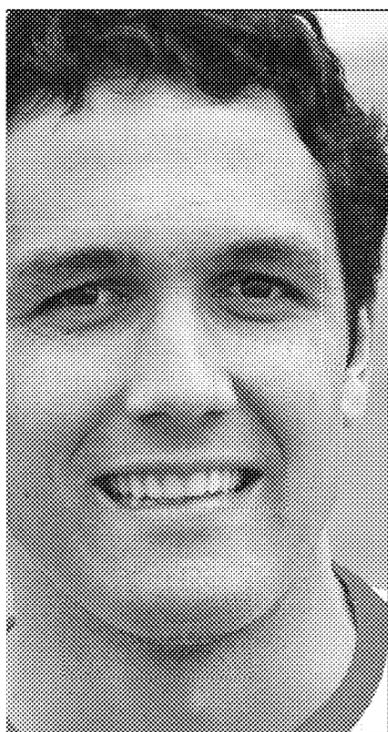


Who is Pedro Delgado?

PEDRO Delgado is a native of Venezuela whose high-flying academic background has been matched on the football field. Boasting honours degrees in psychology and global business as well as a masters in "healthcare management and leadership", Mr Delgado won an under-21 cap for his country. He was the first employee of the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Safety Forum, an organisation set up in 2007 to improve patient safety. He was the general manager and assistant director. While working in the north he played for soccer teams in the Irish League including Linfield, Carrick, Larne and Dungannon Swifts where he excelled as a talented midfielder and striker. Described as "very amiable and bright" by one health professional who worked with him, Mr Delgado now works for the Institute for Health Improvement in the US. The institute, an internationally recognised private body, hosted many of the overseas courses attended by Mr Delgado and dozens of other senior employees in Northern Ireland's health service. When contacted in the US by *The Irish News*, Mr Delgado provided

detailed information on the impact of the work he had carried out on the NHS. Improvements have been made in mental health services, perinatal care, medication safety, central-line infections and ventilator-associated pneumonia as a result of the overseas courses, according to Mr Delgado. He said he was "privileged" to have attended the "world-class courses". However, he raised concerns about the appropriateness of a Northern Ireland conference venue following a Department of Health directive on lowering event costs last year. In a safety forum meeting in November last year he noted that the summit was planned for the four-star Hilton hotel in Templepatrick, Co Antrim, in May this year – despite the directive. The matter was referred to Mary Hinds, who now has operational responsibility for the forum, and the event went ahead in the Hilton. Last month *The Irish News* revealed that the Hilton was used for a second conference in October this year – in which 17 top health staff stayed overnight at a cost of £5,000 to taxpayers.

who made 11 in 3 years



from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

Until September this year the trust had responsibility for

the forum. It has since transferred to the Public Health Agency.

However, *The Irish News* estimates the three-year travel and course fee bill to be more than £32,000.

A trust spokeswoman said: "The information is not held in the format requested and the cost and time involved in getting this would be excessive."

The spokeswoman was, however, able to provide detailed information on the benefits of courses to the Northern Ireland health service.

This included Mr Delgado's work with staff across the north's healthcare organisations to "promote a safety culture".

The spokeswoman said Mr Delgado had developed a network of patient-safety officers, promoted the use of "many improvement tools", developed many nursing programmes and "attended many events as a conference speaker to promote the patient safety work within NI".

"Ultimately this work saved lives and contributed to better outcomes for patients in Northern Ireland," she said.

When contacted in the US by *The Irish News*, Mr Delgado

said he had been "privileged" to work for the safety forum and described the training he received as "world class".

He said: "My efforts and passion were always focused on making a difference for patients as a way of paying back the incredible opportunities I was afforded, through training others and transferring the knowledge gained (to over 1,000 professionals), as well as through establishing a drive for measurement and learning of processes and outcomes."

Mr Delgado was asked about the luxury standard of overseas hotels used by the Northern Ireland health service for its employees on training courses – compared with English counterparts who stayed in budget hotels.

"I have no idea how many stars the hotels I stayed at had, as this was never the focus of any of the training (there was always an attempt made to stay in the hotel where the training was held, as work days were very long-usually 7am to 7pm)," he said.

"The focus was to work hard, to learn and to bring back useful techniques that could improve safety for patients throughout Northern Ireland."

The Magic of Time...

Late Night Opening Hours

December 13th - December 19th

Monday - Friday: 9am - 10pm

Saturday: 9am - 5pm

Normal Sunday opening hours

December 20th - December 26th

Monday - Thursday: 9am - 11pm

Christmas Eve: 8am - 4pm

Closed Christmas day

Boxing day: 1pm - 6pm

*Some stores may open additional hours.

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