



DÍOSPÓIREACHTAÍ PARLAIMINTE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

**DÁIL ÉIREANN**

TUAIRISC OIFIGIÚIL—*Neamhcheartaithe*  
(OFFICIAL REPORT—*Unrevised*)

*Thursday, 3 July 2008.*

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# DÁIL ÉIREANN

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*Déardaoin, 3 Iúil 2008.*  
*Thursday, 3 July 2008.*

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Chuaigh an Ceann Comhairle i gceannas ar 10.30 a.m.

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*Paidir.*  
*Prayer.*

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## **Requests to move Adjournment of Dáil under Standing Order 32.**

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Anois, iarratais chun tairiscint a dhéanamh an Dáil a chur ar athló faoi Bhuan-Ordú 32. We will now deal with requests to move the adjournment of the Dáil under Standing Order 32.

**Deputy James Bannon:** I seek the adjournment of the Dáil under Standing Order 32 to raise a matter of national importance, namely, the renewed threat of post office closures across the country, which must be addressed by the Government in the interest of rural communities.

**Deputies:** Hear, hear.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Well done.

**Deputy Seán Power:** One cannot beat originality.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** God loves a trier.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** I seek the adjournment of the Dáil under Standing Order 32 to raise a matter of national importance, namely, the fact that the Taoiseach yesterday flatly contradicted the Minister for Transport's repeated assertions that, even in difficult economic circumstances, the necessary funding will be provided for Transport 21 projects. This means major projects such as metro north may, as a direct result, be deferred or put on the long finger. The truth is that cutbacks and time delays are being plotted in the Department of the Taoiseach even while progress in motion meetings on Transport 21 are being held with Members.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Tar éis breithniú a dhéanamh ar an nithe ardaithe, níl siad in ord faoi Bhuan-Ordú 32. Having considered the matters raised, they are not in order under Standing Order 32.

## **Order of Business.**

**The Tánaiste:** It is proposed to take No. 13, motion on the proposed approval by Dáil Éireann of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2008 — back from committee; No. 2, Legal Practitioners (Irish Language) Bill 2007 — amendments from the Seanad; and No.

[The Tánaiste.]

23, statements on climate change. It is proposed, notwithstanding anything in Standing Orders, that No. 13 shall be decided without debate.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Is the proposal for dealing with No. 13 agreed to?

**Deputy Ciarán Lynch:** The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government explained this week that a problem has arisen in respect of the Attorney General and that the amending regulation is intended to tidy up legal issues. I listened to a discussion of environmental impact studies on “Morning Ireland” and I accept that the intent behind this is to prevent duplication in the planning process. However, I ask the Minister to open regulations such as this to debate because obvious difficulties with this approach were identified this week. As a result of the debate we held on this matter last week, it transpired that planning notices do not have to be published for developments of a significant size because they are exempted. I question the approach being taken by the House on this matter and, particularly in light of the public participation directive and other matters, stress that changes to planning regulations should allow local public inputs into developments that affect communities.

**The Tánaiste:** I am aware that briefings were given to Opposition Members prior to the debate and a full and frank discussion was held with the Minister. He offered to remain with the committee for as long as necessary. All the issues have been dealt with and there has been absolute clarity regarding the matters raised here last Thursday. As it was agreed by the committee that it would revert to the House with a recommendation, I do not see the necessity for further discussion on the matter.

Question, “That the proposal for dealing with No. 13 be agreed to”, put and declared carried.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** I will start with a two mark question for the Tánaiste.

**Deputy Billy Kelleher:** Magnus Magnusson.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Thank you. Does the Tánaiste agree with the statement by the Minister for Finance that the construction industry in this country has come to a shuddering halt?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That question is not on the curriculum.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** It is definitely on the agenda.

**Deputy Noel Dempsey:** It is one thing not to get the answer right but there is a problem if the question is wrong.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** Give him 100 lines.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Tá an fheadóg séidte ag an réiteoir.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Tá.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Can I ask under the relevant financial motions whether the Tánaiste agrees with the Minister that the construction industry has come to a shuddering halt? It is a Lisbon type question — “Yes” or “No”.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Deputy Kenny knows as well as I that——

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil an réiteoir ag caint anois.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** If we want to have to have Leaders' Question on Thursday mornings, the Chair has no difficulty with that. I would be absolutely delighted but Members would have to change Standing Orders.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** We cannot have Leaders' Questions on Thursday mornings because the Taoiseach will not come here.

**Deputies:** Hear, hear.

**Deputy Seán Power:** It is the only relief Deputy Kenny gets all week.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** He refuses to come here. He is afraid to come here.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not an issue.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** The Ceann Comhairle cannot do anything about that.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It is not an issue for the Chair either. I ask the Deputy to stay in order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** I am left to put questions to his deputy, the Tánaiste. I wanted to ask whether she agreed with the Minister——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is out of order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** ——who is in the unfortunate position of coming in to clean up the mess created by his predecessor, that the construction industry has come to a shuddering halt.

**Deputy Brian Lenihan:** I did not say that.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not in order. We have had two days of that.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** We will try again. Céard iad na moltaí atá tagtha ón Seanad i leith Bille na nDlí-Chleachtóirí (An Ghaeilge) 2007? Tá sé ar an chlár inniu. Níl a fhios agam céard iad na moltaí atá i gceist. Ní bhfuair mé iad. Níl soiléiriú tugtha dom. Tá an Aire Stáit ag caint leis an Tánaiste mar gheall ar na moltaí faoi láthair. Céard iad féin?

I respectfully ask the Tánaiste whether the Government proposes to introduce a series of Supplementary Estimates later this year.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not in order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** If so, in the context of a report that the Government intends borrowing three times more than planned——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not in order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** ——can I have advice from the Tánaiste so we can have clarity? For which Departments will Supplementary Estimates be introduced?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not in order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Will these be subject to scrutiny and will they be referred to committees? The only one we know of for certain is the Department of Social and Family Affairs——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That issue is being debated next week. Deputy Kenny is not in order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** —where there is a huge increase expected and no cutbacks unlike the Departments of the unfortunate Ministers sitting on either side of the Minister for Social and Family Affairs.

Will the Tánaiste clarify the situation in regard to the Supplementary Estimates?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The House will debate that issue next week.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** A report in today's *The Irish Times* states that the Health Service Executive will propose to Government a change in the legislation on health. The Tánaiste will recall that in November 2004, the Minister for Health and Children stated during discussions on the health Bill that the change being proposed to amalgamate 11 health boards was a once in a generation move that would bring about an efficient, professional best practice health service. As Deputy Reilly and others on this side of the House have pointed out this is not the case.

Is that report, which states there will be a change in the legislation to provide for a return to devolved managers on a regional basis, correct? When are we likely to see this legislation which is not included on the list of proposed legislation for this session?

I draw the Tánaiste's attention to a letter given to me by Deputy Seán Barrett in respect of funding for persons with disabilities.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is completely out of order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** It is not. I will explain to the Ceann Comhairle the reason it is not out of order.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It is completely out of order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Deputy Barrett was informed that the Department of Health and Children approved an allocation of €50 million for disability residential, respite and day services for 2008.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is completely out of order.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Deputy Barrett has also been informed by the HSE that approval has not yet been received for the commencement of these developments.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** If Deputies want to change Standing Orders they are quite entitled to do so. I must implement Standing Orders as they stand. Deputy Kenny is not in order.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** That matter was sorted yesterday.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** This affects not alone Deputy Barrett and his constituents but services throughout the country. I want to know if this €50 million is guaranteed and has been ring-fenced for the provision of services for the people whom Deputy Barrett and others have mentioned.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy is not in order. I call the Tánaiste to respond to the question relating to the legislation on health.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Will the Tánaiste confirm this is the case?

**The Tánaiste:** I dtaobh na moltaí ón Seanad ar Bille na nDlí-Chleachtóirí (An Ghaeilge) 2007, níl ach dhá moltaí teicniúla ag éirí as an Acht a bhí againn cheana agus molfaidh an tAire

Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, An Teachta Éamon Ó Cuív, na moltaí sin don Dáil. Athruithe teicniúla atá iontu a cuideoidh go mór le dlíodóirí.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Céard iad féin mar sin?

**The Tánaiste:** Ar dtús báire, tá sé i gceist go mbeidh deis ag aon duine a rinne cúrsa céime abhcóide dlí faoi an Acht Lucht Cleachtaithe Dlí (Cáilíocht) 1929 agus nach raibh Alt 3 den Acht sin comhlíonta aige nó aici, an coinníoll sin a chomhlíonadh faoin Acht nua.

**Deputy Brendan Howlin:** That is clear.

**The Tánaiste:** Táthar ag caint anseo faoi duine ar bith a chríochnaigh a chúrsa oideachais faoi Acht 1929, agus clúdaítear sin san Acht úr. Ní chuireann seo isteach go mór ar éinne. Is é an fáth go bhfuil seo os comhair na Dála ag an mbomaite seo ná chun a bheith cúramach agus ceart.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Ba chóir go mbeadh an t-eolas sin agus an clár oibre tugtha don bhFreasúra roimh teacht os comhair an Tí do na moltaí.

**The Tánaiste:** On the health legislation, Deputies will be aware there is no need for further legislation on the basis of proposals received from the HSE.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Is it proposed to change back to devolved regional managers?

**The Tánaiste:** On the final issue raised, Deputy Kenny is aware the matter of investment in disabilities was clarified yesterday. That matter has been dealt with.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I call Deputy Gilmore.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** On a point of order, the Ceann Comhairle has disallowed a question on how the Government will next week obtain authority for proposed cutbacks of €500 million. My understanding is——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not a point of order.

**A Deputy:** It is a point of order.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** The point of order is on what basis is the Ceann Comhairle stating it is not in order to find out the basis of that authority. The Government must produce an order or a Supplementary Estimate——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It is a longstanding precedent of the House that if the Chair disallows questions, they stand disallowed. The Deputy is entitled to come and see me in my office on the matter. I call Deputy Gilmore on the Order of Business.

*(Interruptions).*

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** I am just asking——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not a point of order.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** It is a point of order. We are entitled to know how these cutbacks will be imposed.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not a point of order.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** Will we have a chance to examine them? The Ceann Comhairle is blocking the opportunity to find out how the business will be done.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I certainly am not. The Deputy well knows there will be a debate on that matter next week.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** The point is a debate does not give them authority.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The matter will be debated next week. I call Deputy Gilmore.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** I do not understand the Chair's ruling.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** I wish to raise three matters. I am sure the Tánaiste will join with me in welcoming the rescue of Ingrid Betancourt——

**Deputies:** Hear, hear.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** ——who suffered a terrible ordeal over six years at the hands of FARC, a gang of narco-terrorists with an apparent interest in eco-tourism.

I understand the Government is to table a motion in respect of next week's debate on the economy. When will that motion be issued to the Opposition and will it set out in detail the measures the Government intends to take arising from yesterday's Exchequer figures?

I am surprised at the Tánaiste's response to Deputy Kenny in respect of the report in today's *The Irish Times* that it is intended the HSE will devolve into a regional arrangement. This is a complete reversal of the Government's strategy in relation to the organisation——

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Absolutely.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy must ask about legislation.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** This is about legislation.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** Legislation is required.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Tánaiste said there is no legislation promised.

**Deputy Brendan Howlin:** It requires legislation.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** We have a set of circumstances——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I will ask the Tánaiste, who has already stated there is no legislation promised, to respond on the matter again.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** The HSE is responsible for every single euro of income tax collected in this country.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Hear, hear.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot debate that matter now.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** That is what we are talking about. That is the size of the HSE budget. A newspaper article in today's *The Irish Times* states the HSE is to be regionalised.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I will ask the Tánaiste to clarify the matter again.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** RTE is confused about this. It thinks this is a bad idea on a bad day and that the Government has left it to Deputy Charlie O'Connor to explain it.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot debate the scheduling of RTE programmes in this House.

**Deputy Dermot Ahern:** Deputy O'Connor did very well and he even mentioned Tallaght.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** There has been no ministerial announcement about this.

**Deputy Michael Ring:** We have no Minister.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I will ask the Tánaiste to respond on the matter again and we must then move on. Is legislation on health promised and what is the position in respect of the debate next week?

**The Tánaiste:** We all echo and share Deputy Gilmore's sentiments in regard to the rescue of Ingrid Betancourt. I am delighted she and many others have been freed from incarceration.

The House will debate the issue of the economy for nine and a half hours next week. Following agreement by Cabinet next Tuesday of the motion, it will be made available to everyone in the House.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** Will there be a vote of confidence in the Government?

**The Tánaiste:** On the HSE, Deputy Gilmore, as leader of the Labour Party, will be aware this is what was sought in his party's document. I do not understand his concern in this regard.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** No, it is not.

**Deputy Emmet Stagg:** It was not.

**Deputy Paul Connaughton:** It is something the Government did not want.

**Deputy Emmet Stagg:** The Tánaiste is wrong. The local tsar is not local.

**The Tánaiste:** I am advised by the Department of Health and Children there is no necessity for new legislation. This matter is being dealt with by the HSE which will discuss it with the unions. At the end of the day, it is right and proper to move ahead with proposals which ensure the consumer is best served and supported.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** What about patients?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I call Deputy Burton.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** Am I correct that the motion on the economy will not be available until after the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday?

**The Tánaiste:** Yes.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** What is the status of the HSE announcement? Is this Government policy or an internal HSE idea? If it is Government policy, why has no ministerial statement issued in this regard?

**Deputy Brendan Howlin:** Hear, hear.



**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** This is a pretty significant announcement. The Government rushed through legislation to centralise operations in the HSE.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Deputy Gilmore there are other ways of finding out the position in that regard. The standard procedure is to table a parliamentary question on the issue.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** We are now to return to regional structures and there has been no ministerial announcement in this regard. What is the status of this announcement? Is this a Government plan to regionalise the HSE?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Is legislation promised in this area?

**The Tánaiste:** There is no legislation promised. This is a reorganisation——

*(Interruptions).*

**The Tánaiste:** ——of the management lines within the HSE. It is an internal issue that was——

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Deputy Charlie O'Connor is reorganising it. Well done Charlie.

**Deputy Brendan Howlin:** It cannot be done without legislation.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I am sorry, Deputy Gilmore, there is no legislation. I cannot go any further with this.

**Deputy Brendan Howlin:** It cannot stand up.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** I do not understand it.

**Deputy Brendan Howlin:** The accountability structure cannot be changed without legislation.

**A Deputy:** Deputy O'Connor should tell us what is happening.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Charlie for President.

**Deputy Eamon Gilmore:** I do not understand it, a Cheann Comhairle. If legislation was required to go from a regional structure to a centralised structure then it must be required to go back again.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Tánaiste has answered.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** I wish to ask the Tánaiste about the debate next week. The Dáil voted moneys under specific headings for certain Departments, but from the announcement by the Minister for Finance yesterday it would appear there are to be changes in expenditure for a number of Departments.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** There will be a debate on this next week.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** The question is——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** What is the question?

**Deputy Joan Burton:** Will the Government come forward with the changes in the spending proposals and specify where they vary from what was proposed in the Estimates?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It has already been stated by the Tánaiste that the motion is to be introduced next week. We cannot go into it.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** Estimates were voted. We know from what the Minister said yesterday that there is a proposal to spend up to €500 million of additional moneys on social welfare.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot go into that now. I am moving along.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** Where is that money going to come from?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot have a debate on that now.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** Will the Government raid the social insurance fund?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is out of order.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** Will we get information next week about the proposed changes in spending? I have other issues to ask about as well.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I told Deputy Burton yesterday that I did not want to ask her to leave the House, but she is coming very close to it. It is not my fault.

**A Deputy:** Sorry, wait outside.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** Voting Estimates of how money is spent is fundamental to the power of the Dáil. Are we going to get details of the changes?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I must ask Deputy Burton to resume her seat. This is the second day I have had to ask her to do this. The Deputy is completely out of order.

**Deputy Ciarán Lynch:** Will the Social Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill come before the House before the Dáil goes into recess next week? The Minister, Deputy Gormley, met with residents in Cork last week——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** This is all very interesting, but we must talk about the legislation.

**Deputy Ciarán Lynch:** ——and stated that mechanisms allowing them to purchase their homes under the tenant purchase scheme would be put in place, but there is no legislation.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Anecdotes are not allowed on the Order of Business.

**The Tánaiste:** The legislation will be made available in July.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** I want to correct the record because the Tánaiste has totally misled the House about the Labour Party policy on health. What we want to do is to put——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot discuss Labour Party policy on health this morning.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** We want to put decision making back at the level of the patient.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy knows that as well as I do.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** It is clear that what is proposed is another layer of management.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Deputy O'Sullivan should ask a question on the Order of Business.

**Deputy Dermot Ahern:** The Labour Party wants health to be privatised.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** Will the Minister for Health and Children come to the House and explain what is being proposed?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not in order.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** This is decision making by stealth, by an organisation that is not elected by the people.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot go into that now. It is completely out of order.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** Can we have a statement from the Minister for Health and Children? If we are going to reverse what she referred to in 2004 as a great new dawn——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy has made her point, and she should not be making it at all because it is completely out of order.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** The Minister for Health and Children should come in here and tell us what is happening in the health services.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Deputy Ring is next. He will probably be in order. I hope so.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** It is Government by stealth and Government by leaking. It is a total abdication of responsibility with regard to the health service.

**Deputy Michael Ring:** Two weeks ago I asked about the charities Bill and the Minister told me it would be introduced this session. In fact, I was told we would have it in two weeks. Is the charities Bill coming before the Dáil next week?

This morning I saw a beautiful photograph of the Tánaiste in an article about innovation in Ireland. The same publication contains a beautiful photograph of Deputy Devins. Another contains a photograph of a new Minister of State, Deputy Curran. There are cutbacks in the HSE, in subvention, and in home help, but this is the nonsense the Government is sending out every morning.

**Deputies:** Hear, hear.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy started well.

**Deputy Michael Ring:** The Government should cut out the waste and put money into the service, and get rid of that old nonsense.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Deputy Ring——

*(Interruptions).*

**Deputy Michael Ring:** The Minister has not brought in or published a bit of legislation in two years. It is no wonder the country is in the state it is in. We should get rid of the whole lot of them.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Incidentally, irrespective of how attractive the photographs are, Deputy Ring is not allowed to display them in the House.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** Keep them under cover.

**Deputy Michael Ring:** I thought I was being nice about the photographs.

**The Tánaiste:** We hoped to have the charities Bill in the House but unfortunately, due to time restraints, we have not been in a position to introduce it. As the Deputy knows full well, if he wants a photograph of me I will send one over to him.

**Deputy Michael Ring:** I hope it will not be as costly as this one.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** With regard to the nursing home Bill, will the Tánaiste communicate with the authorities to find out when exactly this matter will be dealt with? I received an official response following representations on behalf of an individual with regard to long-term care, and I was told to tell the person to wait in a public hospital for a publicly funded bed in a private nursing home.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** On the legislation. Deputy Barrett is a long-standing Deputy and he knows his other comment is out of order.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** We are talking about waste. We are asking someone to wait in a public hospital for a publicly funded bed.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Tánaiste on the legislation.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** I ask the Ceann Comhairle to give me a chance here. In one paragraph I was asked to give consideration to lobbying our Government for a more equitable way of funding our older persons.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy will have to find another way of raising the issue.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** What is going on? I have the letter.

**The Tánaiste:** As has been indicated every week in this House, it will be July before the legislation is available.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** We are talking about staying in a public hospital in a publicly funded bed.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** In view of the imminent standing down of the head of the HSE and his replacement by Deputy Charlie O'Connor, as announced this morning——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not in order.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** There is legislation promised. It will deal with that as well. The Ceann Comhairle will be glad to know the legislation is promised. I would like to know whether we will have this legislation before Christmas, because we are obviously not going to have it now.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** What legislation?

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** This is a serious matter and it does require legislation. It entails our coming into the House and changing the current legislation. The two party leaders who spoke previously are correct. Can the Tánaiste indicate when the health and personal social services Bill will be brought into the House so that Members other than Deputy O'Connor can have some say in the issue?

**The Tánaiste:** That legislation will be available next year.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** So Deputy O'Connor will have to unscramble things.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** He is the shadow Minister.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** In these straitened times, does the Ceann Comhairle not think it would be a good idea for somebody to bring in the financial services regulation Bill? It would be an appropriate time to introduce it.

**The Tánaiste:** We do not have a date for that Bill.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** No date at all.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy cannot monopolise the Order of Business.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** This is my last point and relates to the issue of photographs and so on. Given the marked reluctance of the Green Party Ministers to appear in the House on the Order of Business, I wonder whether they are being forced out, advised to stay out or threatened. In that context——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy must ask about legislation.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** There is legislation promised in this area. It is the protection of persons from enforced disappearance Bill.

**Deputy Michael Ring:** We should put Deputy Harney in there too.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** In view of the current emergency I ask the Tánaiste to introduce this legislation to the House as a matter of extreme urgency.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** A writ of *habeas corpus*.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I suppose it is too much to ask of the Tánaiste.

**The Tánaiste:** I cannot indicate on what date that legislation will be available to the House.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** It might be a good idea, though.

**Deputy James Bannon:** When can we expect the publication of the animal health and welfare Bill? Will it contain provisions to save the national herd——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot go into what it will contain.

**Deputy James Bannon:** ——from the plans of the Minister, Deputy Gormley, to cut it?

**The Tánaiste:** That legislation is out for public consultation.

**Deputy Michael D. Higgins:** Is it the intention of the Government to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families? The other matter I wish to mention is one about which I have asked two parliamentary questions. Is it the Government's intention to legislate in the area of collective bargaining, given that the 1948 ILO convention establishes that right? The reply to one of my parliamentary questions was that it was a matter for social partnership, but in the other reply it was stated that the Government had in fact ratified the convention in 1955. Does the Government propose to clarify the issue of collective bar-

11 o'clock

gaining in terms of the ILO conventions of 1948 by way of legislation? The first question was related to the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The Tánaiste's predecessors suggested the Government did not intend to recognise it, yet it is the only way to establish a basis that would assure all workers in the State equality and protection of their rights.

**The Tánaiste:** I will have to communicate with the Deputy on the issue of migrant workers as I do not wish to mislead him. The issue of collective bargaining is being discussed by the social partners.

**Deputy Michael D. Higgins:** I take it the ILO convention is not being implemented.

**The Tánaiste:** We must await the outcome of discussions with the social partners before a final decision is made on a number of pertinent issues. I do not wish to pre-empt the outcome.

**Deputy Joanna Tuffy:** Speaking of Green Party Ministers, a newspaper report today suggests the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy Gormley, may wish to shift the incinerator from his own constituency to Rathcoole in the constituency I with share with his colleague, Deputy Gogarty, and the Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Deputy Curran. This application got in under the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act which was opposed by the Labour Party. The Act is surely in breach of the public participation directive which has been promised but which has not yet been transposed.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We must discuss promised legislation.

**Deputy Joanna Tuffy:** It is important that people have a genuine say in issues such as this. These matters should not be at the whim of a Minister.

**The Tánaiste:** I am not aware that legislation is promised but I will communicate with the Deputy if there is to be transposition.

**Deputy David Stanton:** I have a number of points to raise on legislation. When will we see the Health Information Bill? Yesterday we were promised a health study of Cork Harbour. It would be useful if the Health Information Bill was published in order that it could be discussed with the study. Given the pollution in Cork Harbour from the Irish Steel plant, it is important to bring forward the Foreshore (Amendment) Bill in order that the issue can be discussed in the context of the Bill.

I understand the environmental liability directive has not yet been signed or brought forward by the Government and that it will probably take legislation in the House to do so. There are proceedings against the State in this regard. The 1998 Aarhus Convention provides information on these issues. Therefore, when will the matter be addressed? The Minister yesterday promised reports on research at Haulbowline but we have not seen them. Will the Tánaiste please remind him to forward them to us?

Are there plans to change the position of the CEO of the HSE as Accounting Officer?

**The Tánaiste:** The Health Information Bill will come before the House next year. I indicated last week that no date had been finalised for the Foreshore (Amendment) Bill. I will have to revert to the Deputy on the other issues, directives and conventions because I do not have the full information.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** The Ceann Comhairle knows I always obey his rulings.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I do not know that.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** I am interested in the basis for the Ceann Comhairle's ruling today that it is not in order to ask questions about matters of legitimate public interest concerning Supplementary Estimates for Departments. The nation is consumed by the mismanagement of this Fianna Fáil-led Government which must now find €500 million through savings, adjustments, cutbacks or whatever one wishes to call them. It is a matter of legitimate political interest to inquire as to which Departments will have to produce Supplementary Estimates. I am interested in the basis of the Ceann Comhairle's ruling that it is not in order to ask a question about this. To which Standing Order does he refer?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The one in question is Standing Order 26(3) which is quite specific. It states a question may be raised on promised business. This applies equally to the introduction of a Supplementary Estimate and the seeking of a debate. In other words, it must be promised. The same applies to secondary legislation.

**Deputy Damien English:** That is a sure thing.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** If the item is not promised, it is not in accordance with Standing Orders.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** But it is promised.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** This is not my decision, but that of the Members of the House.

**Deputy Damien English:** I beg to differ with the honourable Member from south Kerry who now sits in a high position. The precedent during the years in the House has been that if legislation or business is promised, either inside or outside the House, it is a legitimate matter for questioning here.

I recently heard the Minister for Social and Family Affairs on "News at One" tell the nation that there would be no cutbacks in her Department and that the pinch would be felt by other Departments. I have heard promises of €500 million of cutbacks, savings, adjustments or whatever one may wish to call them from the Minister for Finance who says he is in the unfortunate position of being in that Department.

**Deputy Brian Lenihan:** I did not say that.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** This is a matter of business promised inside and outside the House and I beg to differ with the Ceann Comhairle's interpretation of Standing Order 26(3). We have been told that the Government must make €500 million of savings and cutbacks, which means Department after Department will have to take out the cleaver and decide on the areas for the chop and where Supplementary Estimates will have to be introduced.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** Hear, hear. We need to know about this.

**Deputy Brian Lenihan:** Pure speculation.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** I want to know what scrutiny and committees the Supplementary Estimates will face. This is legitimate business that was promised outside the House and referred to inside it. I beg to differ with the Ceann Comhairle.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I do not wish to argue with the Deputy because we can discuss the matter later if he wishes but promised business must be specific, not a generalisation, for



example, on the state of the economy. If we allowed general business to be discussed, we would have no parameters to guide us. I must obey Standing Order 26(3).

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** I again respectfully differ with the Ceann Comhairle as this matter is specific and refers to €500 million of savings.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** There will be a debate on the issue next week. If Members wish to change Standing Orders, they are entitled to do so.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** This comes down to the fact that people who must fork out €1,000 for home heating oil and so on or must seek home help hours will face the frontline cuts.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We must move on. We cannot debate the matter now.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** The Government will hide all this behind the reorganisation of the HSE.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** Who will organise all this? The Government needs the authority of the House to do it.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** The Minister for Health and Children referred to an operational move. There will be €500 million of cutbacks and I want the Tánaiste to respond. This is specific promised business that was referred to in the House.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy knows well that the issue will be debated next week. Are Supplementary Estimates promised?

**The Tánaiste:** For clarity, I will point out that the process is as follows. The Government will make its decisions on Tuesday. There will be a debate on all these issues in the House on Wednesday and Thursday for nine and a half hours. There are no proposals to introduce Supplementary Estimates to the House.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Following the Tánaiste's clarification, may I ask her whether there is any truth in the references to the Government's need for €500 million of savings to be made?

**The Tánaiste:** That matter did not arise from Government sources. It is prudent and proper for the Cabinet to make its decisions on Tuesday. It will be fully informed of the decisions that must be made by the Minister for Finance and the outcome will be discussed in the House.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** Do we live in the real world?

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** The matter of €500 million was raised by the man sitting next to the Tánaiste, the Minister for Finance.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Deputy Kenny is out of order. I do not want to take the unprecedented step of asking the Leader of the Opposition to leave the House but if I must, I will.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** I am here to defend the rights of the people and will do so.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** There will be a debate on the issue next week. The Tánaiste has clarified the position and I have clarified the rules but the Deputy will not accept this.

**Deputy Enda Kenny:** The Tánaiste has not clarified the position. I seek a final clarification from her. Did I hear of and read yesterday a statement from the Department of Finance? Did the Minister for Finance tell us on television that there was a €1.5 billion deficit in Government



[Deputy Enda Kenny.]

income at this point in the year? Did I hear that this would require adjustments, savings, cutbacks or whatever one may wish to call them? Will these cutbacks be due to the extent of the deficit? Will the Government deal with the deficit through adjustments, cutbacks and Supplementary Estimates?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is not the issue. The issue is whether Supplementary Estimates have been promised. Have Supplementary Estimates been promised?

**The Tánaiste:** No Supplementary Estimates have been promised.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is the end of it.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** On a point of order, how can there be a €500 million cut in spending without Supplementary Estimates?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It is 11.10 a.m. and there is a debate on the issue next week.

**Deputy Richard Bruton:** Supplementary Estimates will be necessary to seek authority.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I must implement Standing Orders.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** I wish to speak briefly on the same point. The Dáil votes very specific amounts of money for Estimates. Can Ministers arbitrarily move money provided in the Estimates to other Departments or between headings in their own Departments?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** These issues will be covered in the debate next week.

**Deputy Joan Burton:** What power does the Dáil have regarding Estimates?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It has already been explained. I call Deputy Varadkar. I ask him to be in order, if he can at all.

**Deputy Leo Varadkar:** I assure you I will be in order, a Cheann Comhairle.

**Deputy Noel Dempsey:** The Deputy will be the first person to be in order so far today, other than Deputy Michael D. Higgins.

**Deputy Leo Varadkar:** The Tánaiste is aware that concerns about financial mismanagement and irregularities at FÁS were discussed at yesterday's meeting of the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment. I would like to ask two questions on foot of that meeting. Given that this information was made available by means of an anonymous letter——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot discuss anonymous letters on the Order of Business.

**Deputy Leo Varadkar:** Will the Tánaiste advise the House on whether legislation will be introduced to protect whistleblowers?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Is legislation promised in this area?

**Deputy Leo Varadkar:** She previously told the House that the Garda investigation into the matter related to a sole contractor. The director general of FÁS told the joint committee that the investigation related to a number of contractors and may have implications for members of staff of FÁS.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I call the Tánaiste, on the legislation only.

**Deputy Leo Varadkar:** Will time be made available to allow the Tánaiste to come to the House to correct her statement?

**The Tánaiste:** There are no proposals to introduce legislation in this area. There are no proposals for a debate on the matter.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** Will the Tánaiste set out the position on metro north in the context of the proposed public transport regulation Bill?

**Deputy Noel Dempsey:** We do not need legislation for it.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** Will the metro north project proceed on time, as planned and on budget?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** We cannot go into that matter.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** Will it be re-prioritised?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** No.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** In other words, will there be cutbacks?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is for next week.

**Deputy Noel Dempsey:** We do not need legislation for it.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** The Minister has clearly——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I call Deputy Broughan.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** Can I have an answer to my question?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It is out of order.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** It is off the rails.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** It is in order.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I must move on. It is completely out of order.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** It is not.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy should be fair about it.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** I am entitled to ask——

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I have explained that the Deputy is entitled to ask about promised legislation.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** What are the plans for metro north?

**Deputy Noel Dempsey:** The Deputy should submit a parliamentary question.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** Will it be delivered on time?

**Deputy Noel Dempsey:** Did the Deputy not get the answer to the question asked yesterday?

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** When I asked the Minister, I was told it would not be.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** There are other ways to raise the matter.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** The Taoiseach says it will be.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy can raise it on the Adjournment or by means of a parliamentary question.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** On a point of order——

**Deputy Noel Dempsey:** I will send yesterday's answer to the Deputy.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I promise the Deputy that we will try to assist him if he raises the matter in the proper manner.

**Deputy Fergus O'Dowd:** I apologise.

**Deputy Bernard J. Durkan:** It has gone off the rails.

**Deputy Thomas P. Broughan:** Officials from the Department of Transport announced at yesterday's meeting of the Joint Committee on Transport that the Malin Head Coast Guard station, or the Valentia Island station, was to be closed.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy knows very well we cannot go into that matter now.

**Deputy Thomas P. Broughan:** Will legislation be required to facilitate the closure of the Malin Head station in County Donegal?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Is legislation promised?

**Deputy Thomas P. Broughan:** I asked the Tánaiste last week whether a financial statement would be made in respect of the fisheries and haulage sectors. Will a package for fisheries be announced next week or the following week?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** That is completely out of order.

**Deputy Thomas P. Broughan:** President Sarkozy has announced a €300 million package for the French fisheries sector.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I ask the Tánaiste to answer the question about legislation.

**Deputy Thomas P. Broughan:** Will the Minister for Transport make any concessions to help hauliers?

**An Ceann Comhairle:** There is no chance of that question being answered.

**Deputy Thomas P. Broughan:** I am concerned about the haulage industry.

**The Tánaiste:** No legislation is promised or necessary in any of these areas.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** It was announced this morning that the European Court of Justice had ruled against Ireland in a case involving the manner in which environmental impact assessments were undertaken. The community of Derrybrien, near Loughrea in County Galway, brought

the case at EU level. I suggest this judgment means that the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will have to introduce legislation, as a matter of urgency, to regularise the manner in which environmental impact assessments are made. How quickly can such legislation be drawn up by the Department?

**The Tánaiste:** As the House is aware, the judgment in question was announced this morning. Officials will examine it. I will advise the Minister of the Deputy's interest.

**Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2008: Motion.**

**Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Pat Carey):** I move:

That Dáil Éireann approves the following Regulations in draft:

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2008,  
copies of which were laid in draft form before Dáil Éireann on 25 June 2008.

Question put and declared carried.

**Legal Practitioners (Irish Language) Bill 2007: From the Seanad.**

The Dáil went into Committee to consider amendments from the Seanad.

Seanad amendment No. 1:

Section 1: In page 8, subsection (3), between lines 8 and 9, to insert the following:

“(c) Any person who completed the degree course of barrister-at-law before the repeal by this Act of the Legal Practitioners (Qualification) Act 1929, who had not complied with section 3 of that Act, shall be deemed to have complied with that section.”.

**Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív):** Bheinn faoi chomaoín ag an gCeann Comhairle dá n-ornódh sé, de réir Bhuan-Ordú 136, do Chléireach na Dála athrú focal a dhéanamh ar thaobh na Gaeilge de leasú Uimh. 1. Ba cheart “1929”, in áit “1927”, mar bhliain an Achta a luaitear ar thaobh na Gaeilge.

Déanann an chéad leasú a rinne an Seanad fo-alt nua (c) a chur isteach in alt 1(3) den Bhille. Is é cuspóir don leasú ná chun déileáil leis an aistriú, nó leis an athrú, ón Acht Lucht Cleachtuithe Dlí (Cáilíocht) 1929 go dtí na forálacha nua sa Bhille. D’ardaigh an Teachta O’Shea an cheist seo níos luaithe, nuair a bhí an Bille os comhair na Dála. Gabhaim buíochas leis an Teachta as glacadh leis an dearbhú ón Aire, an tráth sin, go ndéileálfaí leis an ábhar seo le leasuithe sa Seanad.

Faoi alt 3 d’Acht 1929, ní féidir leis an bPríomh-Bhreitheamh a cheadú d’aon duine cleachtadh mar abhcóide dlí i gcúirteanna na hÉireann mura mbeidh sé sásta go bhfuil leor-eolas ag an duine sin ar an nGaeilge. D’fhonn an ceanglas sin a chomhlíonadh, déanann Óstaí an Rí socrú chun scrúdaithe Gaeilge a chuir ar siúl gach bliain le haghaidh daoine a bhíonn ag freastal ar an gcúrsa céime abhcóide dlí. Aisghairtear Acht 1929 leis an mBille agus, i measc nithe eile a dhánnítear leis an mBille, cuirtear dualgas ar dhaoine a bheidh ag freastal ar an gcúrsa céime abhcóide dlí freastal ar chúrsa teagaisc i dtearmaíocht dhlíthiúil na Gaeilge agus i dtuiscint téacsanna dlíthiúla sa Ghaeilge.

Maidir le líon beag céimithe de chuid Óstaí an Rí, ó bhlianta a chuaigh thart, ní bheidh éirithe leo sa scrúdú Gaeilge, roimh aisghairm Acht 1929, ar an mBille a achtú. Féadfaidh sé, freisin, nach mbeidh éirithe sa scrúdú Gaeilge, roimh aisghairm Acht 1929, le roinnt mac léinn

[Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív.]

a bhfuil céim a baint amach acu i mbliana. Cuirtear ceanglas leis an mBille ar dhaoine a bheidh ag freastal ar chúrsa céime abhcóide dlí Óstaí an Rí freastal ar an gcúrsa téarmaíochta dlíthiúla, ach ní dhéantar aon cheanglas den sórt sin i gcomhair daoine a bhfuil an cúrsa céime abhcóide dlí críochnaithe acu cheana féin. Mar thoradh ar sin, ní thiochfaidh céimithe Óstaí an Rí nár éirigh leo sa scrúdú Gaeilge faoi réim an Bhille, nuair a thiochfaidh sé i gníomh.

**Deputy Emmet Stagg:** Will the Minister's speech be circulated? If so, will it be as Gaeilge or as Béarla?

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** Is féidir é sin a dhéanamh. Is í an chomhairle dlí atá ar fáil don Aire ná go mbeidh, faoin Acht Léiriúcháin 2005, céimithe Óstaí an Rí ón am a chuaigh thart, nár ghlaoigh an Phríomh-Bhreitheamh chun an Bharra fós, faoi dhliteanas i gcónaí, tar éis aisghairm Acht 1929, ceanglais Ghaeilge an Achta sin a chomhlíonadh, más mian leo go nglao-far chun an Bharra iad tráth éigin ar ball. Chiallódh sé sin go mbeadh an Príomh-Bhreitheamh ag teastáil i gcónaí, go ceann tréimhse éiginnte, chun a dheimhniú dó fhéin go gcomhlíonann na daoine sin na ceanglais inniúlachta sa Ghaeilge de chuid an Achta 1929, fiú tar éis aisghairm an Achta sin.

Tugann an leasú aghaidh ar sin trí dheireadh a chur le haon dliteanas sa todhchaí ar an bPríomh-Bhreitheamh, de dhroim léiriúcháin Acht 1929, tar éis aisghairm an Achta sin. Bain-tear é seo amach trína mheas, i dtaca le haon duine a raibh an cúrsa abhcóide dlí críochnaithe aige nó aici roimh aisghairm Acht 1929, ach nach raibh alt 3 den Acht sin comhlíonta aige nó aici, gur chomhlíon sé nó sí amhlaidh é. Ar Acht 1929 a aisghairm, is é is éifeacht don leasú ná nach mbeidh feidhm a thuilleadh ar an gceanglas ar an bPríomh-Bhreitheamh a dheimhniú dó fhéin go bhfuil inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge ag duine a bheidh á ghlaoch chun an Bharra. Níl aon cheist dá shamhail sin ann i leith aturnaetha faoi oiliúint. Tá dearbhaithe ag an Dlí-Chumann nár díoltaíodh ainm aon duine a chur ar rolla na n-atornaetha toisc gur theip air nó uirthi na ceanglais reachtúla i leith na Gaeilge a chomhlíonadh.

To summarise, a slight technical problem was raised by Deputy O'Shea. I want to refer to the technical aspect. The problem was that there was a requirement to have passed an Irish exam showing one had reached a standard of Irish to the satisfaction of the Chief Justice. The amendment provides that everybody who has completed the relevant course in advance of the enactment of the new legislation being finalised today will be deemed to have passed the Irish test. That is the nub of the issue. Deputy O'Shea called for this reasonable provision to be made. If it is not accepted, some will be in no-man's-land. The two amendments made in the Seanad deal with the issue in a reasonable way. It does not arise in the case of solicitors. My understanding is that nobody was refused entry in seeking to be a solicitor because he or she had failed the Irish exam and that this is a matter solely for those who have finished their course. The amendment attempts to deal with the issue raised by Deputy O'Shea.

**Deputy Charles Flanagan:** I worked on the Bill and thank the Minister for taking on board concerns expressed on Committee Stage in this House and in the Seanad. I recall that he gave a commitment to consider the matter along the lines of the amendment. Notwithstanding the fact that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform does not do amnesties, this appears to be the closest thing to an amnesty. Níl an focal oiriúnach ar "amnesty" agam i nGaeilge.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** I plead for an amnesty.

**Deputy Charles Flanagan:** I am sure the Minister will oblige. It is important that a quota of people not be left in no man's land and the amendment appears to fit the bill. I welcome what the Minister has done and said.

**Deputy Emmet Stagg:** I thank the Minister for bringing the amendment through the Seanad. I support it.

Seanad amendment agreed to.

Seanad amendment No. 2:

Section 5: In page 16, lines 16 to 20, to delete subsection (3).

**Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív:** Is rud an-ghearr é seo. Go bunúsach, níl aon ghá le ordú tosach feidhme, mar séard atá i gceist ná go dtiocfaidh an Bille i bhfeidhm ar an bpointe go n-achtófar é. The second amendment does away with the commencement provision in section 5(3). As the Bill will commence when it becomes law, there is no need for a commencement date.

Seanad amendment agreed to.

Seanad amendments reported.

### Statements on Climate Change.

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran):** Climate change is the biggest challenge facing humanity. Global warming threatens not just our quality of life but the very survival of the planet and all who live on it. If it is allowed to continue unchecked, the sheer scale of potential disruption and destruction of people and the environment is almost beyond comprehension.

In recent years scientific research has been profound. Last year the research was collated and presented in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC. All countries have recognised that the report represents the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment of climate change to date and provides an integrated scientific, technical and socio-economic perspective on relevant issues. The research has found that climate change has been caused by man-made emissions and that if these emissions continue to grow, they will have potentially catastrophic effects throughout the globe by the end of this century.

Some of the key findings are truly shocking and worth recalling. Climate change is unequivocal. There is very high confidence that the net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming. Global total annual greenhouse gas emissions from human activities have risen by 70% since 1970. Concentrations of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, now far exceed the natural range in the last 650,000 years. Global temperatures have increased by 0.74° since 1906 and our current emissions alone have built-in approximately another 0.5° of an increase. Of the past dozen years 11 ranked among the 12 warmest since 1850. The pace of sea-level rise increased from 1.8mm per year in 1961 to 3mm per year in 2005. Temperatures are likely to rise by between 1.1° and 6.4° Celsius, and sea levels by between 18 centimetres and 59 centimetres this century. Human-induced global warming could lead to impacts that are “abrupt or irreversible”. There is high confidence that by mid-century many semi-arid areas such as the Mediterranean basin and the western United States will suffer a decrease in water resources. Between 75 and 250 million people in Africa may experience water stress by 2020. Almost one third of plant and animal species will be at increased risk of extinction if global temperatures increase by 1.5° to 2.5° Celsius from late 20th century levels. If temperature increases exceed 3.5°, between 40% and 70% of species may be at increased risk of extinction. Consequently, it is essential that carbon dioxide emissions peak within less than ten years. Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must be reduced by 50% to 85% relative to 2000. This would limit global warming at 2° to 2.4°



[Deputy Michael Finneran.]

Celsius above pre-industrial levels and thereby reduce significantly the number directly affected by climatic stresses.

It is possible to take action, despite the enormity of the scale of such findings. The IPCC has also stated there is substantial economic potential for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in coming decades which could offset the projected growth in global emissions, or reduce emissions below current levels.

Another finding is that addressing climate change is affordable. The macro-economic cost of stringent mitigation would be equivalent to global GDP being 3% lower in 2030 than it would be if no mitigation measures were undertaken. This is equivalent to a reduction in the annual global GDP growth rate of 0.12%. If we take such measures, we will delay reaching the same level of GDP in 2030 by less than 12 months.

Ireland is not immune from climate change. The recent research report by Met Éireann outlined a number of predicted impacts. Our climate will continue to warm with possible increases of 3 to 4° Celsius towards the end of the century, resulting in wetter winters and drier summers. These changes in precipitation and temperature are likely to increase the risk of flooding in winter and reduce water supplies in summer. Sea levels around Ireland are rising by 3.5 cm per decade and the frequency of intense cyclones affecting Ireland is likely to increase. Ocean modelling suggests a consequent increase in the frequency of storm surge events around Irish coasts.

The European Union has based its international strategy on climate change on this scientific background. If we are to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, the Union wants to ensure the global temperature does not rise by more than 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the next century. The only way this can be achieved is through very significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, primarily in developed countries. The Union's objective is to stabilise global emissions within the next decade or so and, by 2050, cut them by at least 50% below 1990 levels. Developed countries must continue to lead by reducing their emissions in the order of 30% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels with a view to collectively reducing their emissions by 60% to 80% by 2050. This will keep us on track towards the 2° Celsius target and is consistent with the IPCC findings.

Efforts by industrialised countries alone will not suffice. Developing countries, particularly emerging industrialising economies, must be encouraged to reduce the emission intensity associated with their economic growth. This would require new incentives and flexible commitments, in addition to further transfer and deployment of climate-friendly technologies, as part of a new international agreement.

Between now and the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, there will be an opportunity for the global community to act on climate change. The European Union is determined to demonstrate a leadership role in the UN negotiations. Last year, the European Union set out its aims for a comprehensive and fair international agreement to come into force by the end of 2012. The Union is willing to reduce its emissions by 30% by 2020 compared to 1990 as part of an effective international agreement. It expects other industrialised countries to take on similarly ambitious reduction targets so developed countries as a whole will reduce their emissions by 30% by 2020.

The European Union is determined to demonstrate that this scale of reduction is achievable and that it, the Union, is committed to transforming its economy into a low-carbon economy. As a result, it made an independent commitment to reduce its own emissions by at least 20% by 2020, which it is willing to increase to 30% as part of an effective international agreement.

The European Union played a pivotal role and provided global leadership at the UN climate change conference last December in Bali in Indonesia. That conference set out a path to reach an international agreement on a par with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It established a negotiations roadmap on how we are to reach that new international climate change agreement. That, in itself, was a significant victory, bringing reluctant developed nations such as the United States together with developing countries to reach agreement on the best way forward.

For the first time in over a decade and a half, all countries, both developed and developing, are negotiating new commitments for all to take action to address climate change. This represents remarkable progress by the global community. If we look back just four years, we will note the global picture was much bleaker. The United States had already rejected the Kyoto Protocol. The protocol itself had not even entered into force as an insufficient number of countries had ratified it. Only the leadership demonstrated by European Union brought us to the current position.

The UN conference launched formal negotiations among the 192 parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, on action up to and beyond 2012. These formal negotiations will involve the United States, which is a party to the UNFCCC but not to the Kyoto Protocol. The conference set out a roadmap to guide the negotiations, which includes the key building blocks of a future agreement. These are enhanced mitigation of climate change by limiting or reducing emissions; enhanced adaptation to climate change; action on technology development and transfer; and the scaling up of finance and investment to support mitigation and adaptation.

The Bali agreement acknowledges explicitly the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's recent fourth assessment report, emphasises the urgency of addressing climate change and recognises that deep cuts in global emissions will be required to reach the convention's objective of preventing dangerous levels of climate change. At the European Union's insistence, it also makes reference to a section of the report that demonstrates that emissions reductions for developed countries in the range of 25% to 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 are required to limit global warming to 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Enhanced action to mitigate climate change will be a key focus of negotiations. The roadmap envisages commitments or actions by developed countries, including quantified objectives for limiting and reducing emissions. Developing countries will also take action, but in their case no reference is made to quantified emissions objectives.

In parallel with these negotiations under the climate change convention, the parties to the Kyoto Protocol will continue negotiations already under way on new post-2012 emissions targets for developed countries that are in the protocol. The negotiations under both tracks, that is, the convention and protocol, will be completed at the UN climate change conference to be held at the end of 2009 in Copenhagen. The European Union and many other parties insisted on this simultaneous deadline to ensure a coherent result.

This provides the global political and scientific background for the publication of the climate and energy package by the Commission at the start of this year in response to a request by the member states' Governments. It is important to recall that the full climate and energy package encompasses more than measures pertaining to greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to including proposals on climate, the package includes measures to increase the use of renewable energy, to enhance energy efficiency, to provide a regulatory framework to stimulate carbon capture and storage technology and to amend state aid rules to support environmental actions. The aim of the package is to reduce the European Union's dependence on fossil fuel, to enhance the competitiveness of the European economy, and to reduce European greenhouse gas emissions. The energy and climate measures mutually support the attainment of these goals.



[Deputy Michael Finneran.]

The revised emission trading scheme, ETS, and the effort-sharing proposals specifically set out how the European Union will achieve its independent target of 20% below the 1990 level by 2020. To achieve this 20% target, the European Union needs to cut its 2005 emissions by 14%. The 14% reduction is achieved by two separate but linked measures, namely, the revision of the ETS and the effort-sharing proposals. Under the revision of the ETS, the energy and industrial sectors have an EU-wide cap that is to reduce ETS emissions to 21% below 2005 levels by 2020.

The basic principle for the allocation of allowances is auctioning as this is the most transparent process and eliminates windfall profits. Industries that are subject to international competition from outside the European Union will be subject to special treatment, including the possibility of free allocation of allowances. The European Commission will report on “carbon leakage” by 2011 with appropriate proposals, as necessary.

Under the effort-sharing proposal, there was a need to take into account the wide divergence of wealth in the EU 27. As a result, the Commission used GDP *per capita* as a criterion for differentiating between member states’ ability to pay for the necessary actions within the limitations of -20% and +20% targets. In this context, a reduction target of -20% was proposed for Ireland as a function of our high GDP *per capita*. The Commission proposal has included flexibilities in terms of how a member state can meet its commitments without undermining the level of ambition of the climate and energy package and ensuring significant action is taken within the European Union.

Naturally, the proposals raise serious economic and social issues for Ireland and a detailed analysis of the elements of the package is ongoing in the relevant Departments. Given the scale of the implications of the proposals for the citizen, it is important that decisions on the elements of the package be seen to arise from a fair and transparent process. However, it is important to reiterate that the Government fully supports the targets agreed by the Heads of State and Government at the European Council meeting in the spring of 2007 to reduce the European Union’s emissions by at least 20% by comparison with 1990 levels by 2020 and by 30% as part of a global comprehensive agreement.

Ireland is playing its part, at national level and within the European Union, but also in supporting international efforts to achieve consensus on a comprehensive global response to climate change. The Ireland National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012, published last year, sets out the measures by which Ireland will meet its Kyoto Protocol commitments, and how these measures will position us to achieve further significant emission reductions in the period beyond 2012. Since taking office, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has taken a number of additional steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** As Chairman of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security, I sought this debate some months ago and the day eventually has arrived. Without showing any disrespect towards the Minister of State, who is new to the Department, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should show his face and contribute to this debate. One reason for such a debate is to try to raise the profile of one of the most serious problems that faces mankind today and in the future. The world cannot continue to emit greenhouse gases on the present scale without realising the consequences for future generations. At present, some parts of the world are suffering droughts, starvation, disease and other chronic health problems and envisage no solutions to them unless developed regions, such as the European Union, lead the way by taking steps, first to stall the ongoing rise in greenhouse gases and thereafter to proceed with steps to reduce drastically their levels over the next 50 years.

We cannot continue to ignore what is happening around us in the world today. Recently, the head of the World Bank has predicted that 3.5 million children will die this year of malnutrition. Huge energy prices make it more expensive to transport food from the places where it is grown to the places where those who are starving live. If any sense of humanity is left in us, we cannot ignore the prediction of the head of the World Bank that 3.5 million children will die this year. While Ireland may have its own problems regarding current budget deficits and other economic problems facing it, they pale into insignificance in the face of the possibility of such a large number of children dying before one's eyes. One should consider the amount of concern that is expressed, and rightly so, regarding illnesses that affect children in Ireland and no money is spared in trying to save the life of a single child. While this is how it should be, we close our eyes and ears to the estimate that 3.5 million children will die of malnutrition this year.

Members are aware that lack of food weakens people's resistance to infectious diseases and poor countries lack adequate health systems to deliver the medicines that could prevent some deaths and reduce suffering. The increased demand in countries such as Ireland for sophisticated health care systems draws doctors and nurses from poorer countries to those which have higher incomes available to them. For example, in recent times Zambia has trained 2,500 doctors. Today however, only 600 of them work in the country in which they were trained. Similarly, while only 1,000 doctors work in Ghana, in New York City alone, 600 Ghanaian doctors are in practice. Not alone does a problem exist in respect of climate change, the ongoing effects of starvation and so on, but trained professional personnel to deal with the illnesses arising from these changes are lacking. This problem also applies to nurses. In Ireland, one only needs to look around one to see the number of professional nurses from abroad working throughout the health services. However, every time we take a nurse from the Philippines or wherever, it means the system in the Philippines has been left without a nurse who trained and qualified there. While all these people are welcome in Ireland, it is enormously difficult to deal with problems facing Third World and developing countries because of such ongoing facts and statistics.

In the short time available to me, I will refer briefly to the present position in respect of climate change and Ireland's targets in this regard. Members are aware that after the Kyoto conference in 1997, it was agreed the EU would reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 8% below 1990 levels. Ireland was given a target of plus 13% because of the developing nature of its economy. As the volume of emissions produced by Ireland in 1990 was 54 million tonnes, the target set for Ireland to achieve amounts to 61 million tonnes. I have seen recent figures from the Environmental Protection Agency for 2005 in which our emissions had increased to 70 million tonnes. Consequently, we have greatly exceeded the target set for us. I fear that given the present rate of progress as seen by members of the aforementioned joint committee, if matters continue as they are, there is little chance of Ireland achieving its target of plus 13%.

Lest anyone believes that failure to reach the target means no more than that, failure to do so will cost Ireland a great deal of money. At a time when Ireland's health service and other important services are being reduced because of a shortage of money, it would be an absolute scandal to spend a considerable amount of money as a consequence of failing to reach our targets because of our inability to deal with a problem such as greenhouse gas emissions.

The main problems facing Ireland in respect of greenhouse gas emissions are centred around three main areas. Agriculture, energy production and transport account for approximately 28%, 23% and 20% of our emissions, respectively. The problematic growth area for Ireland is transport and emissions from that sector have grown by 260% since 1990. Urgent measures must be taken in the transport area to deal with the continuation of such growth in its emissions. I suggest to the Minister of State that the Government should instruct the CIE group to bring forward, by year end, an investment plan for public transport that would have the effect of

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reducing overall transport emissions by 50% by 2020. The CIE group should be as brave in its level of ambition as has been the ESB group in respect of energy production.

As for the issue of transport, what we have done or failed to do is an absolute scandal. I do not object to investment in new road structures because it makes roads safer, reduces costs, traffic jams and so on. In addition, however, we should have been and should be investing considerable sums of money in a proper rail service that will transport both people and goods. It would make basic common sense to divert many heavy vehicles carrying various materials from the roads on to rail.

As for public transport, it has been demonstrated that people have responded where the service is available. People in the Dublin region are fortunate to an extent because they have Luas, a DART system and a decent bus service. Unfortunately, however, the number of buses that are available for people is insufficient and for as long as this position is maintained, people will use private cars to travel. I believe there is need for radical thinking in this regard and the Dublin transport authority, when it is up and running, should be to the forefront in making such necessary changes.

As I said earlier, people will use public transport if it is available to them but if someone is living three or four miles from a DART or Luas line or a quality bus corridor it can be difficult to gain access to that service. Some imagination is needed in that regard and one suggestion is to have a link up service between, say, a quality bus corridor and a Luas and DART system.

For years we have been speaking about an integrated ticketing service yet after six years of examination and investing approximately €13 million we have yet to see that service. It does not make sense that people cannot hop onto a DART or a bus and get to their destination using one ticket. In the age of modern technology surely it is not beyond the expertise of men to come up with a system that would allow that to happen.

Cycling is becoming more popular but to cycle on our roads we need proper and safe cycle lanes. Some of the existing cycle lanes are an excuse for cycle lanes and are quite dangerous. In some areas it is impossible for a bus or a car to stay out of a cycle lane because the road is so narrow. It is a foolish exercise to install cycle lanes that are not safe yet local authorities are widening footpaths without allowing for proper cycle lanes. That does not make sense to me.

We talk about promoting cycling holidays and so on, both from a health point of view and to improve our economy, yet if someone wants to travel with their bicycle on a train it becomes an impossibility. Thirty or 40 years ago one could put one's bike in the guard's van of the train and get from A to B. Allowing someone to put their bike on a train to go on a cycling holiday around Kerry should be a basic facility in this day and age.

In countries like Copenhagen taxis are fitted with a device on the rear capable of taking two, three or four bicycles. If someone wants to cycle to work in the morning but the weather turns bad, as it is today, and they do not want to cycle home, they simply call a taxi, put their bicycle on the back and away they go. These measures will not cost huge amounts of public investment but they make basic common sense.

Action in this area must be led by the Government, the Minister for Transport and other Ministers. If they do not lead in this area, show example and call in the taxi regulator and other bodies, including the CIE group chairman and so on, and insist this will happen, we will continue talking about this problem of climate change and energy security and boring people to death because nothing is happening.

It is a simple measure to sign up to targets; it is another thing to achieve them. If the Minister intends to sign up to targets he better be sure he knows what he is doing in terms of what it

will cost this country, the way we will do it and when we will do it. We must deal with the simple issues such as the few I have outlined, and there are many more, which I am sure speakers following me will give examples. Many actions can be taken that will not cost vast sums of money if there is proper political leadership. That is a matter for Government, and it is a matter for us to highlight these issues to ensure Government can take action.

As well as dealing with the targets to 2012, we must also examine the European Commission's proposals, following on the Heads of Government agreement of 2007, to reduce greenhouse gases by a further 20% for the period 2012-20. I should point out that this Government, along with other Heads of State, has said that if there is international agreement, that 20% will increase to 30%. It is very easy to refer to 20% and 30% but how will that be achieved, given that our main problem areas are agriculture, energy production and transport? Where will we find those savings? Time is not on our side, a Cheann Comhairle.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** It is not on the Deputy's side either because, unfortunately, his time has expired.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** Sorry about that. I will not be too much longer.

I suggest that a consultation process should begin in the next three to six months and a new climate change strategy be agreed. It is important also that we communicate better with the public regarding the need for change in our habits in terms of dealing with our household waste, and also in businesses.

In dealing with the matter of cuts in greenhouse gas emissions for agriculture, I suggested in the committee recently that before we delve into reducing our cattle herd it is important that a serious debate take place, not alone in Ireland but within the EU, on the role of Ireland as the producer of quality food for the future. We are living in an era where there is a shortage of food and food is highly priced. The European Union can decide how it will distribute the cuts I have spoken about, and Ireland must play its part. It would be simple to do that. Cutting the herd would reduce the methane gas emissions but that would reduce the amount of food available at a time when prices are increasing and there is a shortage of food. Before we rush into that, the Government should insist that proper debate takes place on the way those cuts are distributed among member states. If Ireland is to be a food producer in the future, there should be recognition of our particular circumstances. That is vitally important.

Before we sign up to a final agreement, part of our negotiations with the EU must focus on the way we intend to deal with the area of agriculture and the role Ireland has to play in agriculture in providing food in the future for the European Union and the rest of the world. We cannot ignore that food prices have escalated, that there is a grave shortage of food and that the population of the world has increased from 3.6 billion in the 1960s to approximately 6 billion today, and that it may rise to 9 billion. People must be fed and as I told the House earlier in the debate, the head of the World Bank estimates that 3.5 million children will die of starvation this year because of malnutrition. We cannot ignore reality.

Before we finalise our agreement we must examine and audit the effect of these cuts in terms of jobs and business. We must plan for the future before any final agreement is reached.

**Deputy Joanna Tuffy:** I wish to share time with Deputy McManus. I will take ten minutes.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** Agreed.

**Deputy Joanna Tuffy:** This is the first opportunity to speak in the House about climate change under the portfolio of this Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and it is disappointing that he is not present for the debate. It is surprising also because

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the Green Party and the Minister, Deputy Gormley, have made climate change the main plank of their participation in Government.

Climate change is a vital issue. It is welcome that it is on the agenda in a way that was not the case before the Green Party got into Government. It is an issue we must address and there are steps we could take that would be of benefit to us as a society and an economy but the way the Minister is using this issue is detrimental to what he should be about, namely, protecting our environment. There have been no reductions in emissions, and the Minister is not planning on there being actual reductions in emissions up to 2012 when this Government's terms in office will end. Everything the Minister is doing is on the surface; there is not substance to it. It is all about appearances, public relations and spin. It started with the carbon budget, which was not a carbon budget at all. In that carbon budget the Minister admitted — what else could he do — that for the next five years the way we will achieve our carbon reductions is by purchasing carbon credits. There will be no reduction of carbon emissions while the Greens are in Government.

The latest report from the EPA about carbon emissions in Ireland showed that they are increasing. Carbon emissions increased from 2005 to 2006. There was a marginal decrease shown, but that was because of the closure of Moneypoint. In fact, there was no reduction in emissions. For example, there was a considerable increase in transport emissions. There has been a 165% increase on the 1990 transport emissions, with road transport accounting for 97% of the transport sector emissions. There is no way we will reduce our emissions in line with the Kyoto Protocol. There is no way we will reach the EU targets to which the Minister wants us to sign up for 2020, if we carry on the way we are going.

There is no fast-tracking of public transport. In fact, buses are being forced off the road. Dublin Bus has been made take buses off routes in Lucan, Swords and Blanchardstown. Private bus companies have withdrawn their services because they cannot operate under the current licensing system. The Department will not allow Dublin Bus put extra buses on the road. It is turning down Dublin Bus applications, for example, to provide extra buses for my area of Lucan at peak hours. This is the type of initiative that would reduce our carbon emissions and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is just sitting back and doing nothing about it.

One can not question the Minister on his policies on climate change because if one does, he makes one out to be in favour of climate change. If one raises the many complex issues involved such as whether it is good for the environment and whether it will affect people who are not wealthy, the Minister just laughs them off and makes one out to be somehow colluding in climate change.

Recently the Minister publicised a climate change survey which his Department carried out. He highlighted that 90% of people thought climate change needed to be dealt with, but he did not disclose, until I tabled a number of parliamentary questions and emailed him, that when the public were asked, for example, were they in favour of an 8% increase on car fuel, a 10% increase on a bag of coal or 10% on a bale of briquettes, a 6% increase on a typical gas bill or an 8% increase on a delivery of home heating oil, the majority were opposed to such increases. They were opposed because they knew they would not be fair. Why would it be fair to jack up the price of petrol or home heating fuel when there are no alternatives provided and when one has no option but to use a car? The public are not stupid. Of course they want to do something about climate change and they care about the environment. However, they want fairness and measures that really are about reducing our carbon emissions, not just stealth taxes, revenue raising measures or measures which are purely to make the Minister look like he is doing something.



As I stated, this is complex. Climate change is an extremely important issue for the world and for us in Ireland, but it is not the only issue. We must deal with issues such as famine and poverty.

We must deal with the issues here at home as well. A considerable amount of people in Ireland live below the bread line and can not afford fuel, for example. The issue of fuel poverty is one which my colleague, Deputy McManus, has raised but it is not being raised by the Greens in Government. If one applied the type of carbon taxes the Minister seems to plan, one would impact on inflation and the cost of living. The cost of food has risen considerably in this country over the past year and people are pressed by their food bills etc.

The Green Party is using climate change to mask what they are not doing in Government about the environment. The Greens used be the party of the environment and it looks like that has been left behind. It is not the priority it used to be for them. Nor is quality of life. They used be called the quality of life party. They are not a quality of life party, quite the opposite. They are leaving people stuck in traffic with a poor quality environment, poor quality water etc. All of the issues the Green Party used say in Opposition were a damning indictment on the Government, a black mark on Ireland etc., are now legacy issues, according to the Minister, who absolves himself of responsibility.

No doubt environmental issues are out of control. Of course these issues did not just arise when Deputy Gormley became Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, but he is the Minister now. For example, habitats are important in terms of reacting and addressing climate change, and if one makes habitats resilient and of good quality, they are better able to deal with the impacts of climate change. A recent report by the National Parks and Wildlife Service found that of 59 protected habitats, only four, or 7%, had good status overall with the remainder either poor or bad.

There is the landfill issue. A recent ESRI report found that 80% of household waste is going to landfills and that there is a discrepancy between the stated policy of the Government and the landfill policies in place. Ireland is in significant danger of missing its European Union targets for diverting recyclable waste from landfill, according to the EPA this year.

There have been U-turns such as the one on the M3. Recently it has been reported that vital archeological information was apparently not provided to the then Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government at the time about the archeology along the M3 before he gave the route the go-ahead. What has the Minister done about that? He has just let it go ahead. He is not even properly protecting the national monuments. It was protestors who really had to force the issue in the case of Rath Lugh, for example.

The Minister is not stopping incineration. He used to oppose incineration; now he is just opposed to where it is located. What is that about?

There is the issue of Haulbowline and the threat to public, marine and animal life. It was important to the Greens that people had proper participation in environmental decisions. Nothing has been done about that since the Greens entered Government.

There is nothing being done to stop urban sprawl. There have been no amendments to the planning Act. There has been phenol contamination of the Cavan and Monaghan water supply. I asked the Minister a question about that at one stage and he stated it had nothing to do with him. It was only when I pushed it that he stated he would consider the reports and recommendations from the HSE and the two county councils.

There is pollution from transport. Noise pollution, which is bad for people's health, is becoming a greater issue. There is poor water quality. One in three water supplies tested by the EPA

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were found to be of poor quality. There is today's judgment about Derrybrien on the fact that proper environmental impact statements are not required in Ireland.

As I stated, the Greens are not doing anything about quality of life. If they concentrated on the environment and quality of life, they would reduce carbon emissions. If one provided proper public transport, one would reduce carbon emissions. Instead, the Minister is all about the targets, for which he buys credits. He is not doing anything about people's quality of life and their right to good public transport, which reduces emissions and results in better quality air. Instead, it is about changing the type of car one buys and buying bio-fuels to ease one's conscience. Social justice in these matters just does not rate with the Greens.

There are some small gains. A good development is obviously the pilot scheme for the insulation of houses, although the Government slashed the greener homes scheme as soon as it came into office. Other than that, it is tinkering around the edges on issues such as light bulbs and carbon purchases, where their view is let us pay on the double for ministers' travel — for their flights and then for their consciences.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** There are five minutes left in the slot.

**Deputy Joanna Tuffy:** We need investment in energy efficiency in public buildings such as schools, we need more buses on the roads and we need to care for the environment.

**Deputy Liz McManus:** I thank Deputy Tuffy for sharing some of her time. I welcome the fact this debate is being held in the House.

Climate change is the single biggest defining political issue for us and for this generation. That is why I find it so dispiriting that the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has not chosen to come into the House when this debate is being held. If the Greens have taken flight on this issue, we really are in a situation that we will not be able to get out of.

**Deputy Michael Finneran:** The Minister is on Government business.

**Deputy Liz McManus:** I mean no disrespect to the Minister of State, Deputy Finneran, and I compliment him on his appointment, but the speech he has given contains five pages of the same old stuff and one page on policy. We do not need to be convinced anymore. The scientific evidence is overwhelming now about global warming. There is consensus in this House about the importance of the issue. The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security is working very well across party lines on the basis of consensus. We do not need the material to be regurgitated anymore. We need to see implementation of policy, including practical measures to change the way we live, work, consume energy and manage our lives in an appropriate way to ensure that we save the planet. However, we are not getting that. Even this debate is derisory in reflecting how the Government deals with climate change and I get the impression it does very little apart from pay lip service. We have benign neglect from Fianna Fáil and good intentions from the Green Party, which is not enough to meet the challenge.

At EU level we will likely be subject to the requirement of a 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020. This is a good target and one to which we ought aspire. We are a developed country and we live in a part of the world that could be described as rich, despite the current economic recession. We have a duty of care to the planet. We need more than the presence of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in the House to discuss what needs to be done; we need the Taoiseach. If policy is not led from the very top, change will not happen and we will not have a chance in hell of meeting either our international

obligations or our duty of care to the planet. I welcome the invitation that will go from the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security to the Taoiseach to address it.

Addressing climate change requires the type of leadership of which this country is capable. We have seen such leadership in the past, whether it was in achieving our independence, developing our economy in the 1950s and 1960s, or creating peace in Northern Ireland. We have done magnificent work in this country and we need the sense of urgency, understanding and leadership applied to those challenges now to address what is not just an issue for us, but a global issue. We must address these challenges in a way which meets targets set, changes behaviour and deals with the significant issues, but is also fair. This is the essence of sustainability. Unless the changes are brought about in a fair way, there will be alienation, especially from those who suffer most from the changes required. We need a fuel poverty strategy.

We need to address the issue of a bio-fuels policy. Why has the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Deputy Eamon Ryan, postponed the publication of the bio-fuels policy until the autumn and not dealt with the matter now? We are discussing global starvation, yet the Minister does not have a policy. The matter is put on the never never, which is rather typical of the man. There is an urgency, importance and a centrality to this issue that cannot be ignored. Today's statements on climate change in no way meet the need for a proper parliamentary debate or a proper approach from Government and I intend to pursue the matter until we get these.

**Deputy M. J. Nolan:** I congratulate the Minister of State, Deputy Michael Finneran, and I wish him well in his new office. I believe he is more than capable of doing a fine job. It is timely that one of the first debates he leads in the Chamber is on the issue of climate change, which affects all of us. It is a matter which has not come to public attention lately, but has been present for several years. One wonders, given the weather on the way into the House this morning, if we are too late in trying to tackle this problem. There does not seem to be any sign of summer.

**Deputy Phil Hogan:** Blame the Green Party.

**Deputy M. J. Nolan:** The Minister of State outlined where we are coming from and the challenges we face. I will talk in general terms about how it will affect us as a country and a people, and the wider context of how we address the challenges in Europe.

We cannot deal with this problem in isolation. As a relatively small country in Europe and an even smaller country in the global context, we must look for a global solution. I commend the efforts of the European Union in trying to bring some order to what is a serious international problem. However, the European Union cannot solve the problem on its own as it is not a European problem or an Irish problem, but a global one and it must be sorted out in the context of a global solution.

It is important to refer back to the Kyoto Protocol. The protocol was an admission and a bold effort to try to bring some order to what is a difficult problem. It is important to make some comparisons to show how the protocol has affected Ireland and Irish industry. When the agreement was negotiated in 1990, Ireland's gross national product was €58 billion, but today it is €145 billion, an increase of approximately 140%. Our gross domestic product then was €63 billion and in 2007 it was €157 billion. We had 83,000 cars in the country in 1990 and now we have over 170,000. These increases and the wealth that has been created have impacted on our carbon emissions. When we negotiated the Kyoto Protocol in 1990, we were producing 54



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million tonnes of carbon emissions. Today, we produce in excess of 70 million tonnes. It is easy to look back in hindsight, but one could say we got a very poor deal at the negotiations.

We must be realistic and understand the current EU emissions trading scheme proposals will impact severely on the health of Irish industries if we do not take a firm hand in the negotiations. A timescale has been set down by the European Union and the European Parliament and decisions will be taken early next year on finalising those proposals. The Commission proposes a system of auctions as the basis of carbon allowances after 2012. This will have a serious impact on certain Irish industries. This proposal is not acceptable to energy intensive industries. There is not one town or county that would not be seriously affected if the energy intensive industries were to be pushed out of business, or where the produce of those companies would be imported as a result of these proposals, and we must examine this issue seriously.

Many companies are beginning to question whether they will invest here. Many of these intensive industries require an investment timescale of five or six years and must plan in advance. These companies need certainty and clarity now on the impact of EU plans on their investment proposals. They also need reassurance from the Government and from the European Union that, having invested, they will get a timeframe to claw back their investments and that they will not be faced with unfair competition from overseas.

Many of these companies have invested in best available technology, but are subject to competition from countries where there is no carbon constraints. We must be careful of this and if it is not changed, the inevitable consequence of the Commission's proposals will be to drive energy intensive industries out of the European Union, which is not acceptable to many Members. It makes no environmental or economic sense. We have already seen the leakage of jobs due to the high cost of doing business not only in Ireland, but in the European Union. Some 10 million tonnes of cement were imported into the European Union in 2007 from China alone. We will see more and more of this unless we get our act together and come up with sound economic proposals to address these problems.

Many Irish companies have invested in world class energy-efficient technologies. In recent years the reduction of between 10% and 20% has been achieved in carbon emissions per tonne of product, which is a good sign. I do not think the same efficiencies are being made in some of the countries we are competing with currently.

Fuel and power accounts for approximately 40% to 50% of production costs in some of these companies. In Deputy Hogan's constituency and my own we have a lime production plant and I spoke to the company management recently. I was told there was between 50% and 60% energy input in production there. The company is seriously concerned about its future if it must face competition from countries with no carbon restraints. These people have invested significantly in updating the plant in Carlow and are building a new plant in Clare. They would like to see a chance for fair competition.

It is important to remember that if we lose business to overseas companies, apart from the loss of jobs and the loss to the economy, carbon emissions will increase. The carbon emissions in making the product will remain but there will be additional emissions from the transport costs over the sea and sometimes halfway around the world. These issues must be addressed and I hope the Government will take action in that regard.

The deadline for the plenary amendments for the European Parliament is December and a vote is expected on 16 December. It then goes to the European Council for decision and this will probably happen during the course of the French Presidency, which finishes at the end of the year.

The question of climate change is topical and not only in Ireland. Of late I have noticed the business sector has become increasingly interested in the topic because of the impact it will have. It affects generation of electricity, cement and lime production, and these are industries which will be seriously affected unless we, as a Government, protect them.

It is timely that the partnership process is under way and we are getting a new social partnership agreement. The Minister and Taoiseach are very interested in securing agreement in that respect. We face challenges in the economy with a rise in the rate of redundancies, other challenges in the labour market and a much more difficult trading environment, which threatens export growth. How we deal with climate change must take this into account.

I ask the Minister and his Government to look sympathetically on the industries that will be most seriously affected by these proposals.

**Deputy Phil Hogan:** I assure the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as well as the Minister of State present, that Fine Gael as a party is committed to playing a constructive and meaningful role in combating climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. My party and I are convinced of the need for action and we certainly do not need to be lectured in any way by people about this matter or the importance of taking initiatives to deal with a subject that is becoming more topical and important to the future development of our country and the European Union.

As an example, the Fine Gael spokesman on energy matters, Deputy Simon Coveney, recently announced a proposal which submitted to the Government an idea that windfall profits can be generated from our electricity supply stations and rebalanced in the context of other measures that could be taken, such as reducing VAT. These are the types of proposal that will come more to the fore in the next couple of years to deal with some of the measures reflective of Government and national policy in stemming the tide of increasing levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

Some dramatic evidence, if we need such evidence related to the global climate, is the rapid decrease of the Arctic Sea ice cover over the past few years. Consideration of what is happening in the Arctic and Antarctic appears to be a litmus test of how policymakers are positioned with regard to climate change. The sea ice reaches its minimum in September each year at the end of the Arctic summer. I read that the ice cover reached an all-time low last year when it was 23% below the previous record.

We have seen in the media and our television screens that for the first time in living memory, the North-West Passage, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans across the north of Canada, was open. I recently read in some UK publications and newspapers articles detailing a prediction from polar scientists that the Arctic Sea ice will disappear completely this September. If that is right, it will be the first time in human history that this section of the North Pole will have been ice-free.

Often people wonder what changes taking place in climatic conditions worldwide and the melting of ice in the Arctic and Antarctic has to do with us and they believe it will not affect us. It will affect us and the information and education process required to convince people of the need for action is urgent. There is a necessity to convince people that a do-nothing strategy is not viable and it will have significant implications on our quality of life and how priorities will be implemented by Government in order to deal with potentially savage outturns if nothing is done to change policy.

I was disappointed with the speech of Minister of State, Deputy Michael Finneran, in that there was no mention of the 3% average reduction per annum target for greenhouse gases over the next five years set in the programme for Government. We have had no indication from the

[Deputy Phil Hogan.]

Government about what policies have been implemented and the success of those which are implemented. What is the result of the recent EPA studies with regard to reducing, or otherwise, greenhouse gas emissions as a result of Government policy?

I am not surprised as the targets are completely turned around at this stage, like the programme for Government itself. The biggest mistake the Green Party made before getting into bed with Fianna Fáil was not asking the question of whether that party would respect the Green Party in the morning. It did not ask if the Green Party would respect itself in the morning, or if Green Party supporters would respect it because the party is not achieving anything in Government related to this significant issue. We heard so much about it from the Green Party before the general election.

Now the Green Party is in Government, the devil will be in the detail, action and results of what we are achieving.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** We are doing our best.

**Deputy Phil Hogan:** The Deputy needs the No. 2 votes. After one year, a fair period to see what can be done in Government, we have merely seen tinkering around the edges with no substantive change on the targets set out in print by the Taoiseach and the Minister, Deputy Gormley, last summer.

Once the Greens sacrificed their political virtue, we were told we would feel better and have a better quality of life. The Minister, Deputy Gormley, has made a substantial amount of running on the changes in VRT and motor tax rates. These had already been announced by the Taoiseach, Deputy Cowen, when he was Minister for Finance in 2006, so the Minister, Deputy Gormley, had nothing to do with them.

The manner in which these are being implemented has ensured, for the past six months, and three months in particular, that there has been no activity in car showrooms around the city or country in general. People were confused, ill-informed and did not understand what was coming down the tracks on 1 July. There will be a little spike in sales for the next couple of weeks for people who have held off but there will be a massive reduction in the amount of money coming into the Exchequer and local government fund. We will then see how the Estimates are faring because of those bad decisions.

A Government cannot be run by photo opportunity, which is what the Minister, Deputy Gormley, is trying to do. I would not blame him for getting €15 million for a campaign to inform people of the impact of climate change policy. At the same time he slashed the greener homes fund, which provided important assistance to householders seeking to insulate their houses.

Approximately 500,000 houses were built in the past seven or eight years, including 90,000 last year. Throughout this period proper energy efficiency standards did not apply and we must now play catch-up. Standards were an equally important issue when the Minister's two predecessors in the Department, the Minister for Transport, Deputy Noel Dempsey, and the Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach, Deputy Dick Roche, were in office. We now find that a fund available to assist people, particularly the less well-off, is being slashed at the expense of an advertising campaign to promote the Minister.

The Minister will beat members of the public senseless with high cost advertising to conceal the reality that no meaningful change is taking place. The Government, of which the Green Party is a part, committed itself to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3% in each year of its term and by 8 million tonnes over the full five year term or 2 million tonnes nominally per annum over 2006 levels. We have not yet heard what progress was made in the Government's

first year of office because it did not come within an ass's roar of meeting its target. On the contrary, we are heading in the opposite direction and the Government has no chance of delivering on its environmental promises. It is big on rhetoric and advertising campaigns telling the rest of us to make changes but low on delivery. It has failed to deliver in areas within its control and should have put the €15 million spent on the recent advertising campaign to better use. We cannot have a Government of photo opportunities and little action.

Citizens are well ahead of the Government and probably Parliament in dealing with this pivotal issue. They understand we are breaking European law and endangering our collective future and are increasingly tuned into the action required. According to a survey commissioned by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, almost everyone in Ireland believes the world's climate is changing. The same survey shows the overwhelming majority accept that humans are responsible for climate change. A similar majority are concerned about the issue, with three out of every ten respondents indicating they are very concerned about it. The encouraging finding is that an overwhelming majority want Ireland to play a leading role in tackling the problem of climate change and that only one third of the population believe the Government is doing enough to address it. More than eight in ten citizens believe it should do more.

We need to remind ourselves that the Green Party is in government. The small initiatives being taken are meaningless in achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The Green Party should examine its performance and accept it is no more than an appendix to the Fianna Fáil Party in government. It has done nothing about the massive carbon footprint of government, the civil and public service, the bus fleet and other areas within the control of the State.

The famous slogan used by various people during the years, "A lot done, more to do", applies in this case. Unlike other countries, Ireland is becoming the exception in the European Union in meeting our Kyoto Protocol targets. The United Kingdom, Sweden and France are ahead of their targets, while it appears Germany, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands will comfortably meet theirs. Why can Ireland not meet its targets, particularly given the Green Party element of the Government?

Climate change is the single biggest moral choice facing this generation. The Fine Gael Party and the Oireachtas must ensure we take decisive action, rather than running photo opportunities and advertising campaigns to pretend we are doing something.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** I thank the Ceann Comhairle for giving me the opportunity to speak in this important debate on climate change.

I disagree with my colleague, Deputy Hogan, on the role of the Green Party. I commend the two Green Party Ministers, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy John Gormley, and the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Deputy Eamon Ryan, on the magnificent work they are doing in government. They have put climate change and the care of the environment and country at the heart of government and we should all support them.

On a practical issue, I thank the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the additional sum allocated to cleaning up Dublin Bay and improving its water quality. This is a major investment and we have a duty to support common-sense projects which clean up the bay. We must also constantly monitor and challenge the Dublin Port Company and its efforts to destroy Dublin Bay. This issue, specifically flooding in Clontarf, Fairview and along the River Tolka, is linked to the climate change debate.

On the broader issue, it is important to understand precisely what is meant by the term "climate change". It is a significant change in average weather or climate conditions. While it

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can be caused by natural factors such as variations in sunlight intensity. The term is now generally used to refer to changes in our climate due to a build up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This build up is caused by excess emissions caused by activities such as burning fossil fuels for energy, transport and heating.

Climate change is a shift in the average weather conditions that a given region experiences. This is measured by changes in all the features we associate with the weather such as temperature, wind patterns, precipitation and storms. Global climate change means change in the climate of the Earth as a whole and also occurs naturally, the Ice Age being an example. The Earth's natural climate has always been changing. The climate change evident today differs from previous climate change in both its rate and magnitude. This is a key issue.

The temperature on Earth is regulated by a system known as the "greenhouse effect". Greenhouse gases, primarily water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, trap the heat of the sun, preventing radiation from dissipating into space. Without the effect of these naturally occurring gases, the average temperature on Earth would be -18° Celsius, instead of the current average of 15° Celsius and life as we know it would be impossible.

During the past 200 years emissions of greenhouse gases due to human activities have accumulated in the atmosphere where, owing to their long life, they remain for periods lasting from decades to centuries. As a result, since the Industrial Revolution, concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased by 30%, methane by 145% and nitrous oxide by 15%. The cause of these increases has been human activities related to our increasingly sophisticated and mechanised lifestyle, in particular, the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas to generate electricity and in factories and cars. In addition, we have cleared more land for human use in the past 100 years than in all of prior human history. This has resulted in the loss of forests and wetlands which absorb and store greenhouse gases and naturally regulate the atmosphere. In effect, by increasing the amount of these heat trapping gases, we have enhanced the natural greenhouse effect to the point where it has the potential to warm the planet at a rate never experienced in human history. Already, the average global temperature has increased by about 0.5° Celsius in the past 100 years and temperature increases in the next 100 years are expected to significantly surpass any such change in the past 10,000 years.

This is a wake-up call for everyone involved in the climate change debate. The issue extends beyond the Government and every individual must play his or her small part. Around the world, climate change is projected to threaten the world's boreal forests, with an increased fire risk because of the drying climate; cause water needs to outstrip supply; cause severe water loss due to changes in evaporation and precipitation patterns; cause flood damage to low lying countries and island states, including loss of coastal land to rising sea levels; encourage the movement of tropical diseases such as malaria northward where populations have little or no immunity; and affect international trade patterns.

These core issues must be addressed. People from the Sammy Wilson school of environmentalism should wake up and smell the coffee. Mr. Wilson, MLA, Minister for the Environment in the North, professes to know a great deal about the environment and is threatening to use the North as a dumping ground for nuclear waste. We cannot stand idly by and allow the North to have a Sellafield mark 2. I challenge Mr. Wilson and others who share his beliefs to examine the broader debate on climate change and the dumping of nuclear waste.

I wish to focus on the impact of climate change on fisheries. Climate change can be expected to have a significant impact on fisheries countries such as Canada and will affect both the productivity of fish populations and how they are distributed throughout lakes, streams and oceans. Changes to water temperature, currents, water quality and food supply could all have



effects on fish populations. Consideration should be given to this matter, particularly in the context of this week's Private Members' debate on the fishing industry.

We must ensure that every interest group, citizen and Member of the Oireachtas plays their small part in the debate on climate change. I referred earlier to flooding and the major impact it could have on Clontarf, Fairview and the River Tolka in my constituency. It is important that we link the potential damage that could be done to the 52 acres of Dublin Bay in which I am particularly interested to the broader debate.

I welcome the recent report compiled by CDM and partners. This company completed an economic, amenity and environmental study of Dublin Bay, including the port area, in July 2007. This study was intended to be the first stage in the preparation of a strategic framework plan for the Dublin Bay area that would guide stakeholders in the long-term development of this resource. CDM and partners put forward a number of options and 75% of the submissions received in respect of them favoured the option which proposes the transfer of Dublin Port to an alternative location and the redevelopment of the port lands. This was assisted by the active engagement of householders in the Clontarf area and by great organisations, such as Dublin Bay Watch, which have a strong interest in the outcome of this debate and a history of opposition to plans by the Dublin Port Company to reclaim further land in order to extend the port estate. It is clear that a positive approach by Dublin City Council in favour of the option to which I refer would be broadly welcomed by those in my constituency. It is essential that this matter be dealt with in the context of the debate on climate change.

We must consider how human activity leads to the production of additional greenhouse gases. This is an important matter. Greenhouse gases are emitted through numerous activities. The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide, CO<sub>2</sub>, which arises from the burning of fossil fuels and land use changes. Other greenhouse gases include methane from agriculture and waste food and nitrous oxide, which mainly arises from agriculture. Industrial gases also act as very powerful greenhouse gases but are emitted in much smaller quantities.

In general, the sources of emissions can be broadly divided into two categories: energy related and non-energy related. Energy-related emissions arise from power generation, transport, industry, and buildings — via heating and other fuel use. Non-energy related emissions arise from agriculture, forestry, land use change and waste disposal activities.

I welcome this debate. I commend Deputy Barrett, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Climate Change, who has done magnificent work during the past five or six months. I also commend my other colleagues on that committee on the great work they are doing. This issue relates to more than one party and people should take it on board and play their part.

**Deputy Simon Coveney:** I wish to share time with Deputy Creed.

I have spoken on a number of occasions in the House in respect of this issue and, therefore, I do not wish to comment on the generalities of climate change. I will instead focus on the current EU climate-energy package. I understand the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy Gormley, is in Brussels today to deal with this matter. I further understand that the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Deputy Ryan, will also be travelling to Brussels in the coming days to discuss the same issue.

The European Commission produced a climate-energy package at the beginning of this year. The aim of this package is to reduce the EU's dependence on fossil fuels — mainly gas, coal and oil — enhance the competitiveness of the European economy in general and, primarily, to reduce the Union's greenhouse gas emissions. A revised emissions trading system, ETS, within the EU and the new effort-sharing proposal specifically set out how the Union will achieve its

[Deputy Simon Coveney.]

independent target of reducing emissions to 20% below 1990 levels by 2020. Regardless of what the rest of the world is doing, this is a commitment we are making.

In order to achieve the reduction to which I refer, the EU, as a whole, must reduce 2005 emission levels by 14%. The latter will be achieved in two ways. First, within the ETS, energy and industrial emitters will be subject to an EU-wide cap, through a system of, depending on the circumstances, either allocating or auctioning carbon allowances. This will reduce emissions to 21% below 2005 levels by 2020. The second way in which the reduction will be achieved is through the effort-sharing proposals. Under these, member states will reduce the remaining non-traded sector emissions to 10% below 2005 levels by 2020. This will be further subdivided among member states in a range of either plus 20% or minus 20% compared to 2005 figures. The Commission has used *GDP per capita* as the basis for the effort-sharing targets allocated to each country.

The Commission's proposals sound complex but that is not the case. Put simply, large industrial concerns in Ireland — this applies to approximately 106 companies, many of which are energy generators and other major businesses — will be obliged to compete and survive within a trading environment under the ETS, where carbon will have a measurable value and where emissions allowances will have to be purchased on the open market through an auctioning system. The remainder of Ireland's emissions are the responsibility of the Government. These will have to be reduced to 20% below 2005 levels by 2020. That will be a significant task. The Government will be obliged to target transport, agriculture, small industry and households to achieve the reduction to which I refer.

The enormity of the task is becoming clearer to people as time passes. It will not be easy to achieve a 20% reduction in emissions by 2020, particularly when one considers that emissions from the traded sector are not included in our target. If the ESB was to reduce all of its energy emissions with immediate effect, this would have no impact with regard to the Government's responsibility to honour the commitment it made in respect of emissions reductions prior to 2020.

The EU climate change package is not a done deal. I wish to raise a number of concerns. The Government must outline to the House its priorities regarding any changes it wishes to make to the package. It must also ensure that there is far greater clarity in respect of the transition from the free allocation of allowances to an auctioning or purchasing system for such allowances. The latter will be applied differently to the energy and non-energy sectors. Those in the non-energy sector require clarity as to how, between 2012 and 2020, we are going to gradually introduce an auctioning system for them. Large emitters planning to invest millions or, potentially, billions in their operations require certainty in respect of this matter. The Government must give priority to providing such certainty.

The Minister of State, Deputy Hootor, and the official from the Department will be familiar with issues such as carbon leakage, which is extremely important in the context of Irish and EU economic competitiveness, permeability between the traded and non-traded sectors, the vulnerability of agriculture and the importance of ensuring that forestry — in terms of its use as a carbon sink — is factored into the equation in respect of our emissions commitments.

**Deputy Michael Creed:** I thank Deputy Coveney for sharing time. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate on this matter.

The target of a 20% reduction by 2020 is ambitious, and rightly so. It will be extremely difficult to meet this target. To place the matter in context, a 20% reduction would be equivalent to the total emissions produced by cars in Ireland. It will not be easy to reach the target. We must increase public awareness in respect of it because everyone must buy into achieving

the reduction. Never has the slogan “The Power of One” been more relevant than it is in the context of each citizen’s carbon footprint.

My specific concerns in respect of this matter relate to agriculture. At a time when the lights are going out or are being dimmed in other sectors of the economy, the future for agriculture and food production is reasonably bright. Although we should not celebrate the current global food shortage, it does present opportunities for the industry in Ireland. We have to perform a delicate balancing act if we are not to hamstring commercial agriculture and its capacity to meet food demands, which is a moral obligation. If global thinking is not joined up and we reduce Ireland’s food production, there may not be a net environmental gain because reductions here will be taken up elsewhere. We need assurances that there will be joined-up thinking within the European Union, as well as globally, if these targets are to be met. It is regrettable that the Lisbon treaty which sought EU competence in the area of climate change was rejected.

I attended this morning’s meeting of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, at which concerns were expressed about the WTO. I am struck by the almost symbiotic relationship between what is on the table for the WTO negotiations and our objectives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The WTO proposals would lead to the slaughter of approximately 1 million cattle in Ireland. To meet our aim of a 20% reduction, to which agriculture contributes 28%, a similar reduction in the national herd is envisaged. I was alarmed to hear the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy Gormley, speak about the cow and the car, while Government backbenchers remained silent. This is a clear threat to commercial agriculture. I am not making a special plea because if we reduce the national herd, food production will increase elsewhere on the globe.

Individual farmers are more than capable of responding by offsetting carbon. On the Continent more money is made from producing energy through anaerobic digestion of pig slurry than from pork production. Germany and the Netherlands, in particular, are light years ahead of us in producing agricultural energy for the national grid. We need to catch up by entering strategic partnerships with those on the Continent who have been carrying out carbon modelling. Teagasc should build research alliances because we cannot catch up on our own and we will need international assistance in the area of research and development. Forestry also offers opportunities for offsetting carbon but it is missing from this debate.

The increased milk quota has the potential to meet global demands for dairy products. Are we going to hamstring our processing industries by preventing them from taking up the opportunities offered by increased quotas? This is a complex issue which calls for joined-up thinking but the national herd is not up for negotiation because the result would be the replacement of our grass-based, environmentally appropriate method of food production by intensive agricultural imports from outside the European Union and standards over which we would have little control.

**Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh):** I have a lot of sympathy for the last point made by Deputy Creed.

Climate change is a global issue but we have national and international responsibilities. As well as being a matter to be addressed in its own right, it intertwines with key issues such as the price and security of food, water and energy supplies. Actions that address one problem, while having a deleterious impact on another, are best pursued with moderation, the obvious example being crops grown for fuel which, if pursued too aggressively, could have negative consequences for feeding the world’s population.



[Deputy Martin Mansergh.]

It is fair to say the direct impact of climate change on Ireland has been relatively small to date. The most obvious change in the past 60 years has been our milder winters. Mean temperatures may have risen slightly but we have not experienced extremes of either heat or cold for a long time. Even a fortnight without rain — an Irish drought — is a rare phenomenon. The incidence of flooding has thus far not increased. However, climate change is more perceptible elsewhere. The atrium of the Office of Public Works is hosting a European Environment Agency exhibition on Greenland, where a considerable impact has been registered. The exhibition makes the point that global warming may have benefits for the native Inuit community and the region in that it allows easier access to the Arctic's resources, potentially increases tourism and could help to keep hunting traditions alive. Against this, however, it may threaten species such as polar bears and change ocean circulation and weather patterns. Given the rain outside which is only just stopping, many might welcome a little climate change.

Some years ago I acquired an umbrella at Stratford-upon-Avon with Shakespearian quotations such as “the rain it raineth everyday”, continuity seems greater than change. There is a great deal we do not know, however, and the safest approach to adopt is the precautionary principle. Applied sensibly, it will also help us to conserve resources and cut costs. Ireland must play its part, with its European and international partners, in mitigating the effects and spread of climate change by working through the Kyoto agreement and the national climate change strategy and other commitments.

I will now speak about areas within the responsibility of the Office of Public Works, namely, flood risk management and energy management in public buildings in OPW ownership. The role of the OPW, as the Government's lead agency in the management of flood risk, is to take on board advice and the current range of estimates coming from climate scientists in developing and implementing policies and procedures for managing the potential change and, most importantly, the uncertainty associated with these predictions. Our biggest challenge is the uncertainty associated with the climate change scenarios being developed by climate scientists. If we knew with confidence what was going to happen, it would be easier to make the economic and other decisions related to investment in flood protection and risk management works, development planning, etc. Uncertainty requires the implementation of policies based on emerging scientific data and general assumptions about the impacts.

Adaptability is another key challenge which is intimately linked to uncertainty. We have to carry out the design of flood defences based on current estimates of flows. It is necessary to make provision for anticipated climate change impacts on the design parameters, provided this approach is acceptable when measured against the costs of environmental assessment criteria, in other words, the precautionary approach. We must also ensure the construction works we carry out are, as far as possible, adaptable at a future date to cater for anticipated changes. The degree, cost and acceptability of this adaptability are now criteria against which the OPW assesses flood relief scheme options. The challenge is how to apply and assess the economic viability of defence schemes in face of the uncertainty.

The issue of design standards is related to the issue of uncertainty. For example, the recently completed Kilkenny flood relief scheme was designed to provide protection against the 1% flood. We do not know, however, what level of protection the scheme will provide in 50 years time, which works need to be planned and financed in order to maintain the design standard, or how economically viable it will be to maintain this standard. This topic is tied into the concept of risk management, as opposed to protection measures, and adaptability. As we move to a risk management approach in which the risk is most economically reduced and a strong emphasis is placed on adaptability of the constructed scheme to meet future changes as they emerge, the concepts of fixed design standards are outmoded in many cases. The adoption by

the Government of the report of the flood policy review group provides the framework for the OPW to fundamentally change how we approach the issue of flood protection works.

With regard to building design and management, the Government has set a target of 33% energy savings across the public sector for the period 2007-12. As part of this commitment, the OPW is engaged in a three-pronged strategy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and the State's dependence on fossil fuels. It is embarking on a programme to convert the heating systems in approximately 20 large State buildings from their existing fossil fuel burners to biomass burners. The biomass fuel will be in the form of wood pellets. The estimated result is an equivalent reduction of 500,000 litres of oil per annum. Apart from the obvious benefits of biomass, the conversion programme is intended to stimulate the native production of these fuels. The tender process is already under way and the programme is due for completion in September. The use of biomass in new buildings is also considered in the design process and where appropriate is being used as the energy source.

Highly motivated and energy conscientious staff offer the single largest opportunity for zero cost energy savings across the whole building stock. The ethos of switching off equipment when not in use, when applied across a large number of people, will lead to substantial energy savings. Published research shows that up to 20% energy savings can be achieved from good energy housekeeping.

At the central core of any energy conservation campaign is the ability to benchmark performance. It is necessary to establish exactly where we are now and how this compares to other similar buildings. It is then necessary to set a target for energy saving, for example, a 15% reduction in overall energy consumption or CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and, finally, to monitor performance against the target.

During the last three years, the OPW has installed a web-based energy monitoring system linked to all large State buildings, of which there are approximately 200 in the OPW portfolio, which monitor and record electrical and heating fuel consumption every 15 minutes. The data can be accessed via a dedicated website. The target is to reduce carbon emissions in each building by 15% through local energy conservation campaigns, energy workshops and close monitoring of the performance of heating and air-conditioning equipment. Staff will be able to monitor the energy reductions in their building via the Internet site. Two firms have been appointed for the provision of services for this campaign that started in early in 2008. It is planned to complete the programme within two years by which time it is expected that good practice will prevail in the buildings leading to ongoing savings into the future.

The scope for improving energy efficiency in new buildings is very significant. At design stage there are key factors which can considerably improve the energy efficiency of the building over its entire lifetime with little or no additional construction costs. With the advances in computer simulation of buildings during the past ten years, it is now possible to model accurately the energy and environmental performance of a building at the design stage. This is achieved by modelling the effects of using different construction materials, orientations, the amount of glazing used, the insulation levels and the type of fuel used for heating and so on.

The OPW has a policy of designing naturally ventilated buildings whenever possible. Properly designed naturally ventilated buildings can use up to 66% less energy than equivalent fully air-conditioned types. The use of computer modelling also facilitates the proper design of naturally ventilated buildings by accurately predicting airflows, internal temperatures and internal comfort conditions. This technology is being used by the OPW to optimise energy performance in all new large building projects, including in the decentralisation programme.

[Deputy Martin Mansergh.]

I would like to say a brief word about coastal erosion and flooding which may shortly revert to the responsibility of my office. Coastal erosion and flooding can be seen to be disruptive of coastal communities and typically occur when the gravitational pull of Sun and Moon coincide with spring tides and storms. We must also take account of the slow rise in sea level. Actions include planning controls in vulnerable areas, coastal defence works, better warning systems allowing temporary emergency measures to be put in place and data collection, research and design guidance.

**Deputy Michael D. Higgins:** I welcome the opportunity speak on this important topic. I returned only last night from a meeting of Socialist International in Athens which was attended by 700 delegates from 170 countries. Socialist International has decided to make climate change its principal topic of discussion. The forum will discuss the challenge of the new structure of the global economy, issues of conflict and peace and migration, all of which are inter-related.

It is important we do not make a descriptive gesture in regard to the challenge we face. Socialist International decided, for example, to provide a slot for a presentation by Professor Rifkin. It is clear and obvious that we have at most ten or 15 years in which to deal with the crisis we face. It is also the case that all of the scientific estimations of the crisis have been off target in so far as that which was predicted to happen has happened at a faster rate and is happening already.

As I listened to Professor Rifkin, I was struck by the fact we are talking about a planetary impact that goes back beyond human life, which is approximately 175,000 years; that we are talking about millions of years in which the planet was unable to sustain any life and almost about a species crisis. For this reason, I reject entirely the suggestion that one could in any sense see in the melting of the Northern ice cap anything other than the disaster that it is for all forms of life. Also, one can trace in the history of science precisely what the species impact would be. This is not to make a deep ecological argument in the North American sense but to acknowledge, in terms of the scale of the crisis, that we have ten or 15 years to address this given scientific projections have proven insufficient.

I will move on to what I believe is the human side of this issue. We are talking about an inter-linked set of crises. Closely related to the climate change crisis is the food production crisis which in turn relates to the energy crisis which in turn relates to issues of political instability. For example, Dan Smith in his book *Climate Change and Conflict* makes the point, in regard to countries producing fossil fuels, that there exists countries within which there are what might be called “weaknesses” in the political and social infrastructures: that there is a serious risk of armed conflict in approximately 46 of these countries and a risk for serious political instability in another 56 countries. One is, therefore, talking about the climate change crisis, the food production crisis, the energy crisis and the instability that flows from fossil fuel producing regions. Another crisis not sufficiently recognised is the disastrous crisis in intellectual and economic thinking. The reduction in the influence of the State and respect for international institutions introduced in the Thatcher-Reagan era and the release of what might have been regarded as a single neo-liberal model of development that came from the Chicago school under the tutorage of Professor Milton Friedman, has been a disaster in every sense in terms of its idea of what one might call non-inflationary consistent economic growth and a single model to be spread all over the world.

I have only a few minutes to raise what we might do. I accept issues arise in regard to mitigation. It is irresponsible to suggest we can deal with this crisis by not changing our way of life. That requires public education. A question also arises in respect of adaptation in respect of new forms of life, the economy and society and so on. The Government is challenged to

state why it is not valorising public transport rather than its roads programme. One cannot be taken seriously if one makes the slightest cut in public transport when one should be driving it on.

On technology transfer, I listened to the spokesperson from India ask if he was to tell the expanding population of India to do without electricity. He asked if the technology used for changing to a new carbon free type society, one which would result in a better connection between economy and society, could be transferred to those countries with population pressure. This requires institutional change of the character of the Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF and World Bank following World War II. We need a new council for sustainable development and capital transfers that would report to the Secretary General.

Many issues have been thrown up for discussion, many of which relate to inter-generational justice. This is a difficult area for parliamentarians elected for a five-year period or for members of parties founded a generation or two ago to address. The idea that one should not take actions that in their own sense or cumulatively have an irreversible effect or an inter-generational effect challenges us to invite ourselves to a new type of inter-generational jurisprudence. I very much contribute to that.

I will turn to the issue of the new relationship. People piously say this will require a contract between the developed and the developing world. How would that happen? I have mentioned already that technology must be transferred to places such as India and Pakistan, but it is not. In addition, if we were, for example, to put a tax on carbon emission activity, the results of that should be transferred to the developing world to enable its people to develop new, responsible forms of production.

There is also good news, which is that every euro invested in cleaner industry and so on has a multiplier effect on the economy that is four to five times that of fossil fuels. This has been scientifically shown. There are better jobs, cleaner industries, better social forms and more responsible forms of economy, but they require a mental shift. I am glad this environmental consideration is lodged in the minds of all parties. However, I have a point to make about our seeking to create a new contract between the developed and the developing world. We cannot go on as we are in some parts of the developed world. We must also realise, in structuring our response, whether we are looking at mitigation, adaptation or technology transfer, and the new institutional forms of which I speak, that certain groups are making the greatest contributions to the problem, such as the United States. In addition, there must be a proportionate response because some of the countries of which we are making demands do not have the capacity to make the response we ask of them. They need technology transfer, as I mentioned, and they need funding. They also have the right to development. For example, in the case of India, are we to say that hundreds of millions of people must bend their backs without electricity?

Professor Rifkin has made some positive proposals which are very interesting. He talks about the third industrial revolution and proposes that we look at the question and consider that our strategy can in fact be based on renewables. We can go so far with that. It could also take into account hydrogen-based development, carbon storage and so on. What is most important, however — this will be the hardest part for people to accept — is that the new liberal model, which has driven irresponsible growth and suggested that the process of change and transition on the planet had to be from one model, has been a disaster. We are not requiring people to drive everything back, but we must recognise that we no longer have two decades to reverse the intergenerational changes that are taking place. We have a decade and a half. These changes are so strong that they threaten the species. We are talking not just about the human species, which emerged over 175,000 years slowly and with many progressions, but about forms of life that themselves emerged in a cosmic sense. It is nonsense to suggest that we can somehow

[Deputy Michael D. Higgins.]

decide to live with the melting of the polar ice caps, develop tourism and explore for fossil fuels. Let us stop the madness before it is too late.

**Deputy Thomas McEllistrim:** Climate change is among the greatest challenges of our time. The debate is no longer about whether climate change is happening; we all know for sure that it is. It is obvious from increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising mean sea levels. It is accepted that most of the warming that has occurred over the past 50 years is very likely to have been caused by human activities. This warming is projected to continue and increase over the course of the 21st century and beyond.

Climate change does not distinguish by nationality, colour or religion, and is a real threat to our way of life. It is no longer something that we hear about on the news from somewhere else. It is affecting our lives directly. We have all become accustomed to seeing the problems associated with various environmental catastrophes on our TV screens and in the media. In many ways people can become desensitized to issues that affect people in countries that seem far away. One reason the tsunami that occurred around Christmas 2004 had a deep effect on people across the world was that the victims included Western holiday makers and businesses.

The surge in oil and food prices, particularly in the past year, has caused a wave — if not a tsunami — of concern. This is no longer just about the issue of climate change but also about the economic consequences of our response to it. The developed world, it may be argued, had become complacent about cheap food. That is no longer the case as we grapple with the consequences of the replacement of food crops with energy crops. In the least developed parts of the world, climate change is an issue of deep injustice, as it is the people who have contributed least to creating the problem who are being disproportionately affected by it. The interaction between climate change and poverty is potentially catastrophic as climate change pushes fragile livelihoods over the edge. The effects of unpredictable rainfall, droughts, floods and hurricanes are already being felt across the developing world and the poorest people in these countries are being hit the hardest. In addition, it is they who are most affected by rising food prices.

Tackling poverty means addressing both the causes and the consequences of climate change in an equitable way. It is widely recognised that global temperature increases must be kept within a limit of 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels in order to prevent the more dangerous effects of climate change. However, for many of the world's poorest people, climate change has already reached danger point. For this reason, the global response to climate change must emphasise support for developing countries in adapting to these changes.

Sustainable Energy Ireland tells us that climate change is already starting to affect Ireland. It refers to the increase in extreme weather events, including floods, storms and droughts, in recent years, and predicts that Ireland's winters will be warmer and wetter. By 2050, the temperature in January will have increased by 1.5° Celsius. Winter conditions in Northern Ireland and the north midlands will be similar to those on the south-west coast today. While milder winters might seem like a good thing, this is not necessarily the case. Rainfall will increase by 11%. SEI also predicts that Ireland's summers will be warmer and drier. By 2050 the average July temperature could increase by 2.5° Celsius. Although this does not sound very threatening, there could be serious implications, such as summer droughts which will cause competition for water supplies. The impact of these changes could include an increase in flooding — particularly in the west — and droughts in summer. Irish farmers will no longer be able to grow potatoes. New agricultural pests and diseases will appear and the possibility of water pollution problems will increase.



Everyone has an important role to play in preventing human-influenced climate change, as everyone contributes to its effects through electricity use, heating and cooling, and transportation. A recent survey showed that most people recognise that climate change is occurring and that steps need to be taken across the board and at every level in society. However, unsurprisingly, people begin to step back from this general standpoint when they are confronted with the likely cost implications of these changes. The considerable growth in the Irish economy over the last decade has undoubtedly put upward pressure on our emissions.

With challenges come opportunities. However, the scale of the challenge facing us means that we must also look beyond the energy sector to achieve the necessary reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Responsibility must be shared by a wide range of actors, including the public sector, which must lead by example. Achieving the targets will also necessitate voluntary changes in behaviour by individual citizens in small ways; for example, by increasing their use of low-energy light bulbs and driving in a more fuel-efficient manner. This is an area in which everyone can and must play a part if we are to be successful in protecting the environment for the next generation.

The Government's National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 was launched by the then Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy Dick Roche, in April 2007. The strategy sets out, in a detailed and specific way, the comprehensive measures the Government has put in place to enable Ireland to meet its target under the Kyoto Protocol. It addresses measures in all sectors of the economy, including energy, transport, agriculture, the residential sector and businesses, and includes existing measures put in place on foot of the National Climate Change Strategy 2000 and, subsequently, through the National Development Plan 2007-2013, Transport 21, the White Paper on energy and the bioenergy action plan. It also includes a series of additional measures to deliver the overall objective of putting Ireland on a pathway towards a low carbon economy.

The national climate change strategy looks beyond the Kyoto Protocol period and shows that the total contribution of measures adopted by the Government will account for 80% of the effort Ireland will need to meet its Kyoto Protocol commitments. The remaining 20% will be made up by Ireland's use of the flexible mechanisms. These flexible mechanisms allow Kyoto Protocol parties to support the development of clean technology in the developing world in return for emissions credits. Some €270 million has been allocated under the National Development Plan 2007-2013 for investment in such projects over the lifetime of the strategy.

The Carbon Fund Bill will provide the necessary legislative underpinning for the National Treasury Management Agency to undertake its role as purchasing agent on behalf of the State. The public sector will be required to measure, report and reduce its emissions. Public sector bodies will have specific targets for emissions reduction and be required to report progress in their annual reports. The Government will publish another climate change strategy for the period to 2020 when Ireland's post-2012 commitments are known.

The strategy sets out, on a sectoral basis, that a combination of existing and additional measures will reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions by over 17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in the period 2008-2012. Additional funding for the purposes of this strategy encompasses policies and measures adopted since the last projections were completed for the Government in March 2006.

The strategy brings together the range of actions being taken by the Government to reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. It provides the necessary co-ordination by the entire Government to meet Ireland's Kyoto Protocol commitments and builds on progress already made since the original national climate change strategy was published in 2000.



[Deputy Thomas McEllistrim.]

Carbon credits arise under the flexible mechanisms, which are an integral part of the Kyoto Protocol since the environmental benefit of a given emission reduction is the same irrespective of where on the planet it is achieved. The protocol, therefore, allows countries to determine the most cost-effective balance between domestic reductions and investing in reductions elsewhere. There will be further reductions, not included in these calculations, as a result of measures such as the rebalancing of motor tax and VRT in favour of low-emission vehicles. There are also a number of key additional measures over and above those already in place when the review of the first national climate change strategy was published in 2006. With regard to energy, for example, 15% of electricity is to be generated from renewable sources by 2010 and 33% by 2020. Biomass is set to contribute up to 30% of energy input at peat stations by 2015, there will be support for combined heat and power projects and a national ocean energy strategy.

Our education system has played an important part in preparing our younger generation for the task ahead. As a former secondary teacher, I believe educators are in a unique position to play a leadership role in reducing emissions by encouraging young people to take what they have learned about climate change home with them. By nurturing activities that can help reduce climate change, we can all make a difference.

**Deputy James Bannon:** The issue of climate change is one that we ignore at our peril. There may still be disputes about exactly how much we are contributing to the warming of the Earth's atmosphere and how much is naturally occurring, but what we can be scientifically certain of is that our continued use of fossil fuels is pushing us to a point of no return. Unless we free ourselves from a dependence on these fossil fuels and chart a new course on energy in this country, we are condemning future generations to global chaos.

These words are not my own. However, I endorse them and support their strong message on climate change. They are in fact the words of US presidential candidate, Senator Barack Obama, but who said them is not important. What is important is that we take heed of and act sooner rather than later to ensure a future for generations to come.

What hope is there for this country under the current Government in the light of the admission by the Minister for Transport, Deputy Dempsey, that the Government's climate change strategy since 2002 has largely been a failure? The fact that the Motor Vehicles (Duties and Licences) Bill has proven to be a damp squib is difficult to face. Speaking on 25 February, at the launch of a public consultation document on the Government's proposed 12 year sustainable travel plan, the Minister said about the strategy: "We did not take the hard decisions in 2002, or certainly if we took them, we did not get to implement them or achieve them. We are now at the endgame in relation to the Kyoto targets." If the Minister felt he was at the endgame in February, where are we today? This is not a game of chess in which, on completion of the endgame, the pieces can be put away and taken out another day. Climate change is deadly serious and the clock is ticking fast.

Unfortunately, the efforts of the Minister, Deputy Dempsey, do not seem to be any more effective at the helm of the Department of Transport than they were in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. It is heartening, though, that he should criticise his own party, Fianna Fáil. The party deserves much criticism in this regard, as it does in many other areas, particularly after yesterday's announcement.

A recently commissioned Government opinion poll shows that 86% of respondents, an outstanding majority of the 1,000 adults surveyed, believe that the Government is not doing enough on climate change and is, by default, ignoring climatic change, our health, the economy and financial security.

Currently, Ireland is the sixth highest polluter *per capita* among developed countries and, according to Stop Climate Chaos, if everyone polluted on the same level as us, we would need three planet Earths to survive. This is not an achievement to be proud of and I hope the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy Gormley, takes note. It is a pity he is not in the Chamber today to hear the debate on this important issue.

There is a tendency for western public opinion to blame global warming on countries such as China and the United States while overlooking the considerable contribution to climate change made by other western countries. In this respect Irish people are guilty of a head in the sand approach. They are prepared to throw stones at every glasshouse but their own.

The greatest sell-out by any party in coalition has been by the Green Party. A wilting Green Party Minister who appears to be colour blind is certainly not the bonus for the environment we might have hoped for. Shortly after entering into government after the general election, the Minister promised that “this Government will deliver on Ireland’s Kyoto Protocol commitments and will prepare Ireland for the further reductions that lie ahead”. A year later, his officials, and certainly the rest of us, are pessimistic about his aspirations. According to a paper prepared for the Minister for Finance, the bottom line is that we are obliged to meet certain climate change targets under the Kyoto Protocol but there are doubts about the possibility of success. Success will mean changes to policies that will have social and economic implications.

In a move that brought outrage from the Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association, the Minister, Deputy Gormley, suggested earlier this month that the size of the national herd might have to be cut in order to meet targets. This is nonsense on the Minister’s part. We are proud to say that this is an agricultural county. How dare the Minister threaten the future of agriculture with such comments? When one considers that the Government is targeting the sick, the vulnerable, small children and the elderly, it is not surprising that the animals in this country are being earmarked for cutbacks.

I wish to speak about our climate. Met Éireann announced yesterday that long-standing records have been broken by the recent heavy rain, storms and frost. The Leas-Cheann Comhairle comes from the supposedly sunny south east, which recently experienced its wettest June day for 50 years. The strongest winds since 1980 have been recorded in Dublin in recent times. The amount of rain that fell in the south and south east in June was twice the average for that month in that part of the country. The reality of climate change for the daily lives of citizens throughout the world, including Europe, is that food prices will continue to increase dramatically and water shortages will lead to a reduction in agricultural production. Food rioting will continue in the urban areas of developing nations. The world’s most vulnerable nations will have to endure famine. Facts and details of this nature were expressed by Deputy Michael D. Higgins during his fine contribution to this debate in the Chamber this morning. It is likely that the rich-poor divide will become more marked. The poorest nations in the developing world will suffer dreadful hunger as the demand for bio-fuels grows in industrialised nations. There will be mass migration from Africa, Asia and the Middle East as hunger and rising sea levels drive people towards Europe. That will have negative implications for the EU.

I am particularly concerned about the increasing carbon figures in our transport sector. Such increases are cancelling out the gains being made in other areas. The transport sector needs to stabilise this adverse impact by reducing its contribution of more than 20% to this country’s carbon emissions. Strong Government input and direction is needed if our dependency on fossil fuels is to be reduced. Such leadership has definitely not been shown by the wilting Green Party Ministers in the past 12 months. The potential for the deployment of renewable energy in Ireland is immense. I refer to energy from wind, solar, biomass and ocean sources. If we invest in the potential of technologies associated with renewable sources of energy, we will

[Deputy James Bannon.]

improve the economies and employment opportunities of rural areas. Action, rather than talk, is needed. Spin doctors should not be employed to come up with soft and palatable words behind the scenes. The Minister needs to get a grip on the situation if we are to ensure that our young people have a future in 2030 and beyond.

**Deputy Ciarán Cuffe:** I do not believe the Green Party Ministers are wilting. They are crisp, clean and growing in their resolve to tackle the issue of climate change.

**Deputy James Bannon:** They have not shown no evidence of such resolve in the past 12 months.

**Deputy Ciarán Cuffe:** Since it came into government, the Green Party has taken decisive action to address climate change. As we speak, my colleague, the Minister, Deputy Gormley, is in Paris at meeting of the EU Environment Council. That Deputies in this Chamber have castigated the Minister for not being here is a demonstration of their lack of engagement with these issues. The Minister is at the heart of EU environmental decision-making. He is abroad at a Council of Ministers meeting.

**Deputy James Bannon:** Why did he not arrange the meeting for this day two weeks?

**Deputy Ciarán Cuffe:** I do not underestimate the challenge of climate change. The former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said last week that there is a glaring gulf between the statements of politicians and the actions required to tackle climate change in a meaningful way. The role of the Green Party, which is in government in Ireland for the first time, is an immense one. It will not be easy to meet the challenge of turning the super-tanker around. It is important that we do not gloss over the fact that there will be legacy issues. On many occasions during the past 25 years, the Green Party delivered a robust critique of the Ireland's system of economic development and the policies which were followed by successive Governments.

I do not think one can expect the Green Party to turn the ship of State around over the course of 12 months. Policies cannot change dramatically overnight. Climate change has been brought centre stage in the past 12 months. There are signs at international level and at home that decision-makers realise the immense task that lies ahead of them. In my 25 years as a member of the Green Party, I have never before seen such a sea change in the space of 12 months. There is a recognition of the problem and the need to tackle it. I see the first signs of the change that is needed. The new vehicle registration and taxation system, which kicked in two days ago, will bring about radical changes in the way we consider our motoring habits. The profound changes which have been made to the building regulations are dramatically different from the kind of regulations we had last year, five years ago or ten years ago. Opposition Deputies who suggest that the Green Party is doing nothing in government are ignoring the facts. We have made significant changes in two key areas which affect people's lives. While we have not turned the ship of State around, we have taken the first steps towards tackling climate change in Ireland.

I wish to mention some other measures. Those involved in energy research in our universities have been given sizeable grants. We have introduced pilot schemes to encourage domestic energy saving and new electricity micro-generation programmes. There has been an increase in the support given to renewable energy. While such measures may not be that visible to those on the Opposition benches, they will change significantly the way we live our lives. I remind the Opposition speaker who suggested that nothing has changed in the planning sector that the Minister, Deputy Gormley, rejected the development plans of various local authorities. He said they were not good enough because they did not provide for sustainable planning. He has

brought an end to the passing around of rezoning motions like snuff at a wake. Enough is enough. It is time to focus development in our towns and villages, rather than three or four miles up the road where people will need to jump into a car to get anywhere. The steps that have been taken to promote sustainable development represent progress in tackling climate change. Deputies on the Opposition benches have stayed silent on the need to tackle rezoning anomalies in our counties and cities. The Green Party is making a difference in such areas. We are overseeing the provision of finance for research into wave power, environmental projects and bioenergy. The first budget to be influenced by the Green Party provided for tax incentives to be given to green businesses.

I do not deny that the Government and the country as a whole face substantial challenges. Ireland has one of the highest *per capita* emissions levels in the world. We need to take radical action, for example by reviewing our land use and transportation policies. We need to change the way we live our lives. The tackling of climate change involves individual action. I do not doubt that people can make profound changes in their own lives. Such changes can have benefits for everyone. We have to go further. There are huge opportunities in the sunrise industries of green energy. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have already been created in many European countries in the area of renewable energy. I have no doubt the future of Irish job creation lies in the green solutions we have spoken about at great length. The announcement by the head of the ESB of a €22 billion plan to turn that organisation into a renewable-energy company shows the kind of figures involved and the challenges we must tackle.

Farming and transport offer immense challenges. It is not business as usual, however. Those on the other side of the House who think we can continue to accept substantial emissions from these sectors must take a reality check and examine what changes can be made. The Green Party has long advocated significant capital investment in public transport. The success of the Luas light rail system in Dublin and the improvements made in long-distance rail routes show we can tackle climate change and reduce emissions through better public transport systems. It is not easy to make such changes. It is important we continue to prioritise public transport measures in the capital programme for transport.

Looking ahead to the kind of changes that might be suggested at the climate change conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, it is likely we will be required to make dramatic changes in almost every sector within the Irish economy. This can be a good news story. From my experience I know that providing greater levels of insulation and putting in better systems of heating and controls can result in real savings for the householder. We must provide safety nets. If we are to introduce a climate change levy there must be a system of supports for those on lower incomes. We already have systems in place to provide fuel allowance for the bulk of the year and we must look at those supports and, if necessary, change them to ensure people do not suffer unduly from fuel poverty.

In the face of global crisis in climate change we cannot do nothing. We cannot resist change and pretend things can go on as they have until now. We have only uncovered the tip of the problem that lies ahead. We have made only limited changes in the scale of Government policies that must be addressed in the future.

We have made a good start for the first year in government. A lively discussion will continue to bring about changes in future budgets and policies. There is an enormous challenge ahead. If members of the Opposition suggest we should not change the lightbulbs or that we should not make changes in agricultural policy they are simply burying their heads in the sand. That is no longer a solution to the challenge.

**Deputy Frank Feighan:** I welcome the chance to take part in this serious debate on climate change which is not a local but a global issue. I take on board what the previous Deputy said,

[Deputy Frank Feighan.]

speaking from the perspective of the Green Party. However, global warming and environmental issues must be addressed across parties. I welcome the involvement and participation of the Green Party but the green agenda on climate change is a global issue and is not the reserve of one party. I am sure the Deputy agrees that within the ranks of Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and other parties this subject is high on the agenda. That is the way it should be.

We talk about waste management and wonder what we can do in this country. Sometimes we despair because it seems we are not doing enough. I take great consolation from the following. When I was elected to the local authority in Roscommon in 1999 the issue of the regional waste management Acts was to the fore. The Irish have never been good at complying with authority. People gave up drink-driving not because they feared they would kill themselves or an innocent individual but because they feared they might lose their licence or that their insurance might be increased. It is the same with many issues. We embraced waste management and while great credit must go to local authorities and politicians who implemented it most credit is due to people who set up recycling centres and bring centres. We must take the issue further but we have come a long way.

Deputy Cuffe mentioned rezoning. This matter can be a two-edged sword. I have had my runs in with people in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. They are not elected but think they know better than the elected representatives. In my area, in Lough Key Forest Park, there was a major tourism development but people in the Department decided they knew better. We have come full circle. There was a time when big developers and builders had a major influence on planning but now faceless bureaucrats in certain Departments are implementing their own policy. All that we want in life is fairness, openness and transparency from politicians but we want the same from departmental officials. That is not a reflection on the vast number of officials who do their job. It is only a few who pursue their own agenda and they do not do so in a democratic fashion. That is a matter I wish to state for the record.

It is better to live in a house with good insulation so the heating system will be better and it will not be cold in the morning. However, a majority of people live in local authority housing that was built in the 1960s and 1970s, where the insulation is not up to scratch. These people are effectively the new poor. No matter what they do to try to heat their house, bringing in briquettes and coal and whatever, the house is never warm. We could do more concerning insulation.

We can address the matter of light bulbs. Leinster House has new bulbs which is welcome although it probably does not make much difference. When I bought my house it was fitted with candelabras which contained six or seven bulbs. I took out five of them and have only one. I know it does not look great but it serves the same purpose. We should all make the same effort. I will not say "sacrifice" because I am saving money and I believe I am saving the environment.

Concerning cars, I was at a conference some weeks ago where the talking point was hybrid cars. However, if one is making long journeys, a diesel car is probably just as good if not better for the environment. I was very enthused by the fact that a member of the Green Party had a bio-fuel car. I say this as a compliment. I believed the car was very worthwhile but we now hear that bio-fuel cars may not be as appropriate as once believed because of the role of bio-fuel crops in food shortages around the world. The Green Party member was acting in the right spirit and I was nearly thinking of obtaining a bio-fuel car myself but we need to know more about the subject and debate it further before we jump in with our two feet.



Solar and wind power projects are very necessary but the ESB has not been up-front regarding the addition of new suppliers to the grid. There is now a movement in this regard but we had to wait ten or 12 years for it. Operators with serious sums to invest obtained planning permission for alternative energy projects but these were held up by the ESB. They are now coming on stream but this should have occurred five or six years ago. There was an impasse but it should not have been allowed. Generating electricity using wind and ocean energy is very necessary and it is exciting that we can harness such energy.

There are two sides to the debate on farming. One comprises Deputies from rural constituencies who represent the farming community. Farming is a vital part of life in rural areas. On the other side there are Deputies from Dublin and other cities, whose constituencies do not include the farming community. We must be careful to strike a good balance. We must be mindful of the fact that practices deemed bad years ago are now deemed good, or *vice versa*. We need to debate this issue. In our mad dash we should not undermine the farming community. We can make savings in other areas, by way of carbon credits, for example. Therefore, we should not jump in with two feet.

I live on the Sligo line and it is great to see there are eight trains each day in both directions. We have engaged in a mad dash to develop road transport but more could be done to encourage rail freight such as utilising small ports. It could be beneficial to have a port in Sligo or along the west coast for the importation of goods.

Those of us who have Sky television see environmental programmes and note that species are under threat. This debate is worthwhile and welcome. We can make a difference together. I like the Power of One advertisement that claims everyone can make a difference.

**Deputy Charlie O'Connor:** Having been mentioned on a few occasions by Opposition Members during the Order of Business, which is unusual, I was planning on keeping a low profile for the rest of the day. However, I am anxious to contribute to this debate, albeit briefly, because it is important to do so.

Deputy Feighan made a point I was to make in that he stated it was a question of what each individual could do to combat climate change. It is well and good to discuss the responsibility of governments but it is ultimately up to individuals to take responsibility and make a contribution, however small.

This morning I read that climate change was already proving to be a defining issue of the 21st century. There is no doubt about this. It is important to have this debate, as Deputy Feighan stated. Years ago we believed climate change and saving the world were issues that fringe groups worried about and tried to address. However, it is important that we understand we all have an impact. When I rose this morning and went for a walk, I noted it was almost like a winter's day. One wonders whether the world is changing.

I remember my maternal grandmother who is dead 42 years but whom I remember very well telling me when I was quite young that she always had worried about the world after the Russians had launched the Sputnik spacecraft. She never believed the weather would be right again. It could well be that her generation held this view. It could have been correct because during my lifetime it has been interesting to see how the world environment has changed and how climate change has become very much part of the agenda. It could well be that it has become a political issue 40 or 50 years later than it should have. There have been many contributing factors, including energy demands. We should regard climate change as an issue which poses a challenge for us all. It is important to debate it to get the message across to the public. I am not saying it does not care but that the public, in all countries, understands the political issues of the day and the challenges it faces.



[Deputy Charlie O'Connor.]

I am not so sure we all take the state of the world sufficiently seriously. Suddenly the world-wide phenomenon of climate change is clear to us all. It is certainly true that in Ireland, in all constituencies, the environment and climate change are being ascribed greater importance. We always make a point about education and awareness campaigns and I am glad the national climate change strategy is taking account of this. There is a very important message to be circulated to all of us, especially young people. Without putting pressure on schools or teachers, I hope the message is receiving considerable attention. Damaging one's own environment, rambling along the streets and dropping litter and defacing walls with graffiti are all sins against the environment and the climate. It is very important that we understand the challenges that arise in this regard.

Climate change will prove to be the greatest challenge to face humanity this century. Clearly, it is profound in its implications for the planet and all of us who live on it. It cuts to the core of modern living and commerce in the 21st century. There are those who believe the solution is obvious. Clearly, reducing greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently quickly to avoid the worst aspects of climate change will be emphasised by many. We all have, or should have, a personal interest in meeting this objective. We have a responsibility to play our small part in whatever way we decide we can. Clearly, the onus is very much on governments, businesses and individuals.

Colleagues have referred to how we might address the problem of climate change. There are many ways of doing so in our communities, including the protection of the environment locally. Reference was made to insulating one's own home and ensuring green bins are more full than black bins.

Deputy Ring referred to all the reports Members received. Not a day goes by without my receiving tonnes of material, glossy magazines and brochures with pictures of various people at my home and offices in Tallaght and the Dáil. One wonders where we are going in this regard. While I was a slow developer in working with computers and websites, undoubtedly, if it is possible to create a paper free environment in respect of Members' work, it is important to do so.

I also have long believed one can make a contribution by keeping out of one's car as much as possible. It is not always completely possible and although I live only eight miles from Leinster House, sometimes it is necessary to use my car for various reasons such as bringing back good news leaflets or visiting different parts of my constituency. However,  
2 o'clock I try, in so far as possible, to use public transport and use both buses and the Luas. As I have mentioned in the House previously, I experienced a health challenge approximately nine years ago when I had a serious heart attack, although thankfully, I am now fit and well. I have done much walking since, having taken advice from the cardiac rehabilitation unit in Tallaght Hospital about leaving one's car as far away from one's destination as possible. While it is not easy on a morning like this, simple initiatives such as getting across a positive health message also help the climate change agenda and all Members should make an effort to do so.

I have made reference to the initiative regarding the climate change awareness programme. I am glad that strategy provides for a multi-million euro public awareness campaign on climate change. I note the emphasis placed on the issue of climate change in An Agreed Programme for Government reinforced the necessity to put in place the resources necessary to effectively communicate this complex and far-reaching issue. The campaign has a number of aims. In addition to raising general public awareness of climate change and promoting behavioural changes to reduce emissions, it will include a strong partnership aspect to focus on stakeholders

in specific sectors and work with them to develop specific programmes and initiatives tailored to achieve emission reductions in their sectors. Another important goal of the campaign will be to empower individuals and groups to play their part in tackling climate change. The campaign has been designed specifically to ensure it dovetails with related public sector awareness campaigns and initiatives such as the Power of One, One Small Step and the Race against Waste. Duplication of message and unnecessary overlaps will be avoided and every effort made to enhance the messages of existing campaigns and programmes.

I have listened to many of the contributions to this debate and, to an extent, all Members are reading from the same handbook. However, one must face the challenge raised by Members which also has been referred to in the Seanad of how to deal with waste and what methods are to be used. Deputy Tuffy referred to a proposal for an incinerator at Rathcoole which is close to my constituency and a town I represented on the county council from 1991 to 1999. This issue is important and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will be aware that people have concerns in this regard. At the same time, this must be balanced against the challenges under discussion in this debate. It will be interesting to see how such issues develop; how future Governments will deal with the question of waste management and what is to be done about waste and its reduction. Moreover, in respect of the residual waste that must be dealt with, how will this be done without damaging the environment?

The presence of Deputy Lynch as Acting Chairman reminds me of the debate this week on the Haulbowline site and I have much sympathy for those affected. I thank the Acting Chairman for her courtesy and appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this debate.

**Deputy Ciarán Lynch:** While listening to Deputy Flanagan talking about the weather, it is true that on a day in the first week of July——

**Deputy Charlie O'Connor:** Has the Deputy forgotten my name?

**Deputy Ciarán Lynch:** —— and considering the weather, one must restate one's commitment to tackle climate change, given that it is pouring from the heavens outside.

The term “climate change” has become part of daily discourse. However, what are people saying when they use the term? In particular, how does it connect to them on a day-to-day level? One aspect to be feared is that people may consider tackling climate change to be the responsibility of the Government or international bodies such as the United Nations or the European Union, without perceiving a personal connection to the issue. Arising from this debate, I hope for a number of outcomes. The public should consider that dealing with climate change can be done simply, is not full of complications and is attainable. Part of the discourse suggests it is the greatest concern facing humanity. While that may be the case, it makes it sound like an inevitable disaster. However, the problem can be turned around. Members must show leadership to demonstrate that dealing with climate change is an attainable objective. This should be done by putting in place measurable goals for people regarding steps that can be taken at both local, national and international level. I refer to measurable steps that can be taken on a week-to-week basis in order that people can discern change in their own domestic and professional lives, as well as to the benefit of their communities and so on. This can be achieved by adopting consistent and repetitive approaches to one's daily life that individuals can control. Moreover, one should avoid disconnection or divorce on the part of people's engagement with the process. Ultimately, there should be a commitment modelled at both Government and individual level.

Before turning to the main body of my speech, I wish to preface my remarks by stating that in our anxiety to deal with climate change, a number of precautions must be taken. In this House last week, as a means to facilitate and encourage renewable energy systems, the Planning

[Deputy Ciarán Lynch.]

and Development Act was changed by the Minister to provide for a series of exemptions, whereby renewable energy sources will no longer be obliged to go through the standard planning regulations. While all Members may have a high regard for such energy systems, it should not be separated from what constitutes good planning practice. It constitutes bad planning practice, regardless of what the infrastructural development might be, to allow the construction of a development within a local community without putting in place a site notice or without advertisements in the local media. It is bad practice for a number of reasons. First, it denies local participation and public information. Second, if it goes wrong, it will undermine the entire concept of planning in respect of enforcement because a local community or housing estate that was unaware of a development that has been exempted under conditions will not know what such conditions are and what the extent of the development should be.

As Members move towards adopting more legislative approaches to dealing with climate change, I wish to put down a marker that they should not deregulate matters to such an extent that the baby is thrown out with the bath water. That is what happened in the House last week when a good idea was implemented extremely badly through secondary legislation. Consequently, the obvious anomalies and flaws in the measure were put through the House by the Minister and could not be dealt with or amended. While the Minister likes to invite ideas and suggestions from the other side of the House, unfortunately, neither ideas nor common sense are being accommodated when processes are put through the House by this method.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. As I noted, it requires urgent and decisive action within the next decade, a measurable period of time. This is a global problem that affects every individual and every local community. Ireland must make a significant contribution to finding the solution. I will summarise some of the areas in which Ireland will be affected by this issue. In agriculture, for example, we may be obliged to change from grass to maize to feed our livestock and there may be an increased requirement for irrigation in the eastern part of the island, in particular. A traditional staple product such as the potato may become unviable in a different climate.

Regarding water resources, we fear the likelihood of increased flood events in winter and pressure on water supplies and infrastructure during the drier summer months. Regarding forestry, there is the likelihood of an increase in harmful exotic pests and diseases because of a warmer temperature.

Regarding marine ecosystems, there is the likelihood of negative impacts on aquaculture from increased algae blooms, and infection rates and pests as mentioned. Other issues such as sea level rises and biodiversity will have to be examined on this island.

The international consensus on the need for radical action has been growing since the Kyoto Protocol was negotiated in 1997. The effects of radical climate change are already evident including the melting polar caps, unseasonable weather in many parts of the world, rising sea levels and increasingly stormy weather.

Ireland must play its part in the global effort to combat climate change. We had ten years to prepare for our first run of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol which commenced on 1 January this year. Despite that, we are set to overshoot our target by 7.2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year for five years. The Government has sanctioned the purchase of 270 million worth of carbon credits from abroad to compensate for its failure to meet our domestic target. Carbon credits operate in a market and if the market increases, the cost could rise to as high as €750 million.

The latest projections from the Environmental Protection Agency indicate that in 2006, the total emissions decreased by 0.8%. That was supported by a large reduction of 4.6% in emis-

sions from the electricity generation sector. That was accounted for in large part by adaptations made in the Moneypoint station and not through general usage throughout the country. Emissions from transport continue to add to overall emissions as do waste services, which advanced by 5.2% and 3.3%, respectively.

Despite that good performance in 2006, the European Environmental Agency has stated that based on past trends, Ireland is not on track to meet its target, even with the use of carbon sinks such as planting forests and so on. The Kyoto Protocol mechanisms as accounted for will require further domestic actions not currently in place or outlined.

Instead of regarding CO<sub>2</sub> reduction as a cost to the economy to combat climate change, we should see it as an opportunity. Ireland is favourably situated to exploit the potential of wind and tide and to go from being a net importer of polluting fossils today to an exporter of clean, renewable energy within a few decades. That is a realisable and measurable target.

We have the expertise and the ability to become world leaders in ocean and tidal technology. Instead of standing idly by as Irish companies succeed abroad, we must ensure they are given every opportunity to succeed here and become leaders in this field.

In this year's budget €13.2 million was provided for energy research in the national development plan. That is clear evidence that renewable energy is not viewed as a matter of urgency requiring immediate action. Buying carbon credits is not a long-term solution but unfortunately it appears to be a mid-term approach by the Government.

Climate change is a global problem that can only be solved by collective action on the part of the international community, and also at a local level. The ability to make strategic foreign policy decisions at EU level will be vital in future climate change negotiations, particularly if the EU is to exploit its diplomatic and economic power to the full.

The Labour Party is committed to supporting a climate change protocol setting out what the EU would do to tackle climate change through the mechanisms it creates. That could also help to break the European deadlock and demonstrate the relevance of the EU and a strong, cohesive Union that can act in the global interest at a greater level on this global issue.

Ireland must take serious action now to meet the Kyoto commitments and to position ourselves for a medium to long-term economic climate where energy and environmental issues will dominate.

**Deputy Mary Alexandra White:** I am delighted to speak again in the House on the issue of climate change but when I heard Fine Gael's Deputy Hogan speaking on climate change it reminded me of the graveyard scene in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" when he says, "Alas, poor Yorick!". Alas, poor Deputy Hogan, a fellow of infinite jest. It is obvious Fine Gael does not understand or has deliberately misunderstood climate change. Perhaps Deputy Hogan was absent without leave, AWOL, during the Green Party's constructive input into tackling climate change in the past year.

Just over six months ago when this House had a similar debate on climate change Fine Gael's Deputy Coveney stated: "I contend also that my party, a big catch-all party, has not perhaps offered enough insistence and leadership in this area, but that must change". It is a bit rich for Deputy Hogan to start throwing stones from glass houses about greenhouse emissions.

Above and beyond party politics I can assure the House that my party in Government is delivering real and significant reforms in the way Ireland is behaving in terms of its contribution to tackling climate change. Contrary to assertions by Deputy Hogan, the reform of VRT and motor tax would not have been purely emissions based were the Green Party not in government. An emissions based system has already led to a radical rethink of the type of cars people drive. One has only to look at the advertisements and read the newspapers to see that people

[Deputy Mary Alexandra White.]

are taking heed of the way we drive our cars, and car manufacturers are producing cars to meet this global climate change threat. Deputy Hogan talked about the repercussions of the reforms taking effect in July but converting systems takes time. It is better to get the system right rather than rush through a radical reform without paving the way.

Other important reforms such as new energy efficiency standards, planning exemptions for certain renewable energy generators and the planned ban on the sale of incandescent light bulbs will save over 700,000 tonnes of carbon emissions per year. These are radical measures which have required transition phases but which are important components in the Government's programme of combating climate change. Recent proposals for offsetting Government business flights is an example of the Government practising what it preaches.

My colleague, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Deputy Ryan, has been equally energetic in moving the economy towards more renewable sources of energy. The home energy saving scheme is accessible and innovative. His reform of the refit scheme for wind energy and the encouragement of new forms of green energy such as anaerobic digestion, which will be a fantastic source for local agriculture to get rid of raw products in a sustainable way by flaring off the methane to heat houses, schools and hospitals, is the way to go.

The introduction soon of net metering will allow consumers to sell electricity back to the grid and other green energy forms going back into this natural grid will reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels. These are significant moves in the direction of a post-carbon society and economy.

There is no doubt that policies and attitudes in many areas of combating climate change must be constantly reviewed and re-evaluated. Those involved in the current debate on bio-fuels — nationally, globally and in my own party — are acutely aware and engaged in the issue. Many issues concerning net carbon savings, food prices, deforestation, the destruction of carbon sinks and the repercussions for the developing world are now associated with the first generation of bio-fuels. We must look at the second generation. Looking at the tops and tails of the beet, waste, straws and slurries we will be able to generate these fuels for our cars without compromising the need for food versus fuel. Bio-fuels using resources such as these wastes and not requiring land changes must be researched at length and prioritised.

All parties in the House should join the debate on bio-fuels to ensure it does not become another partisan petty squabble on the wider issue of climate change. Above all, as fuel prices soar and the debate on climate change deepens, we must protect those on low income from fuel poverty, particularly as we head into the autumn and winter. After a year in government, my party is delivering significant reforms in its campaign to tackle climate change.

Before I finish I want to return to Shakespeare, where I started:

All the world's a stage,

and all the men and women merely players.

Each one plays his part but we in the Green Party have a leading role in this. There has been no time for a dress rehearsal. Climate change is the greatest moral imperative of our time. We, in the Green Party, are driving change. We are delivering reform and are delighted to be in government in these extraordinary times in which we live to implement these policies.

**Deputy Dan Neville:** I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate on climate change. We all accept climate change is one of the greatest challenges to humanity in the medium to long term.



The Government's targets for reduction of emissions are way out of line with what they set. We have not heard today — in fairness, I have not heard all of the debate — that the Government has firm proposals to ensure our promised contribution will be achieved.

The Minister of State, Deputy Devins, will understand the value of €15 million and how hard it is to get that sum for projects, including his own in a previous life. The Government is spending €15 million on a public relations exercise to tell people to make changes while it has done substantially nothing about its massive carbon footprint in Civil Service buildings etc.

Total greenhouse gas emissions in 2006 were 69.77 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, which is 0.8% lower than the level of emissions in 2005. The slight decrease is mainly accredited to the temporary closure and generation reduction at Moneypoint power station due to maintenance and upgrading work. I impress on the Minister the need to continue the upgrading and improvement of Moneypoint. It directly affects my constituency of Limerick West because the prevailing winds pass over it. We have had problems. We can not say conclusively that these were due to emissions from Moneypoint but we believe they contributed in the Askeaton area. I urge the Government to ensure the ESB continues to upgrade Moneypoint to ensure it is environmentally friendly.

Under the Kyoto agreement, Ireland has committed to limiting the increase of greenhouse gases to 13% above its 1990 levels, a limit that must be reached during the period 2008-12. Current levels of Irish greenhouse gas emissions are more than 25% above the 1990 levels.

Ireland, unlike other EU countries, looks unlikely to reach the Kyoto targets. Other countries, such as the UK, Sweden and France, are already running ahead of their Kyoto targets. Germany, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands all look like they will comfortably reach their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. We hope the Government will ensure over the next number of years to alter its approach to the Kyoto agreement and reach our targets as agreed.

The European Commission has set Ireland a challenging target to cut Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 in its new climate strategy. The EU has given Ireland the toughest individual target because of its prosperity and poor track record on cutting emissions, particularly transport emissions. While we welcome the changes on emissions in the last budget, they do not go far enough to achieve the objectives that the Government has set itself. In the response to the debate we would welcome details of how the Government will approach ensuring we reach the targets. However, Ireland will benefit from the upper cap, which restricts the maximum emissions cut demanded from a single EU state to 20% when compared to its emissions in 2005.

According to Harry McGee, in *The Irish Times*, the latest report on greenhouse emissions in the European Union shows Ireland is in the bottom half of the table of the 27 states in terms of meeting its Kyoto Protocol targets. Overall emissions fell by 14 million tonnes or 0.3%, and now stand at 7.7% below 1990 levels. In all, 5,142 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent were emitted in the 27 member states in 2006. The fall was even greater among the EU 15 — the 15 member states of the EU before the accession of the new member states in 2004 — which cut emissions by 35 million tonnes or 0.8%. The Irish figures for 2006 show a marginal decrease from the previous year of 0.6 million tonnes or 0.8%.

Irish emissions rose by 25.6% between 1990, the base year for Kyoto Protocol targets, and 2006, which is 12.6% above our target. Energy and agriculture remain the biggest factors in Ireland, though agricultural emissions have been declining considerably in line with the decline in the agricultural industry. The biggest problem within Ireland is the transport sector, to which I referred earlier, where emissions increased by 180% between 1990 and 2006. Year-on-year, emissions in transport increased a further 5.2% between 2005 and 2006.



[Deputy Dan Neville.]

It is generally acknowledged that Ireland's Kyoto Protocol targets were comparatively generous compared to other EU countries. However, it is lagging behind considerably countries such as the UK, Sweden and France, which are already running ahead of their Kyoto Protocol targets.

The reduction in countries such as Germany, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands have been attributed to the use of technology and better efficiencies in power plants and heavy industry. In the UK, a major switch from oil and coal to gas in electricity production has also been a major factor. This brings me back to the issue of ensuring carbon efficiency at Moneypoint which I raised earlier.

Of the accession countries, all but Slovenia have achieved significant reductions, thanks to what the EEA describes as "the decline of energy-inefficient heavy industry". However, in a slightly worrying trend, most of those recorded small increases — a reversal of what was happening — in 2006.

Ireland is by no means the worst performer. We are one of the lowest performers, but Spain's emissions were 35% above its target in 2006. We must get perspective on the position in Europe. The other states with big gaps between emissions and goals were Luxembourg at 29%, Austria at 28% and Denmark at 23%.

I referred to the €15 million which has been spent by the Government on its public relations exercise. The Minister of State, Deputy Devins, will be aware that €15 million is hard to come by. This €15 million of taxpayers' money, which is currently being spent on the climate change media campaign, is an enormous expense which follows money which had already been spent in that area. Fine Gael suggests that a large share of this money would be better spent on tangible products to help the environment such as home insulation schemes. A new home energy saving scheme was launched some time ago by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and will spend €5 million on improving home energy efficiencies via insulation. There are 1 million homes in the country requiring investment to improve energy efficiency, yet the Government sees fit to spend three times more on a media campaign designed to make it look good. I suggest the investment should be in real projects rather than public relations exercises.

**Deputy Mary O'Rourke:** I did not know whether I would be able to come to the House today. As I listened to the speakers it struck me this was a debate in which I wished to have an input. We have had "do-good" debates for the past few weeks, including a seemingly endless debate on the Intoxicating Liquor Bill. Whilst I know it was very worthy, I declined to speak on it because as a person who likes a glass of wine I believe it would be hypocritical of me to lecture others on what they should and should not drink. For this reason I hesitated to show my face. It is not as if a glass of wine is in any way dangerous, but if one enjoys a glass it seems a little odd to lecture that others should not have one.

While listening to this debate I was struck by several matters which I wish to lay before the House. Climate change is truly an international global issue and it is no overstatement to say as much. However, by so doing we strike the fear of God in everyone. One wonders if there is anything one poor, single person can do to help effect change and of course there is. Climate change is a personal issue as well as an international and a national issue. We cannot say it is all the Government's fault. Nor can we say the Government must do something wonderful to address climate change overnight and if not there will be finger-wagging in the Dáil next week. All that is silly as responsibility is down to every individual.

This is why I found the “power of one” campaign very interesting and heartening. It is down to each person how he or she will address climate change. It sounds very ordinary but I understand if one walks about the house before leaving on a Tuesday morning and plugs out every appliance it would mean quite a decrease in carbon emissions. Imagine the impact if everyone lucky enough to have kettles, radios, televisions, clothes dryers and so on did this. I did exactly this before I left the place where I stay in Dublin this morning — a small apartment. It struck me that I had not done so for months, which shows how careless one can get.

This brings me to my beef or crib. Why is the campaign always painted in such penitential and punishable ways? We hear the seas will cover Ireland again. I recall that we were told when we were growing up that Ireland and England was one land mass and there was no division.

**Deputy Michael D’Arcy:** It is a long time since the Deputy grew up.

**Deputy Mary O’Rourke:** I used to teach history, so I know what is in some of the history books. The debate on climate change is painted in such biblical terms that one wonders how could one woman unplugging a kettle have any bearing on what will happen if we are all going to be submerged beneath the waters, never to rise again. Sometimes, rather than confront what needs to be addressed, we simply push it to the back of our heads and say, like Scarlett O’Hara in *Gone with the Wind*: “I’ll think about that another day”. We are inclined to put it on the back burner and say it is for someone else to address, but no one else will address these matters; it is up to every single person.

I applaud the Green Party which was convinced it could change the world overnight on the Opposition benches. However, the reality of being in Government has shown this is not possible. Even God Almighty cannot change the world overnight. When the Green Party came into Government it decided it would proceed by short steps and did so. Addressing such matters as efficient light bulbs among others seem small, but no more than the “power of one” campaign when added up will render what the Green Party hoped to and will achieve in Government. The Green Party during its term of office in Government with Fianna Fáil will be able to bring about a reduction in emissions.

I do not know which of the previous speakers brought up the matter of how we buy carbon credits. I have spoken about this in the Dáil and I believe it is a con-job. The idea that a country can somehow buy carbon credits from a remote island in the Samoan ocean and that this renders the power plant in County Clare or some other guzzling installation relieved of some of its duties makes no sense. How could that be? We are all one global village and, therefore, it is one world. I do not know who thought up the idea of buying of carbon credits. It was probably some brainy civil servant and the relevant Minister nodded, agreed it sounded like a good idea, brought it further and so it became official policy. However, this cannot be right. The implication is some poor benighted small place in the world with no power or emissions of any kind should be allowed to sell off what it would have used to a country which has over polluted. This does not make for an equitable or arithmetic solution. We are only fooling ourselves. I wish we would drop the idea because it is an erroneous path to pursue.

I believe the future lies with children and young people. It is not that I wish to divest myself of my responsibilities in this regard. I have found that visiting schools, discussing the matter with young children and listening to my very young grandchildren, who are only beginning to talk, has revealed to me their good ideas. They want to make changes and they do not feel exhausted and worn out as we do. It is lashing rain outside and it looks like it will rain for the whole summer. There are very bad weather forecasts. There is a deepening economic gloom. However, instead of being bogged down by all of that young people see the rainbow all the time, which is lovely for them.

[Deputy Mary O'Rourke.]

If we can — indoctrinate may be the wrong word and I would not like to over-use it — give our bible on how the world can be changed to young people, they could bring their common sense, youth and optimism to bear on what is truly a sizable problem. It would be easy for us to ask what good is all our effort, given the behaviour of China and the USA. The USA has been very tardy in coming to the table with any ideas. One is tempted to ask what poor Ireland can do in such a climate. However, this brings me back to what I said about the “power of one”, which is a concept we do not emphasise enough. We must find some language for them and I appeal to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Green Party and all parties who wish to convey our sense of momentum and urgency about this matter to do so. We should seek to express it in a positive way. When one begins to read an article about climate change it is couched in such biblical, awesome terms that one is inclined to ask what the point is in installing solar panels on one's roof. I hope to do that this winter. I do not know if it will make a great change, but I am told it might.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The Deputy has one minute remaining.

**Deputy Mary O'Rourke:** One minute to bring about change. What a difficult task.

**An Ceann Comhairle:** The weather can change in seconds.

**Deputy Mary O'Rourke:** I do not know if solar panels will work or unplugging every plug in the land will work, but I believe the “power of one” should be emphasised more. The message should be given in positive and optimistic terms, not gloomy and doom-laden language, which makes us all just want to dive under the duvet and stay there for the day.

**Deputy Michael D'Arcy:** It is good to be here discussing this important issue, which will only get more significant as the years go by. It is important to put in context the scale of the problem we have. Some of us on the Joint Committee on the Constitution met the Indian Ambassador a number of months ago and we were trying to wrap our heads around the scale of the Indian subcontinent. He informed us that the Indian population increases by the same number as the population of the island of Ireland every two months. That is the scale we are dealing with.

Deputy O'Rourke quoted Scarlett O'Hara and I will paraphrase Humphrey Bogart in that we do not amount to a hill of beans in the scheme of things. America and China, which has a population approximately 30% bigger than India, together with India contribute over 50% of significant pollution and, in truth, they are only making very small token gestures.

One must consider some positive aspect from the current price of oil. For the first time ever, it has started to dawn on the American population that it cannot have V6 gas-guzzling engines to drive from one end of the country to the other just for fun. It is also starting to dawn on the aircraft industry that it is not just a matter of jetting here and there on the back of cheap fuel. There must be a balance, which I am not sure we are striking, between energy and food provision.

In 1900, 70 years before I was born, the population of the world was approximately 1.5 billion. The projected numbers for the end of this century are in the region of 20 billion, which is a massive increase. The land producing food is reducing because of climate change. The land which is marginal is not able to produce a crop yet the numbers of people are ever increasing. The people of the world must certainly be fed.

The way we are currently promoting the biofuels industry, whether first or second generation, will in time be considered a crime against humanity. I am speaking as a commercial farmer. One cannot take an acre of good land, sow a crop and expect to get between 1.75 tonnes and

2.1 tonnes of product before using the same amount of energy to press that crop that would be saved through using the product. It would amount to three quarters of a tonne of biofuel. One cannot make any saving to the environment this way.

It has been said here that agriculture is a major polluter, which is true. There is innovation within the agricultural sector at the moment which is not being substantially supported by Government. Practically all funds for research and development are coming from the private sector. I am a commercial dairy farmer and the Keenan Group is doing significant research into the reduction of gas from bovine animals, which must be considered.

The position taken by the World Trade Organisation to Ireland, which will lead to a reduction in cattle numbers by 1 million, will make no difference as somebody elsewhere on the planet will take up the same production. A carbon sink is provided by other crops, including forestry and grass. Crops consume the negative emissions to the atmosphere and sugar beet, for example, was a superb carbon sink crop. We lost that industry far too easily.

I have been trying to promote the extraction of biomethane gas from dairy stock for some time. This would take some research and time to look into the prospects of pooling dairy herds, putting together herds of hundreds of stock and housing them all year round while extracting biomethane gas. Bovine stock are a negative but we should take some positive from them. If we could extract biomethane gas we would use less diesel and petrol, which would be a benefit.

A word people have studiously avoided using is “nuclear.” We must accept that at some stage in the future of energy production, Ireland will not be able to ignore this type of energy. I am not saying we must go in that direction but we must consider it. We should open the debate on the nuclear option.

France and Finland have significantly reduced their emissions and have gone very much in the direction of using nuclear energy. We should get the debate on the table and consider the positives. Of course there are negative aspects but we should weigh the options.

The Government must be more proactive in the grants available. Deputy O’Rourke spoke of solar panels on rooftops but a negative aspect is the SEI not providing grants for wood log gasifiers, which are timber burners. There is a grant for wood pellets, although there is a production cost in turning wood shavings into pellets. We do not produce those pellets in Ireland so there is also a cost in terms of transport, as well as the cost to the environment. I cannot understand, when wood is available freely throughout the country now with plantations available for thinnings, why people cannot use them. The thinnings are available as a resource and a number of farmers provide them with minimal transport costs, if only burners could be grant-aided.

We should consider the matter. I pursued the issue a bit and an answer I received was silly in the extreme. I was told that if a grant was provided for a wood log gasifier, people could burn what they wanted in it. It is a self-defeating argument. If somebody goes to the bother of procuring a wood log gasifier, that person will not put other products into it.

I would like to see the extension of recycling centres. If the public is given the opportunity to recycle and not shove everything they have into a landfill site, they will take it. We are not fast enough in getting the recycling centres open to the public.

I spoke to a geologist yesterday who made a very stark point. He told me it took tens of thousands of years to produce coal, oil, gas and other products we are burning for energy, and in a matter of a few hundred years we have begun to extract and consume the products for energy and have nearly consumed it all. I spoke of a balance at the beginning, which we must strike. We need to achieve a balance between renewables, such as wind turbines on land and off-shore, nuclear energy and other types of renewables.

[Deputy Michael D'Arcy.]

If we are proactive and positive in the issue, we will make a difference. However, if India, China and the US continue to ignore concerns, what we do in this country will have no impact whatever.

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael P. Kitt):** I thank Deputies on both sides of the House for their contributions to the debate. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy John Gormley, wished to take part in this important debate given his strong interest in the issue of climate change, which was the main reason the Green Party entered Government. However, the Minister is meeting other EU Ministers of the Environment to press Ireland's case in the European Union's climate and energy package and its strategy for the next UN climate conference in December.

Our modern and very busy lifestyles exert enormous pressure on our natural environment, as is evident from the scientific advice on climate change. If climate change is allowed to continue unchecked, the consequences for humanity and the environment are almost beyond comprehension. It is hard to believe we face the real possibility of triggering abrupt or irreversible impacts which have the potential to devastate whole countries and displace millions of people all over the world. The scientific and economic advice points to the need for and benefits of early and effective action.

Ireland is playing its part at national and European Union level and in international efforts to find an effective global response to this significant global challenge. The ultimate objective of the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is to stabilise greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a safe level. Achieving this objective will entail significant changes in our lifestyle, socially and economically. The Kyoto Protocol was only a first step in the global response to climate change and a much greater effort by developed countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be required if the ultimate objective of the 1992 convention is to be achieved.

The next decade will be crucial. We have a window of opportunity for an effective global response to climate change. Fundamental to this response is the need for global greenhouse emissions to peak within ten to 15 years and, thereafter, decline significantly by 2050. The longer it takes to mobilise an effective global response, the higher will be the cost in human and economic terms. The European Union is providing leadership in the international negotiations on climate change and pressing for an ambitious agenda for global action in the period to 2020 and beyond. Ireland fully supports this proactive approach.

The scientific advice underpins the need to have significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the economic advice points to the advantages of acknowledging and embracing the inevitable change to a low carbon future. Last January, the European Commission published a package of proposals to address EU greenhouse gas emission reductions and renewable energy targets for 2020. As expected, the proposed individual targets are tough and raise serious economic and social issues for Ireland and other member states. At this year's spring meeting of the European Council, Heads of State and Government of all 27 European Union member states endorsed the package as a good starting point and basis for agreement on the Union's ambitious 2020 targets.

The economic and environmental realities of climate change have hit home and the firm focus within the European Union is on achieving the necessary greenhouse gas emission reductions. The national climate change strategy sets out the measures by which Ireland will meet its Kyoto Protocol commitments and how these measures will position us to achieve further significant emission reductions in the post-2012 period.



Central to the strategy are measures such as reform of energy markets, ambitious targets for renewables, participation by Ireland in the EU emissions trading scheme, record investment in public transport and substantial reduction in energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions through strengthening of building regulations. All will play their part in Ireland reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. The strategy has been enhanced by further measures introduced by the Government. These include the revision of motor taxation and vehicle registration tax, strengthening the energy requirements in building regulations, the commencement of work on energy standards for lighting and a programme of expenditure on energy efficiency, including pilot funding announced in the recent budget. These and other measures were announced by my colleague, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy John Gormley, in his first carbon budget last December.

In meeting our international and domestic targets, the Government will aim to introduce further measures to reduce national emissions. The more we can achieve in terms of transition to a low carbon society in the Kyoto Protocol period, the better prepared we will be to manage the more demanding agenda in the period to 2020 and beyond. We have a national climate change strategy to meet our Kyoto challenges up to 2012. A new climate change strategy will make sense when we learn what will be are 2020 targets following the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in 2009.

The Government is strongly representing Ireland's concerns and interests in the EU negotiations. As Deputies noted, agriculture is an important economic sector and a major source of emissions. We continue to press this issue with our EU partners in negotiations. A whole-of-government approach is taken on climate change. It is led by a special Cabinet committee on climate change and energy security chaired by the Taoiseach.

On the issue of energy intensive industries, I concur that it is important to give industry greater certainty for the purposes of making investments and this point has been made in the negotiations. Carbon leakage is an issue we also want properly addressed in the Commission's proposals. I thank Deputies who contributed to this productive and, I hope, fruitful debate.

*Sitting suspended at 2.55 p.m and resumed at 3.30 p.m.*

## **Ceisteanna — Questions.**

### **Priority Questions.**

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#### **ICT in Education.**

1. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the reason he recently decided to dismantle the information and communication technology advisory service for both primary and secondary schools in the context of the Government's promise to spend €252 million on developing ICT within Irish education. [26389/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** The change to which the Deputy refers arises from a value for money review of the ICT support service undertaken by my Department, which will shortly be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas. The review concluded that while the service is generally effective and efficient, the resources currently utilised by the operation of the service from the regional education centres would be better employed in focusing supports for ICT leadership and change within each school. The review highlights the need to ensure the integration of ICT is specifically incorporated into all support



[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

service activities funded by my Department and that it is recognised as an integral part of all curriculum development, support and training rather than as an optional add-on.

There are three vacancies among the 21 ICT advisor posts attached to the regional full-time education centres. A further post is due to be vacated in September following the retirement of an ICT advisor. Of the remaining 17 posts, 14 are filled by teachers on secondment from their teaching duties and three are filled on a non-secondment contract basis. These posts have been renewed annually. Against this background, the education centres have been advised by the National Centre for Technology in Education, NCTE, that my Department is not prepared to renew secondment arrangements for the 14 teachers seconded as ICT advisors. The NCTE has discussed the implementation of these arrangements with the education centres and the schools concerned and my Department will ensure that any difficulties arising in specific schools due to the return of the teachers concerned will be addressed. The position of the three non-seconded ICT advisors is under consideration.

The role of ICT co-ordinating teachers, with the support of school principals, will be prioritised in the provision of ongoing ICT support and advice to teachers. Local school-based and peer-to-peer support has been identified internationally as the most effective way to further ICT integration in schools.

*Additional information not given on the floor of the House.*

This emphasis on in-school promotion and support for ICT integration in learning and teaching is consistent with the findings of the report of the strategy group appointed to advise on the priorities for investment in ICT in schools and the evaluation report undertaken by my Department’s inspectorate on the impact of ICT on teaching and learning. These reports will be published shortly.

I have previously indicated to the Deputy that I am reviewing the overall financial position for my Department, having regard to spending trends to date and emerging pressures, prior to making decisions on specific areas of expenditure such as ICT in schools. I expect to be in a position to make such decisions shortly.

A key area of the ICT in schools programme is the provision of broadband connectivity to schools. As the Deputy will be aware, my Department has worked in partnership with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Telecommunications and Internet Federation on the current schools broadband programme. I am sure the Deputy will welcome the launch this morning of the next-generation broadband policy paper, which includes the objective of equipping second-level schools with broadband connectivity of 100 Mbps and installing local area networks. I look forward to working with my colleague, Deputy Eamon Ryan, in the pursuit of this objective.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** Was this decision taken by the Minister or by his predecessor?

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** The decision was taken by my predecessor.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** Am I therefore right in saying that this decision was taken in March—

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** I must add to my previous reply by stating that even though the decision was taken by my predecessor, having examined the files I would have come to the same conclusion.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** I understand this decision was taken in March by the Minister’s predecessor. Thus, it landed on the Minister’s desk when he was appointed. Does the Minister think it acceptable that the way in which these ICT advisors learned of the abolition of their posts

was on a news programme on RTE on 20 June? From March to June, nobody in either the Department or the NCTE informed the advisors of this position. Does the Minister feel this is an acceptable way to treat professionals?

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** It is not the way I would have preferred it to be done. I accept that. When the decision was taken, a strategy report was available and an evaluation was carried out by the inspectorate. To give the background to the notification process, on Friday, 20 June, the director of the NCTE first attempted to contact the chair of the Association of Teachers’ Education Centres in Ireland, ATECI, to say that the renewal of contracts would not be taking place. Unfortunately the chair of the ATECI was not available until 4.30 p.m., at which time the issue was discussed. Letters to the education centre directors were e-mailed at 4.45 p.m. and hard-copy letters were posted the same day.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** When I raised the issue of ICT with the Minister during Question Time last May, I made the point that the Government had given a cast-iron commitment to spending €252 million over the lifetime of the national development plan. In the context of this issue and the Department’s appalling record of supporting schools in enhancing technology, when will the Minister provide an opportunity for schools to draw down that money? Is that money in place?

Can the Minister tell the House whether the expert report given to the Department in September was doctored in any way? Why has this report not been fully published and placed out in the open despite the statement by the Minister’s predecessor that this was the best way to decide how to spend the money?

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** Under no circumstances am I aware that any doctored of an independent report took place. I am quite satisfied it did not. It certainly has never come to my attention that such a thing would happen and I do not believe it would happen within the Department. We must bear in mind the evaluation that was carried out by the inspectorate. While it was accepted the education centres were performing a very important role, we must recognise that ICT, like education, evolves. They were set up in the early 2000s and now, nearly nine years later, we had to have another look. International practice would suggest it is far better to have a principal and a fully trained ICT co-ordinator within each school, providing leadership and ensuring that other teachers within the school are brought into play.

One of the issues that was pertinent in this decision was the impact the service was having. How well aware were schools of the existence of the education centres? My information from the evaluation was that levels of recognition were quite low. Obviously, while the centres were performing an excellent function in many ways, their impact was not equal to that of having the service within the school itself, in accordance with international practice.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** Will that report be published soon?

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** Yes, I intend to publish the evaluation and the strategy report together. I hope to be in a position to do that next week.

### **School Accommodation.**

2. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science the steps he intends to take to deal with the crisis in primary school accommodation in view of the findings of his Department that around 2,300 additional classrooms will be required over the next five years and the disclosure that around 40,000 pupils are being taught in prefabs; if his Department will consider the introduction of an emergency building programme to provide new classrooms and

[Deputy Ruairí Quinn.]

upgrade existing accommodation, using the surplus capacity now available in the construction sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26106/08]

4. **Deputy Ulick Burke** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of schools that have applications before his Department under the school building and modernisation programme; when he will make an announcement in connection with the next phase of the programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26390/08]

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** I propose to take Questions Nos. 2 and 4 together.

Due to demographic increases in the general population, my Department is planning for a minimum increase in primary school enrolments of some 58,000 pupils over the next five years. This increase will require the building of about 2,300 classrooms nationwide during this time. These extra classrooms will be provided through a combination of brand new schools in developing areas and extensions to existing schools.

A total of 1,548 schools have applied to my Department for major capital projects under the school building and modernisation programme. The projects in question vary greatly in size and priority and include renovations to existing schools, extensions and applications for new schools. While many of these applications will require capital investment, not all are of a sufficiently high priority to warrant the expenditure of substantial capital.

As I have indicated in the House and elsewhere, I am currently in the process of reviewing my Department’s school building and modernisation programme with my officials. I do not propose to make any further announcements on the school building programme until that review has been completed. However, it should be noted that the current school building programme is a major programme, involving an investment of almost €600 million in school buildings. This includes the completion of construction work during the course of 2008 on 67 large-scale building projects, the opening of 26 new school buildings in rapidly developing areas, and the progression of 374 devolved projects under the permanent accommodation and small schools schemes.

This level of activity under the school building programme builds on the significant achievements under the last national development plan when over 7,800 building projects were delivered to provide new and modernised educational infrastructure.

As I have outlined, the current schools building programme is delivering a record number of new schools and extensions. In response to growing demand for school accommodation in rapidly developing areas, a dedicated developing areas unit has been established within my Department’s planning and building unit. This unit is focused on planning solutions for the accommodation needs identified in these areas. In addition, my Department has a programme of public private partnerships, PPPs, for the construction of new schools and I am currently examining the suitability of additional projects for inclusion in the PPP programme.

While the capital funding available to my Department has increased significantly over the years, I accept that there is also a very significant level of demand from schools and that it will not always be possible to respond to this demand as rapidly as I would wish. While there may be surplus capacity in the construction industry at present, my Department has to operate within the overall financial parameters set out in the national development plan. Nevertheless, the financial resources being made available for school building under the current national development plan and the prudent allocation of these resources will see continued improvements in the quantity and quality of the accommodation available in Irish schools.

**Deputy Ruairí Quinn:** Having been recently appointed to his post, is the Minister surprised that the Department has been totally taken by surprise by demographic figures that were boasted about by his Government colleagues when speaking of the growth in the labour force? Was there no joined-up thinking between the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Central Statistics Office, CSO, and the Minister's Department, which, ironically, is called the Department of Education and Science? Surely it was recognised that an increase in the labour force would mean an increase in the children of those extra workers knocking on school doors. What effective action has been taken to deal with this massive managerial deficit in the Department?

Is the Minister confirming for the House the statement made during the debate on the Estimates? It was said that just under €600 million would be invested in the schools building programme. This would mean the completion of work on the 67 large projects, the opening of 26 schools, although the Minister's predecessor announced 27, and the completion of work on over 150 devolved projects. Are these projects to go ahead in this calendar year or has the Minister frozen financial commitments contained in the figures he quoted and further decisions on the release of moneys as a result of the review that is to happen until September? Are any of the projects referred to at a standstill due to the review that will not be completed until September?

**Deputy Batt O'Keeffe:** I was asked whether the Department anticipated this and I am in the best possible position because I was previously the Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government with responsibility for housing, urban renewal and developing areas. During my time in that post I arranged full contact with the Department of Education and Science because local authorities would influence the availability of sites and so on. A developing areas team was established at that time within the Department of Education and Science. Meetings between the Departments are ongoing and there is much integration and understanding. Before I left the housing office, we arrived at a situation where local authority city and county managers were prepared to anticipate demand and purchase sites on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. There is evidence of this all over Dublin. The level of co-operation I received from city and county managers was outstanding and there was much joined-up thinking and joined-up action between the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Education and Science.

I was asked whether the difficulties that were to arise were not anticipated within the Department of Education and Science. There was not a lack of anticipation but migration patterns tend to favour certain locations and approaching April to June of 2007 there was an indication that there would be serious issues with regard to finding places in developing regions of the greater Dublin area. This was handled extremely well, with the co-operation of local authorities and others, to ensure that by the end of September all the people were accommodated.

Regarding the programme, Deputy Quinn will understand that the previous Minister announced around 54 projects. Some 24 of these were allowed to go to construction phase. My arrival at the Department coincided with a change in economic circumstances and, as a result, I had to review Departmental spending. I am well into the review at this point, although until Cabinet takes a collective decision I will not know for sure what finances are available for the remainder of the year. I am confident that I can produce a construction programme in the latter part of 2008 but I cannot outline the extent of it this afternoon. By September I will be in a strong position to outline what can and cannot be achieved.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** The Minister referred to the 54 projects announced by his predecessor last February and said 24 have gone ahead.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** I think it was actually 26 projects.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** Where stand the remainder? They are obviously in limbo. The standard reply we get to parliamentary questions is “however, in the light of current competing demands on the capital budget for the Department, it is not possible to give any indicative timescale for the progression of this project”. The previous Minister for Education and Science said in February that a further list would be announced after Easter but, obviously, that time has passed and no announcement has been made. Should we expect, therefore, that the Minister will indicate a timescale for the remainder of the 54 that were originally announced in February in addition to those that should have been announced at Easter?

Does the Minister have a timescale for the completion of the review that is taking place in the Department? Will he announce the outcome of this review? The Minister says there is now an indicative group established in the Department for these projects. I know of a particular case in which no capital expenditure demand is placed on the Department and in which a programme is being put in place, under a PPP scheme, with the Department. The physical building, completed to the standards required of the Department of Education and Science and fully fitted, is being provided on the site for the Minister and the Department to consider without any capital demand. It will be leased back to the Department for a period to be agreed at the Minister’s discretion. Surely this is an opportunity for the Minister because there is a dire need for projects to proceed urgently. The Minister cannot turn his back on such a proposal if there is any understanding in the Department.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** There were about five questions there. When I came into the Department, I had to examine spending within the terms of the budget. I indicated clearly that, given the downturn in revenue, it would take me some time——

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** To sort out the mess in the Department.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** They spent all the money.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** ——to examine what could and could not be achieved. I confirmed to Deputy Quinn this afternoon that I have made much progress regarding what has been spent and what we will be capable of in September. I must wait to see what the Government decision is on overall spending for the rest of 2008 before I can make a complete decision on what can and cannot go ahead. I have indicated this afternoon that I believe I will be in a position to make some announcements in September on a building programme for the latter part of 2008 and into 2009.

At a time when our finances have taken a downturn it is important that we be as innovative as possible. I want to make it clear to the Opposition and everyone else that if people have innovative ideas, I will listen to them.

Regarding Deputy Burke’s point, we must always remember that the Secretary General of the Department will always be answerable to the Comptroller and Auditor General. In taking on board any particular scheme, one has to have regard to the borrowing power of the Department — the level at which it can borrow. It is obvious that no charge can be more than the long-term cost of the borrowing to the Department. We will have to have a serious look at how competitive is the offer mentioned by the Deputy. It is obvious that if it is competitive, we will be happy to take it on board.

**Deputy Ruairí Quinn:** Do I take it from the Minister’s reply that the Revised Estimate his predecessor announced in this House on 24 April last no longer stands, in effect? Is it the case that the commitment to 67 large-scale projects in the primary sector, 26 new schools and 150



other works no longer stands? The Minister has put all projects which have not yet started on-site under review. He intends to make a decision in September on the projects which have been put on hold. He will communicate that decision to those involved at that stage. He is taking four months of capital spending out of the Estimate, in effect. I am sure it will be the end of September by the time the outcome of the review is communicated to the people in question. At that stage, there will be less than two calendar months remaining in the year in which cheques can be cashed.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** That is right.

**Deputy Ruairí Quinn:** Is it not the case that a massive cutback, in real terms, is being dressed up as a review? The reality is that there will be less than seven weeks left in which money can flow on to a building site or into the pockets of building workers.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** Can the Minister give a definitive answer in respect of the many schools to which specific promises and guarantees were issued? On 15 May 2007, a guarantee was given to Kinvara secondary school that everything would be up and running within 12 months. A deadline applies in that case. The sisters have given some leeway to the Department and the board of management so that the school can enjoy a continuous intake. Some 15 months have passed since the guarantee was given, but the project is still not finished.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** I have given the Deputy a good innings.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** I remind the Minister that €35 million was spent on prefabs last year.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** We are well over time on this question.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** Deputy Quinn was regarded as a prudent Minister for Finance. He always operated within the resources that were available to him. I would like to think I can be a similarly prudent Minister for Education and Science.

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** Frugal.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** I will examine what is in my bursary before I dispense it properly. I am conscious of the commitments that were made and I want to meet them as best I can. I have indicated that I hope to make an announcement in early September to specify those projects which can proceed to construction. I will do that in early September. I understand that school authorities are waiting on projects which have gone to tender. They want to start work on them.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** The school has a guarantee.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** I appreciate that. I cannot answer questions about specific schools.

**Deputy Ulick Burke:** I am concerned about the principle of withdrawing a guarantee that was made in May of last year.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** This year’s massive allocation of €600 million for the school sector represents an increase of €44 million on the allocation for 2007. We will complete many more school extensions this year than we did over recent years. It will be a record high. We will be happy to——

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** We must move on to Question No. 3.

### **Teachers' Remuneration.**

3. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if, regarding the two rulings made against his Department by a rights commissioner, where two part-time teachers were awarded €100,000 in total salary arrears, he will quantify the amount owed to teachers as a result of this failure to implement the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26516/08]

**Deputy Batt O'Keeffe:** I assure the Deputy that the Department of Education and Science is aware of the issues relating to the pay adjustments which are due to certain part-time teachers under the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001. It has worked closely with school management bodies and teacher unions to ensure the legislation is implemented and applied to teachers fairly and consistently. The Department has made pay adjustments and paid arrears to the majority of part-time teachers, including substitute teachers, who are on the payrolls it directly administers. It has funded VECs to do likewise for part-time teachers on their payrolls. Part-time teachers who are employed on a part-time basis by individual boards of management of primary schools have yet to receive adjusted pay and arrears. There is a grant system in place to allow the boards to claim from the Department the funding required to pay such teachers. The boards of management pay part-time teachers directly. Such teachers are mainly employed by schools as resource teachers for special needs pupils, as language support assistants for newcomer pupils or under the modern languages primary schools initiative.

Under the Protection of Employees (Part-time Work) Act 2001, qualified eligible part-time teachers are entitled to be paid salaries appropriate to their qualifications and to receive incremental credits for their relevant teaching service. The Department decided to extend the single payroll process for all other teachers in primary, secondary and community and comprehensive schools, rather than persisting with the practice of having boards pay them directly, to ensure that the terms of the 2001 Act could be applied to part-time teachers who are paid directly by school boards. This approach ensures that teachers who have served part-time in more than one school can get full credit for their overall service. Software development is well advanced on the required extension to the payroll system.

It is not possible to assess the amount of money due to individual teachers, or in aggregate, because the Department holds no records on the teachers concerned. To calculate the correct salary details, the Department needs to obtain a complete service history for the teachers in question from each of the schools involved. This information will be added to the payroll database to make any salary adjustments needed when entitlements under the legislation are matched to the service history of the teachers. Under the implementation schedule, the collection of this service history data will begin when primary schools reopen in the autumn. All part-time teachers will be paid directly on the teachers' payroll from 2009. The system will have the capacity to pay arrears due on the basis of past service.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** I would like to focus on the real problem that exists at present, rather than the payroll system that will be introduced in the 2008-09 school year. I understand that up to 1,000 part-time teachers have not been paid the correct amounts for their work over the past seven years. Will the Minister give the House an indication of the total financial liability the Department of Education and Science will face when the review has been completed? Will he confirm that arrears of €100,000 — €60,000 in one case and €40,000 in the other — had to be repaid to two teachers in the cases, taken at rights commissioner level, which were brought to the Minister's attention in a brief when he took over as Minister for Education and Science. Will he also confirm the total number of cases taken by part-time teachers which are before

rights commissioners or the courts at present? I presume he will face a huge financial bill as a result of the incompetence of the Department of Education and Science in enforcing this legislation.

When the Minister read the departmental brief on this matter when he took office, what was his view? What was his reaction when he read the part of the brief which suggested that the Department's failure to pay the appropriate rate of salary to part-time teachers could lead to it being found to have acted unlawfully? This problem has emerged seven years after the enactment of legislation that was supposed to give part-time workers the same rights as permanent workers.

**Deputy Batt O'Keeffe:** My first reaction was to ensure that those who are entitled to increased wages are paid those wages as soon as possible. As the Deputy is aware, a substantial process of negotiation and discussion took place before agreement was reached on the payments. It was agreed by all the stakeholders in the agreement that those who are on the direct payroll should be paid immediately. Unfortunately, information about the system that applied to part-time teachers, including resource teachers, in primary schools, was not available on the Department's database. Under the system that was used, the Department paid two moieties to each school. The board of management of each school paid each part-time teacher directly. We have started to obtain all the relevant information. It is not as easy as it sounds because some teachers work in a number of different schools. The collation of this information is difficult and time-consuming. We want to be as fair to everybody as we can. We have made contact with all the schools to ask them to supply the information. We are satisfied that the new payroll system will be up and running quite soon. We will then be in a position to make the outstanding payments, even if that is happening belatedly.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** Can the Minister give some indication of the total cost to his Department of the payment of arrears to part-time teachers? How many cases taken by part-time teachers are currently before rights commissioners?

**Deputy Batt O'Keeffe:** I do not have information regarding the Deputy's final question about the cases before the rights commissioners. I will make sure that the Deputy is made aware of how many cases are in question. As he will know, an individual has the right to go to the rights commissioner even though an agreement has been reached between the stakeholders. That has been adopted.

Of the two cases that were taken to the rights commissioner, I believe one had an agreement of €35,000 and the other was of €55,000.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** Has the Minister any ball-park figures concerning how much this will cost? He does not have the money at the moment.

**Deputy Batt O'Keeffe:** I have asked the officials to try to piece this together but I understand it will be quite a substantial sum.

*Question No. 4 answered with Question No. 2.*

### **Languages Programme.**

5. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Education and Science the steps he is taking to address the English language deficit of legally resident migrants; the steps which have been taken to date to provide additional resources to vocational education committees to take

[Deputy Denis Naughten.]

over the operation of the Integrate Ireland Language and Training programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26392/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Conor Lenihan):** The English language needs of legally resident migrants are being addressed on a number of fronts.

First, there are currently almost 2,000 English language resource teachers working in our primary and post-primary schools at an annual cost of some €120 million. This number has increased from 262 teachers in 2001-02. I believe most Members will accept that this is a significant upping of resources.

The arrangements for enhanced provision of English language resource teachers were set out in a circular from my Department which issued to schools in May 2007. The previous restriction of two such teachers per school was removed and a two-year limit of English language classes for the students was also lifted, where a specific request is made. A school with more than 121 pupils with English language needs can now have six English language resource teachers. Resource materials, including intercultural guidelines and assessment kits, have been prepared and provided to assist teachers with this work.

Second, for adult migrants the network of VECs throughout the country provides English language classes. In 2007 there were approximately 13,000 students attending these English language classes at a cost to the Exchequer, or to the VECs, of approximately €10 million.

Third, Integrate Ireland Language and Training, IILT, provided English language classes to immigrants with refugee status. In 2007, just over 900 learners attended IILT courses at 12 centres around Ireland. Due to turnover, approximately 450 students are in direct tuition at any one time.

IILT approached my Department earlier this year with a proposal to withdraw from direct tuition for adult refugees and with a request that this tuition be mainstreamed. IILT envisaged continuing direct tuition for a group of up to 200 programme refugees, namely, those on the resettlement programme. I accepted that mainstreaming of service provision was appropriate as it accords with the overall approach to provision of services to migrants as set out in Migration Nation — A Statement by the Government on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management, a report I wrote myself and recently launched.

In this context, it was decided that all direct tuition provision should be mainstreamed and provided by VECs as it would be less efficient to seek to continue with a small element of provision by IILT.

*Additional information not given on the floor of the House.*

The funding allocated to IILT will now be redirected to provide for the continuation of this service to refugees through the VEC network. The Irish Vocational Education Association, IVEA, has confirmed that it is happy to co-operate and collaborate with my Department in the delivery of English language services through its nationwide network of 33 VECs. The VEC sector has already developed best practice in teaching English for speakers of other languages, ESOL.

My Department has already had discussions with the IVEA with a view to ensuring a smooth transition to the system. An independent review was commissioned to develop a national English language policy and framework for legally resident adult immigrants. The review involved extensive stakeholder consultations. I await the report and recommendations which will inform the future development of provision for adult immigrants.

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** The statement issued by the Department announced that, via the VECs, the Department would immediately take over the provision of the service for refugees.

I presume that means from 1 August. If that is the case why was the IVEA approached to come into the Department about this matter only last week? What additional funding will be provided to the VECs? What funding over and above that provided to IILT will be given to the VECs? Surely it will cost more money if it is to be mainstreamed rather than continue as the pilot scheme in place to date.

Why have the VECs not yet been given any indication of the additional funding that will be provided? They must have this service in place within less than a month. Is it not the case that, because of the lack of adequate funds, funding will be taken away from the training and education of the indigenous population to support this scheme?

**Deputy Conor Lenihan:** I apologise to the Deputy because time did not allow me to read the full answer into the record of the House. I assure him and anybody else concerned about this issue that this particular service is being mainstreamed. The provision for IILT service will be incorporated in the overall provision that the VECs will now deliver in place of IILT. This service is now to be mainstreamed through the network of 33 VECs across the country so there is absolutely no question of there being a shortfall. The cost will be absorbed by mainstream spending through the VECs which is very good news for the service and for migrants in particular. Rather than being on a pilot basis the service will be part of the conventional provision made by the Department. Any funding that IILT had will be given to the VEC structure and network.

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** I thank the Minister of State for his reply. In light of that information is it not the case that there is to be no additional funding over and above what was given to IILT? As a result the money will be spread over 33 centres instead of 14. Is it not a fact that the existing services provided by the VECs around the country will be directly impacted as a result of this decision?

What specific provision is being made to retain the staff and expertise developed over the past nine years by IILT? I understand that the IVEA recommended this expertise should be incorporated into the VECs throughout the country. Will the Minister of State give a specific recommendation that the staff be taken on in this manner?

**Deputy Conor Lenihan:** From the point of view of Government it is very clear what is happening. IILT is a private not-for-profit company based on the Trinity College campus. It makes the decisions with regard to this matter. It approached the Department with a view to ending its service because it is delighted, as we are, that it is now to be mainstreamed. The decisions will be made by the company in the first instance, with regard to redundancy payments and entitlements. In terms of the actual provision, the VEC network was enthusiastic about taking on this particular challenge. It is not looking at the situation as a burden that will involve extra stress or pressure.

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** The CEOs around the country are saying that.

**Deputy Conor Lenihan:** The VEC officials are in direct discussions with me. I have spoken to them twice within the past week and my officials are in constant contact—

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** They are extremely concerned.

**Deputy Conor Lenihan:** The priority from my officials' point of view is that there be a seamless transition to the mainstream option. That will happen in July and August this year and nobody will be at a loss because of it.

With regard to the staffing issues and the expertise the Deputy referred to as being lost, namely, the 40 teachers who are ably represented by SIPTU, that is a matter for negotiation between that union and the staff and management involved from IILT. Obviously any decision



[Deputy Conor Lenihan.]

by the VECs to employ any of those 40 teaching staff who will lose their jobs because of IILT's decision to close will be a matter for the VECs. I cannot dictate to them that they should employ one person over another. From the point of view of the VECs, the employment of staff will involve an open competition.

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** Not one red cent will be spent.

**Deputy Conor Lenihan:** Given the experts——

**Deputy Denis Naughten:** There will be twice as many centres.

### Other Questions.

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#### Local Authority Charges.

6. **Deputy Dinny McGinley** asked the Minister for Education and Science if additional funds will be provided by his Department to schools to pay for water rates; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26217/08]

**Deputy Batt O'Keeffe:** I am very much aware of the cost pressures on schools, including those arising from the changes in water charges.

Primary schools now get over €178 per pupil to meet their day to day running costs. This is an increase of nearly 70% on the 2002 rate of €105 and €15 more per child than they got last year. Post-primary schools have also seen improvements in funding and through a similar €15 increase this year now receive €331 per pupil. These increases are significant and well ahead of the consumer price index increases for the same period.

The position on water charges is that the Government agreed a transition period to full water charges in the case of non-fee charging recognised schools and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has advised local authorities of the detailed arrangements regarding the implementation of this decision.

The transitional arrangements afford schools the opportunity to put in place water conservation arrangements and practices and to undertake works that can help reduce water usage significantly before full water charges are introduced. By virtue of good water conservation, schools can be in a much stronger position to reduce the impact of water charges on their overall budgets. Guidance was also recently issued to schools on the most appropriate measures to minimise excess consumption of water and to reduce wastage where it occurs. In addition, water conservation issues will continue to be addressed by my Department as a matter of routine where new schools are being built or where major renovations are being carried out to existing schools under the schools modernisation programme.

My Department remains in close liaison with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government regarding water conservation and is supportive of any initiatives by it and local authorities that will help reduce water costs for schools.

The funding needs of schools generally and the support I can give them to help them meet day-to-day running costs are a matter that I will be considering in the context of next year's Estimates.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** As the Minister is aware, schools are trying to keep their heads above water in terms of a range of new costs, particularly heating and fuel costs. One charge on foot of which most schools are having to pay through the nose is the new water charge. For example, water charges levied on all the schools in the area of South Dublin County Council have more

than doubled over the past five years. Will the Minister conduct a nationwide survey of all the local authorities to determine exactly what increases have occurred in recent years? Bearing in mind the transition period between now and January 2010, what enhanced capitation and other benefits will the Minister give to schools next year to ensure they will not have to pay the very excessive water charges they expect at present?

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** It is difficult enough to run my own Department, not to mention trying to run the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** The Minister has many Ministers to help him.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** I will raise Deputy Brian Hayes’s point on local authorities with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy Gormley, to determine the exact differences that exist.

Deputy Brian Hayes referred to increases and claimed the Government committed to addressing the issue of charges in the programme for Government. The programme states, “Examine the provision of waste and water allowances to schools, with charges becoming effective after these agreed allowances are exceeded”. There is absolutely no commitment but a reference to examining the matter.

The green flag concept is outstanding. It involves three phases, the first pertaining to waste management, the second to energy conservation and the third to water conservation. We have issued guidelines to each of the schools on how they can minimise the impact of water charges. Regulatory efforts are being made so many schools can carry out a project, at very little cost, to ensure they will decrease their water consumption.

**Deputy Ruairí Quinn:** Will the Department of Education and Science be able to fund or make a contribution towards the introduction of water meters for schools so they can measure their improved performance?

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** The introduction of water meters is currently a matter between the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the schools involved. I did not make a commitment but indicated quite strongly that I would determine the help I could give schools, primary schools in particular, in terms of capitation in line with the 2009 Estimates. We should improve the level of capitation, particularly to primary schools, and I intend to prioritise this. It is important to note that capitation for a school with 300 pupils amounts to €100,000 per annum. Many schools, therefore, are doing particularly well.

**Deputy Brian Hayes:** They are coining it.

**Deputy Batt O’Keeffe:** We provided for a 44% increase in capitation last year and, therefore, significant improvements have already been made. There is an action plan for the DEIS schools in disadvantaged areas and €19 million was allocated to meet their needs. Much work is being done and considerable funding is being invested in the system.

#### **Private Notice Questions.**

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#### **Health Service Reform.**

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** I will call on the Deputies who tabled questions to the Minister for Health and Children in the order in which they submitted their questions to my office.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the proposed changes to the management structures of the Health Service Executive, whether she has approved the proposed changes, whether legislative authority is required for the proposed changes, and whether she will make a statement on the matter.

**Deputy James Reilly** asked the Minister for Health and Children whether the reports in today's papers on the Health Service Executive are factual and, if so, whether she can give details of the full plan and a timescale for implementation, whether she can confirm if there are any cost implications and, if so, whether they will necessitate a Supplementary Estimate.

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** I do not want to talk specifically about the report but will talk about the plans, if that is in order.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to answer these questions. I confirm there are management changes taking place in the Health Service Executive. Work has been proceeding on these changes since the middle of last year. The CEO of the HSE recruited consultants to help him and the board of the executive to devise an appropriate organisational structure for the executive. Considerable work preceded the passage of the legislation to establish a unified service in 2004. Some called for its establishment as long ago as 1980. The legislation does not need to be changed as it provides flexibility to the CEO, which is appropriate, to delegate functions and organise the management structure as he or she sees fit. This must obviously be with the authority of the board of the HSE.

I have been in discussions with the HSE for quite some time. As we know, the higher review group on public pay drew attention last year to the need to have greater clarity regarding the management roles in the HSE. More recently, the Fitzgerald report drew attention to the systemic weaknesses in governance and management in regard to the events in Portlaoise. Following this, on 4 March, I wrote to the chairman of the HSE asking him whether the deficiencies identified in Portlaoise had wider application. In that context, the HSE is proposing it will continue with nine national directors but will consolidate, into one pillar, the National Hospitals Office and primary, community and continuing care. It believes it is appropriate when providing an integrated service to patients to merge the two pillars into one, not just at the top but right down the line. I support this.

Merging the pillars will mean that, at hospital level, there will not be confusion over whether a home care package comes from the hospital budget or another budget. The merger of the pillars will allow for a more effective response to the needs of patients. The population health directorate will be entering a new planning unit which will have different care managers. This will be headed by a director of planning, who will effectively be the person responsible for setting standards, making strategic plans and overseeing the implementation of change. The communications functions will be at directorial level. These are the changes taking place.

The HSE will continue to have nine national directors. It is simply a question of reorganising what they do, and particularly of elevating the post of director of communications to directorate level. All the directors will report to the CEO of the organisation and will carry out the responsibilities delegated by the CEO. There will be no increase in head count. Rather, when the new management structure is in place, as will occur over the coming months, the contrary will be the case.

At local level we want to consult stakeholders, particularly employees, on local arrangements and this will take some time. The intention is to recruit the directors at national level very quickly.

Recently, a new head of human resources started with the HSE. I had written to the HSE asking it to fill these posts because many posts at national level are held by people in an acting capacity, rather than by people who have been appointed to the positions. Clearly, that is

unsatisfactory for an organisation that now is more than three years old. Consequently, I am delighted to note that a new head of human resources started recently with the HSE and he will be charged with overseeing the implementation of the new approach.

Essentially, what is happening in this regard is that many of the decisions that currently require approval at central level are being devolved to a more local level in respect of service delivery. One of the deficiencies identified in the Portlaoise report was that some people were managers for delivery of service, while also being involved in many strategic and national initiatives, such as negotiating with consultants or whatever. Clearly, those who have the responsibility to manage the delivery of services cannot focus completely on such delivery if they also are involved in national issues. The new organisational changes that are being made will bring an end to this, which is appropriate.

Many people have called for greater clarity and accountability. Many human resources gurus and management consultants have stated and advised — one telephoned me in this regard today — that to be able to devolve appropriately, one must centralise. One must know one's organisation and its capability. The HSE was not simply a merger of ten health boards and the Regional Health Authority. It also involved the merger within it of more than 50 different organisations. Clearly, before one even contemplates something like a redundancy plan, one must know what one's resources are, what resources one requires and what such resources should do. Notwithstanding the calls for redundancy programmes, the idea of a redundancy programme could not be entertained until clear organisational structure and lines of accountability were in place. As I noted earlier, this is a forerunner to giving consideration to what redundancy programme might be put in place, obviously on a voluntary basis.

Many of the changes that now are taking place have been called for in this House. More recently, the Labour Party outlined in a six-point plan proposals on how the Health Service Executive could function more appropriately. Some of these developments must be music to the ears of those in IMPACT and other trade unions who believed the decision making and day-to-day delivery of services to be over-centralised.

Finally, this change will involve an increase in neither budget nor headcount and will involve no change to legislation. Clearly, however, as Minister for Health and Children, notwithstanding the operational nature of the HSE's remit, it also is my responsibility to ensure that appropriate management and governance exists within the HSE. This is the reason the Department of Health and Children and I have been involved in detailed discussions over the past 12 months pertaining to the changes that now will be put into effect and which were communicated to the worker representatives through the unions this morning.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** Does this constitute an admission that the centralised structure, which was the Minister's big idea a couple of years ago, has failed? This is how it appears to me. While I appreciate the Minister's reference to the Labour Party's proposals, I am unsure whether her proposals closely resemble them. On the one hand, the Minister spoke of not being more centralised while, on the other, I understand that everyone will report to nine national directors at central level. The Minister should clarify this point because I now am more confused about what is being proposed than I was after reading this morning's edition of *The Irish Times*.

Are regional structures proposed? The article that appeared in *The Irish Times* today suggested that such regional structures were proposed. The Minister has made no mention of regional structures and were such structures not proposed, I would welcome it because the Labour Party seeks the devolution of decision making down as close as possible to the patient's level. If the Minister states she agrees with the Labour Party proposal, its Members are on her side in that regard.

[Deputy Jan O'Sullivan.]

I wish to question the Minister in respect of a number of issues. First, how is one supposed to believe this? On the introduction of the HSE, Members were told there would be fewer layers of management and more staff on the front line. However, the complete opposite happened. Will more than 600 managers still be at grade eight and above? Before the establishment of the HSE, one could count such managers on two hands. The Minister stated there would not be an increase in staff. However, where will such staff be located and will new people be brought in? The Minister mentioned a couple of new posts and mentioned various directorates as new posts. Can the Minister explain to Members what exactly will happen in respect of staff? Does she intend to thin out the existing top management levels?

In addition, the Minister stated that, essentially, she would make decision making more streamlined between community and hospital care. Can she explain exactly how she proposes to do so? Will this take place at local level or does the Minister continue to refer to an entity that is led from the top, is centrally controlled and in which those who wish to make a decision in their patients' interests are obliged to go to the top?

As I noted at the outset, I am considerably more confused now than I was after reading the newspaper this morning because the Minister now appears to be stating there will not be regional structures. I seek clarity on whether there will such structures. As for the implementation of this initiative, has consultation taken place? What is going on and to whom is the Minister talking? Has the measure been costed and has the Minister done her homework in respect of how it is to be implemented from the perspective of personnel and so on?

It appears that what has been proposed is a good deal more confusing than the existing structures. Having read the Fitzgerald report on Portlaoise, it noted, for example, that when meetings were held on what to do, although five different kinds of managers attended such meetings, not a single clinician did so. The meetings were attended by network managers, safety managers, hospital managers and all sorts of managers. How will the Minister's proposals address the need to have clear decision-making processes at the level of the patient and which do not constitute a continuation of the mess that is the HSE at present, in which no one who tries to make decisions that are close to the patient has the power to do so but is obliged to refer them up the line?

**Deputy Mary Harney:** First, regional structures exist at present. On the hospital side there are eight network managers and on the community and primary care side, four regional structures are in place. Implementation units probably are what are being envisaged under these proposals, whereby the two will be together. For example, in the case of a long-stay patient in a hospital, the responsibility for funding either a home care package or a long-stay place rests not with the hospital, but with the primary and continuing community care division. This leads to many service deficiencies and we want it to be integrated as close to the patient as possible in order that someone on the ground can make that decision and that such a decision will not be inhibited because it affects someone else's budget.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** That is in the Labour Party's proposals.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** Yes.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** So far so good.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** As for the new directorates, I wish to make clear that the people at the top, including the chief executive officer, are responsible for strategy, standards and configuration of services, such as, for example, the cancer plan. Professor Keane is implementing the cancer plan and this is a national role. Clearly, however, he has people at local level who are responsible for implementing it in Cork, Galway, Dublin or wherever. I wish to



distinguish between service delivery, that is, the implementation of the strategy, and the people who are responsible at the top. In this regard, there will be a new post of clinical affairs director. I believe it is extremely important to have a clinician at national level with responsibility for risk assessment, protocols and the kind of issues that have emerged in recent years. The public has much greater confidence in a clinical response than in one from someone who does not have a clinical background. In fairness, Professor Drumm identified this deficiency approximately one year ago. He has put this in place at local level, including the Deputy's own area, where she is familiar with Professor Lyons who has responsibility for the implementation of the changes there. I believe this will work well.

The communications job is being elevated to director level because, as the Fitzgerald report highlighted and Members are aware, the HSE faces a major communications challenge to communicate what it is doing and to inspire confidence in the wonderful new things that are happening. I have stated in other fora that the HSE is somewhat like German unification. While it was known the principle was right, it takes one a long time to put together all the pieces. The current cancer plan, which is based on eight centres, would not have been developed had the health boards continued in existence because a number of areas will not have a designated centre. Similarly, we would not have consistency and uniformity in the way nursing home standards are being implemented. We would not have the current focus on where services are provided if the local hospital, as the Taoiseach said here the night he was elected, was the centre of the medical universe. We know high quality service cannot be provided at local level. None of that is possible without a unified organisation and I remain convinced it is the right way to go. As the Deputy is aware, other countries are going down the unified organisation route but that is not inconsistent with ensuring that for the day-to-day delivery of service, responsibility rests as close as possible to where services are provided.

The Deputy asked me about frontline staff on which I have given the statistics previously. It is wrong to say there has been an increase in administration staff at the expense of frontline staff but it is true that under the old health board regime there were many people in managerial roles with various titles and when a single organisation came together, both as a result of that and through IR issues that arose in connection with it, there was greater clarity on that aspect. I look forward to a reduction in the number of people in management positions but a precursor to that must be to have clear lines of accountability and responsibility before we go down a redundancy route. The purpose is to reduce the layers of bureaucracy.

On the Portlaoise issue, which the Deputy mentioned, one of the criticisms was that the person responsible for the hospital was also involved in a great deal of national activity and clearly one cannot do the two. That is why it is important that some people are concerned with the national focus. In some countries some people are involved with the reform and others get on with the delivery of the services on a day-to-day basis. That is what is happening here and it makes a great deal of sense.

**Deputy James Reilly:** I thank the Minister for coming into the House to take this Private Notice Question on a rather miserable July day.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** I am not responsible for that. I hope the Deputy is not blaming me for it.

**Deputy Jan O'Sullivan:** Climate change.

**Deputy James Reilly:** No, but the Minister's Government is responsible for the misery patients suffer under the Health Service Executive and that we must suffer in terms of the finances of the country.

Like Deputy O'Sullivan, I am no clearer now on the position and I want to ask the Minister a specific question. It is reported in *The Irish Times* that there will be four or possibly eight

[Deputy James Reilly.]

new regional management structures. Is the Minister telling the House there will be new management structures regionally or there will not because it is not clear from what she has said? It said also that the existing services would be broken up and existing management structures streamlined. If that is not true, I would like the Minister to clearly indicate that.

The Minister mentioned redundancies, something we have all looked for, but it is clear that should have been done before the HSE was formed. The Minister coming into the House and talking about more changes in anticipation of redundancies down the road is a recurring theme because whether it is cancer services she referred to or other services, removing existing services today on a promise of something wonderful to come tomorrow is wrong. We now have another plan that promises to deliver something further down the line. The Minister's promises have not been well kept. She promised there would not be any health cuts, but there were, and she promised they would not hurt patients, but they did.

Some time ago I asked the four questions I felt had to be answerable by management in the HSE. They were not answerable in either the Fitzgerald report or the Doherty report. Can the Minister give us a guarantee as a result of this measure that in the future management will be able to say who made the decision, why it was made, what it cost and, most important, how it impacted on patient care because none of this matters a whit if that is not the net result?

Furthermore, anybody in the HSE should be able to say what is their job, who they report to and who reports to them. If, as a result of these changes, the Minister can say those questions can be answered she will have done a good day's work but, unfortunately, I do not believe from what the Minister has said that that will be the case.

Another recurring theme of the Government is that the Minister intends to promote the communications director to that of national director. If that director was to control internal communication, which is a major deficit within the HSE, that might be something we could applaud the Minister for, but I have a sneaking suspicion, having listened to her outline all the wonderful work going on in the HSE that must be communicated to the wider public, that we are back to another Transport 21 situation where €15 million was spent on explaining to people why Transport 21 is not being delivered while telling them about all the great measures that will be taken.

The same is being done with the HSE. It seems to be a case of more money spent with very little gain for the patient. That is the major issue. How will patients benefit from this measure? Rather than the philosophical, patient centred wonderful words we heard from the Minister, we should see some action because we have seen no action that has resulted in true improvements for patients.

The Minister has told us in the past, as has the chief executive of the HSE, that services have improved, the figures are much better etc., yet independent figures taken from the Irish Association for Emergency Medicine show that in Beaumont Hospital the figures for the number of people lying on trolleys for over 12 hours waiting for a bed in April of last year were in the region of 380. Last April the figure was 904. It is the same in Galway. The figure was 185 in April last year while this year in April the figure was 444. That is one of the regions that will be a centre of excellence for cancer services, which are being delivered to an excellent standard currently in Mayo and Sligo, but the Minister wants to remove them and locate them in Galway where there is no adequate parking, there is a €4.6 million ICU suite that cannot be used because there is no staff and in April or May they were already €4.6 million over their budget. I do not know what the figure is now. There are all the signs of overcrowding, with the accident and emergency figures and MRSA.

I believe the Minister has taken notes of the main question but I want to ask one other question.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** I will call the Deputy again.

**Deputy James Reilly:** Will the Minister confirm that there was no increasing cost as a result of all these grade 8 appointments because I am sure that was the case.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** To repeat again, I remain a strong fan of a unified service. I will give the figures for the cancer plan because it is so important. Our outcomes in Ireland — 18th out of 23 countries in Europe — are very bad. It is important that we put in place the appropriate services for cancer patients, but that did not happen. We saw what happened in the midlands when there was a piece of the action for every hospital in the region and we could not get multidisciplinary expert care.

**Deputy James Reilly:** When they were not properly resourced.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** Deputy Reilly is a doctor and he knows that with breast cancer, 150 new patients a year are needed to warrant the kind of skill, training and throughput to deliver quality services.

**Deputy James Reilly:** Each centre, not each individual——

**Deputy Mary Harney:** Deputy Reilly will always go on about the measures that do not work. Every vested interest in the health system that has a whinge seems to be able to get it aired on the floor of the House but the reality is that accident and emergency services have improved greatly since the establishment of the HSE, and the Deputy knows that.

**Deputy James Reilly:** It has not. I refute that.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** The idea that before an organisation is established we can start deciding who to make redundant——

**Deputy James Reilly:** Any merger would do that.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** We cannot do that. I have no expertise in this area but I have spoken to quite a few people in other sectors who have and they all say that we need to centralise before we devolve and know what we have in place. For Professor Drumm or the board of the HSE to decide before the organisation was put together who they would get rid of would not have made sense. Some people, like CEOs, went because we abolished their jobs by law——

**Deputy Dan Neville:** We reappointed them.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** The organisation has to be put into effect before deciding the management structure that is required, the individuals or whatever. The idea is to have fewer layers of bureaucracy.

The Deputy asked me about regional structures. We have regional structures currently. We have eight network managers for hospitals and four such persons for community continuing care. In the first instance they will be brought together because it does not make sense to have them separate. We want to have consultation with stakeholders and the HSE should have consultation. It is the employer, either directly or indirectly, of 130,000 people. It wants to and should have consultation with stakeholders, community groups and others. What the shape of those operational units will be — whether there will be six or eight — is not yet determined. It is around that ballpark figure on which they are having discussions. The first measure taken today was that the structure agreed by the board and supported by me, my Department and the Government was put forward to the IMPACT union and other unions today. That is the first step because, obviously, it affects many people who work in the organisation.

[Deputy Mary Harney.]

I was asked about a voluntary redundancy programme. I remain committed to a redundancy programme, once we know what we want to do by way of numbers and what is required to do the job. In particular, we do not want to lose——

**Deputy James Reilly:** *Mañana.*

**Deputy Mary Harney:** It is not. This State does not have a good history of redundancy programmes. Sometimes the best people go and then they come back as consultants. We want to ensure before a redundancy programme is devised that we put this organisational structure in place.

On communications, even Deputy Reilly's own organisation, Fine Gael, has a director of communications, who is an excellent person. Surely an organisation that spends a budget of €16 billion is entitled to have a director of communications at a reasonable level. I do not think anybody would begrudge that. It is important for internal communications and for external communications.

All of the directors report to the CEO. Professor Drumm remains the CEO for the organisation. He is given significant powers in the legislation that established the organisation to delegate etc. He remains responsible and people report to him.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** There are four minutes left and three Deputies indicating. I will try to accommodate them. I call Deputy Finian McGrath.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** I welcome the Minister's response on the managerial issues within the HSE. They were constructive and positive solutions.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** A brief question.

**Deputy Finian McGrath:** I have three short questions. First, will the improvement in the management structures planned in the regional areas improve delivery of services for persons with disability?

My second question relates to the communications challenge. The Minister accepted there is a negative image of sections of HSE services. How do we improve that?

My third question relates to the redundancies. The sum of €30 million would appear to be a high cost. How does one prevent top quality staff leaving the senior management and medical sections of the HSE?

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** I will take Deputy Barrett's question as well.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** Is the Minister aware that it seems to be official policy that an elderly person who is seeking accommodation in long-stay nursing home facilities is being told officially in a letter I received yesterday that one of the ways of doing so is to remain in a bed in a public hospital until a place in a public nursing home facility becomes available? In other words, we are now being told that one brings somebody through accident and emergency into a hospital to remain in a bed until a place becomes available.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** It is an important issue but perhaps it would be more suited to an Adjournment debate.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** Is this official policy, which I received by way of letter yesterday?

**Deputy Mary Harney:** If I could start with Deputy Barrett, I would be horrified to think that it was an official letter. I would like to see the letter, if he would share it with me.

**Deputy Seán Barrett:** It is a letter.

**Deputy Mary Harney:** Of course it is not the policy. The policy is to allocate long-stay beds to those who need them most. In fact, the policy is very much to keep people out of long-term care and to encourage people to stay at home with home-care packages and clinical support. From a zero base five years ago, we now have 11,000 such persons being supported at home. That is what older people want. If the Deputy would share the letter with me, I would like to pursue it.

In reply to Deputy Finian McGrath, the HSE is an enabler of providing services. It is not the panacea, or anything like it, nor could any organisation be. The purpose in having a unified organisation, and the reason so many people advocated it — all the parties in this House supported it although they had issues about the speed at which we implemented the legislation — and former Deputy Ivan Yates, in 1998, recommended it was because they believed it was a more appropriate way of providing better services. I believe it will provide better services. In particular, it will allow decisions around services to be made locally. At present, if one wants to make simple decisions, he or she must go into Professor Drumm's office.

That brings me to the issue of redundancy. With appropriate management structures right down the line, one will provide incentives to people to remain in an organisation where their talents are used appropriately, where they have got responsibility and where they can make key decisions. Nobody would want to stay in an organisation where they felt they had no real role except passing issues up the line, and that will be important.

It is too early to speak of redundancies. Clearly, there will be capacity to reduce the number of people who work for the Health Service Executive, not just in the corporate HSE headquarters where there are approximately 3,800 but in the health service generally. We must ensure, before we even embark on that, that we encourage the right people to stay. That is a human resource job. Other organisations can do it successfully and I believe we can too.

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** That concludes the time allocated for Private Notice Questions.

*Written Answers follow Adjournment Debate.*

### **Adjournment Debate Matters.**

**An Leas-Cheann Comhairle:** I wish to advise the House of the following matters in respect of which notice has been given under Standing Order 21 and the name of the Member in each case: (1) Deputy Joe Carey — the provision of water services in Ennis, County Clare and in the other gateway and hub towns listed in the national spatial strategy; (2) Deputy Joe Costello — the need to mainstream the “Dial to Stop a Drug Dealer” campaign currently being operated on a pilot basis by Store Street Garda Station; (3) Deputy Joanna Tuffy — to ask the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if the Haulbowline site, Cork is affected by the provisions of the Seveso Directive, or any other directive and if so, whether the provisions have been complied with in respect of this site or any other relevant sites or establishments; (4) Deputy Dan Neville — the need to address the second report of the independent monitoring group on the expert group on mental health policy's A Vision for Change; (5) Deputy Róisín Shortall — the urgent need to grant permanent recognition to Gaelscoil Uí Earcháin, Finglas, Dublin 11 in order that the school may be able to secure accommodation for its pupils in light of the collapse of the Department of Education and Science's negotiations on another vacant school building in Finglas; and (6) Deputy Lucinda Creighton — the threat to water quality in Dublin Bay caused by Ringsend wastewater treatment plant operating above maximum capacity.

The matters raised by Deputies Dan Neville, Joe Costello, Joe Carey and Lucinda Creighton have been selected for discussion.



## Adjournment Debate.

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### Mental Health Services.

**Deputy Dan Neville:** I welcome the opportunity to address the report of the independent monitoring group on A Vision for Change. The group is chaired by an eminent person, Dr. Ruth Harrington, and I note that a member of the monitoring group is the former Minister of State in the area, Mr. Tim O'Malley.

The monitoring group, in the conclusions of its first report which was published last year, recognised that 2006 was a year of significant challenge and change for mental health services and expressed the view that it expected to see accelerated action in the second and subsequent years. It is disappointing to report, by and large, that the recommendations of the first report of the independent group have not been addressed in 2007, but they have been prioritised for 2008. However, no resources have been allocated to introduce them because the Minister has suspended giving any further resources to implementing A Vision for Change.

The main concerns of the monitoring group on the implementation by the HSE include the absence of clear, identifiable leadership within the HSE to implement A Vision for Change. The monitoring group considers that the Health Service Executive was mistaken in its decision not to implement the recommendation to establish a national mental health service directorate to drive the changes recommended in the report. The monitoring group does not believe that the administrative arrangements put in place by the HSE are appropriate to the scale of the changes requires. The monitoring group notes that the HSE appointed a director of cancer services in 2007, which was mentioned earlier, to lead implementation of the cancer strategy, and the reform of the mental health services, it states, requires a similar approach. The national steering group appointed to manage the planning and implementation for A Vision for Change is not multidisciplinary and includes no service user or carer representative, as recommended. In addition, the role and relationship of the steering group to the HSE expert advisory group on mental health and the implementation group is unclear. There is a confusion of roles in that regard.

The HSE implementation plan relates to 2008 and 2009 and spans 11 chapters of A Vision for Change, and it identified six key priorities to do so. The plan is selective and vague and is mainly limited to the years 2008 and 2009. Although many of the recommendations require a longer time span for implementation, it does not address the impact of the employment control measures with the HSE on the recruitment of key staff necessary for the implementation of A Vision for Change.

The monitoring group has been informed that a comprehensive plan will be provided by the HSE before the end of 2008. The group regrets that a comprehensive plan has not been published heretofore.

The recommendations of A Vision for Change are not being addressed as a comprehensive package. The monitoring group is concerned that the HSE transformation process is taking precedence over the implementation of the recommendations.

The resourcing of multidisciplinary community health care teams is not being adequately prioritised, an issue which we have raised repeatedly over the past three years in this House. There appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the key central role of multidisciplinary teams, as envisaged in A Vision for Change. Primary care and significant aspects of specialist mental health care, including the multidisciplinary community mental health care group, are concerned about the potential for a blurring of boundaries.

The monitoring group also raises the issue, highlighted on several occasions in the House, of the use of funds. Some €24 million of the €51 million development funding allocated to the

HSE for the implementation of A Vision for Change was not used as planned. It was hived off elsewhere and it is not apparent to the monitoring group who in the HSE has budgetary responsibility for mental health services or how budgetary decisions affecting mental health services are made. Will the Minister of State identify who is responsible for making these budgetary decisions? As he has come into the House with a prepared script I am sure the matter will not be addressed.

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews):** I take this Adjournment debate on behalf of my colleague, the Minister for Health and Children, Deputy Mary Harney. I thank Deputy Neville for raising this issue. I warmly acknowledge that it has been inspired by a genuine commitment to ensure that persons with mental health difficulties receive the best service possible and, for that reason, I welcome the opportunity to explore this issue in the House this afternoon.

I will discuss the findings of the report, but it is important to acknowledge how far we have come in the area of mental health. I do not wish to dwell on the past, but in 1961 the rate of psychiatric beds per 1,000 of population was 7.3, which was believed to be among the highest in the world. Ireland was described as being “hospital prone”. For a considerable time those in need of treatment or care had little choice but to seek it within an institution. Although there was considerable stigma attached to these institutions, they were the only places available.

I am pleased to say that since then, significant developments have taken place——

**Deputy Dan Neville:** The community based team did not replace——

**Deputy Barry Andrews:** ——with the full implementation of the Mental Health Act 2001 and the launch of two important strategy documents, A Vision for Change, the report of the expert group on mental health, and *Reach Out*, the national strategy for action on suicide prevention.

A Vision for Change, launched in January 2006, represents an action plan for the development of a quality mental health service which places the patient at the centre. It recognises both the strengths and inadequacies of existing services and a strategy for building on the innovations outlined in previous strategy documents. The Government has accepted the report as the basis for the future development of our mental health services and is firmly committed to its full implementation.

Although there have been great strides taken in the development of mental health services in Ireland, I accept that we are not where we want to be, but we are getting there. A Vision for Change is an ambitious and aspiring publication, containing 200 recommendations to be implemented over a seven to ten year timeframe. The challenge is to maximise the benefits of having such a progressive strategy to ensure that real benefits for the patient and indeed for society as a whole are realised.

The second annual report of the independent monitoring group was published on 27 June 2008. I welcome the findings and recommendations in the report. The group expressed its disappointment at the slow rate of progress in implementing A Vision for Change. We must accept that much work needs to be done and I look forward to seeing increased progress this year and in subsequent years.

The HSE recently approved its implementation plan which sets out six key priorities for 2008 and 2009. These include the provision of eight additional consultant child psychiatry teams. The HSE recently advertised an additional 12 consultant child and adolescent psychiatrists and is examining new ways of working to address waiting lists. Another priority is the provision of 18 additional beds for children and adolescents at St. Anne’s Hospital in Galway, St. Vincent’s Hospital in Fairview and St. Stephen’s Hospital in Cork. This will increase the bed complement from the current provision of 12 to 30 during 2008, which represents a 150% increase in child

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and adolescent inpatient bed capacity. A third priority is the construction of two 20 bed units for children and adolescents in Cork and Galway. Construction of these units is expected to be completed in 2009.

The HSE will also expand multidisciplinary community based mental health teams and complete existing teams. It is intended to support new and existing teams to develop the multidisciplinary nature of their services and provide a more comprehensive range of medical, psychological and social therapies to service users and families. Adopting a holistic approach to developing services lies at the core of A Vision for Change.

Work is also advanced nationally on the process of replacing the remaining psychiatric hospitals with a range of modern mental health services. Closure plans for existing psychiatric hospitals will be put in place by the end of 2008 and the revenue raised from these sales will be directed towards improving mental health services.

Mental health has been in receipt of unprecedented investment in recent years which has allowed us to make real improvements to mental health services. However, it is not just funding that has made a difference. It is a completely different approach that has and will enable new mental health services to develop. We now have a much greater focus on community services, the provision of multidisciplinary teams, early intervention services and many others. The modernisation and reform of services is in line with what patients want and what they need.

I assure Deputy Neville that the Government is firmly committed to the implementation of A Vision for Change. The Government's decision to establish an office for disability and mental health reflects its ongoing commitment to developing a more coherent and integrated response to the needs of people with disabilities and mental health problems. The overall vision is to establish structures which provide greater cohesion in supporting disability and mental health across the public service. The office brings a new impetus to the implementation of A Vision for Change, working in partnership with the HSE and other stakeholders to achieve implementation of agreed targets. The HSE has undertaken to prepare a more comprehensive implementation plan for beyond 2009 by the end of this year and I reiterate the Government's commitment to the full implementation of A Vision for Change.

### **Drug Dealing.**

**Deputy Joe Costello:** I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak about this pilot programme in the House. Much drug dealing takes place in public houses. Moreover, there is a great propensity for multi-drug use with alcohol consumption. Publicans have a legal responsibility to ensure that drugs are neither traded nor consumed on their premises.

Last Christmas the supply control committee of the Dublin north inner city drug task force, of which I am chairman, linked up with Store Street Garda station through the good offices of Inspector Gus Keane, a very active member of the supply control committee. Inspector Keane organised several meetings with the proprietors of public houses in the north inner city. We explained the need for publicans to ensure their premises were drug free. Large posters were produced, advertising the publicans' responsibilities and displaying dedicated telephone numbers with "dial to stop a drug dealer" emblazoned, for display in each public house. The Garda funded the cost of these posters. Large quantities of beer mats were made available for distribution on bars and tables in public houses.

The programme has been in operation for 12 months. There was originally a slow take-up, but it was very important that all publicans bought into the programme. They turned up in large numbers at the meetings. Anecdotal evidence suggests the initiative is providing encouragement to people to reject drug dealing and refrain from drug consumption in public houses in the area. Publicans have signs prominently displayed. They are happy with the initiative, happy to participate, and they feel reassured by their ability to demonstrate they are actively

implementing the law by preventing drug dealing and drug consumption on their premises. It is reassuring for them to have these signs prominently on display and to have corresponding beer mats on the tables.

This is a practical initiative that adds to the curtailment of the activities of drug pushers. If it was rolled out nationwide, it would make a valuable contribution to the fight against drug abuse. I call on the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform to take steps to mainstream the “dial to stop a drug dealer” programme as quickly as possible. If the programme were successfully established on a wide basis, it could be extended to other retail outlets in community areas such as off-licences and shops. There could be bus stop advertising too and we could begin the process of creating drug free zones where a premises would have on display material stating it is drug free — steps to ensure this have been taken.

This is a practical initiative which, in so far as it has been operational, demonstrates that it has good effect. It is not a very expensive programme and requires no extra personnel or staffing. Costs would be limited to the necessary materials. The steps involved are to organise several meetings, explain what is intended, explain the law and get the programme operational.

**Deputy Barry Andrews:** I reply on behalf of my colleague, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Deputy Dermot Ahern. I thank Deputy Costello for raising this matter. The Government very much welcomes and wholeheartedly supports this initiative taken by the Garda Síochána in its introduction of the “dial to stop drug dealing” project in the Garda Dublin north central division and the similar initiative on which it was based, which was led by the Blanchardstown local drug task force in its area during 2006.

Before getting into the detail of the Government’s specific proposals, which will now further assist the development of such initiatives, I would like, on behalf of the Minister, to first set out the context in which this work needs to take place. First, all of us in this House are well aware that the issue of drug misuse remains one of the most pressing social problems facing us. It is, sadly, a problem experienced globally for which there is no quick and easy solution.

Given the severe harmful and destructive consequences brought about by drug abuse at individual, family and community levels, it is undoubtedly an issue on which we as a society must continue to collectively maintain a keen focus and urgency in addressing. As the Minister and many of my other Government colleagues have stated previously, the focus in our jurisdiction must be to strive constantly to ensure that the measures and policies we have in place to address the problem are appropriate and flexible enough to be able to respond to what is a global and dynamic issue.

As the House will, I am sure, appreciate, the remit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform under the national drugs strategy is primarily, although not exclusively, in the area of drug supply reduction and drug law enforcement remains a key feature of the Government’s drug policy framework. It follows that the “dial to stop drug dealing” initiatives which have emerged recently are of such particular interest to my colleague the Minister, Deputy Dermot Ahern.

An Garda Síochána retains primary responsibility in this regard and it will continue with the Government’s full support to invoke vigorously the range of broad strategic responses it has in place to address the issue. However, any assistance which can be provided to the Garda by the public in tackling the crime of drug dealing is to be welcomed and fully encouraged.

“Dial to stop drug dealing” campaigns offer a real opportunity to deliver the integrated action to which I referred to earlier in a very pragmatic way. The Minister understands that the campaigns in Blanchardstown and Dublin’s north inner city are deemed to have been

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successful local initiatives with feedback on their operation from the local drug task forces there, An Garda Síochána and the local community all of a supportive nature. An Garda Síochána has reported that the information generated in some of the reports made to the confidential numbers have been particularly helpful in terms of identifying new dealers, confirming existing suspicions and generally assisting police intelligence on local drug dealing activity. The campaigns have directly led to a number of arrests for drug dealing in the local areas.

The Minister also understands that during the formal evaluation of the Blanchardstown model, the gardaí in the local area particularly welcomed the sense of an increased co-operative approach between An Garda Síochána and the local community to tackling drug dealing in the area, which the campaign there appears to have generated. All of this is very positive and I am pleased to advise the House that following the success of these initiatives, the national drugs strategy team in conjunction with An Garda Síochána is currently finalising proposals to begin a national roll-out of this programme this year in conjunction with the 14 local and ten regional drug task forces.

To facilitate this, an allocation of €300,000 has been secured from dormant assets funds to proceed with this programme. On behalf of the Minister, I am pleased also to advise the House that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is also providing additional funding of €50,000 to support this initiative. The Minister understands that the national drugs strategy team anticipates that the roll-out of this programme nationally will begin this autumn. The Minister looks forward to the implementation of this programme and he will continue to support it in every way he can.

### **Water and Sewerage Schemes.**

**Deputy Joe Carey:** I thank the Ceann Comhairle for allowing me to raise this most important issue. We have no records that Coleridge's ancient mariner ever made it as far as Ennis, but the refrain, "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink", certainly gets one thinking.

Some 30,000 people dependent on the Ennis water supply, which services Ennis, Clarecastle, Barefield, Crusheen, Doora, Drumcliff and Spancilhill. Since July 2005, these 30,000 people have had to deal with boil notice after boil notice on their water supply due to the presence of cryptosporidium. The spring at Drumcliff from which the Ennis water supply drawn remains volatile, due to its limestone karstic base, and is considered highly susceptible to cryptosporidium.

Almost three years ago, in July 2005, the first reported outbreak of cryptosporidium in the Ennis water supply came about, yet it took a full 13 months before an interim treatment plant was commissioned to filter the water. Ennis has also fared quiet poorly in comparison to Galway.

In Galway, a water voucher scheme was established within weeks of the first outbreak of cryptosporidium and rate payers also received a rate rebate. None of these measures was introduced in Ennis and residents and business people alike are very angry as a result.

Since the provision of the temporary water filtration plant, five or six full boil notices have been placed on the Ennis water supply. Since July 2005, the HSE, together with the local authority, has placed a partial boil notice on the water, which advises water be boiled before consumption by the immuno-compromised, infants and pre-school children.

Given these circumstances, confidence in the Ennis water supply is at a very low level. Last Sunday, that confidence was almost sunk when residents were informed that they should conserve water, as the quantity of treated water passing through the interim treatment plant was



not sufficient to meet demands because of heavy rainfall. I understand that following consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency and the HSE, Clare County Council later decided to partially bypass the filtration system with a view to increasing the quantity of water that could be dispatched to consumers.

This move was designed to replenish the storage levels in reservoirs, restore supply to all consumers and ensure that critical areas such as the fire service and hospitals such as Ennis General and St. Joseph's hospital had an adequate volume of water. To think that a town's water supply was put out of action because of heavy rainfall is both ironic and tragic.

This latest problem with the Ennis water supply highlights the fact that we now urgently need an alternative water supply not just to address the water quality issue, but also the water quantity issue. This evening, I propose a solution to the daily problems which residents encounter, such as having to boil or buy water to brush teeth, wash vegetables or simply drink a clean fresh glass of water. Significant water pressure problems also exist throughout parts of Ennis, Clarecastle and Doora, which prevent people from washing and taking showers when they want.

I ask the Minister of State to fast-track the delivery of the Ennis water augmentation scheme. This scheme will provide Ennis with a new water supply which will be a plan B. It will be a source of water free of cryptosporidium and which will address our water quantity issues.

The scheme up to now has been looked upon as a long-term project. It is clear Ennis needs access to an alternative water supply as soon as possible. I ask the Minister and Department to engage directly with the local authorities in Ennis to drive the speedy delivery of this vital scheme.

The outstanding elements of the Ennis water augmentation scheme consist of the following elements. A new pumping station at Clareabbey must be built, a new reservoir at Edenvale must be constructed and extraction capacity at Castle Lake must be increased. The remaining piping work, which has been laid along the Newmarket-on-Fergus bypass and new Ennis bypass, must be completed.

As an immediate action, I am asking that a simple pump and less than a kilometre of piping be provided from Carnelly to Kerins Cross in Clarecastle, as this work would access the Castle Lake water supply and provide a solution to the water shortages in Clarecastle and Doora, taking pressure off the Ennis town supply. I have proposed this measure several times in the past in the chamber of Clare County Council; it makes common sense and must happen as soon as possible.

I am appealing to the Minister on behalf of the 30,000 people who are dependent on the Ennis water supply. I am looking for a commitment that the Minister will ensure that the Ennis water augmentation scheme is prioritised. This scheme will solve the daily intolerable problems relating to our water.

I ask the Minister to take a hands-on approach to this issue because if he does not, our problems will only worsen. Water is a basic right and we live in a First World economy. The people of Ennis, Clarecastle, Barefield, Doora and Crusheen are depending on the Minister to provide that basic right of clean fresh drinking water with proper pressure and service.

**Deputy Barry Andrews:** I am taking this matter on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Since its adoption in 2002, the objectives of the national spatial strategy have been among the key criteria local authorities have taken into consideration in their needs assessments for new water services infrastructure. It will be no surprise, therefore, that the current water services investment programme, announced by the Minister last September, allows for invest-

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ment of some €2.6 billion in the hubs and gateways over the next few years. The programme is available in the Oireachtas Library.

The range of new water and sewerage schemes planned and in progress in the hubs and gateways provides strong evidence of the Government's determination to safeguard the environment in these areas while making provision for new housing, new jobs and all the other requirements of a successful hub or gateway location.

In the period since 2000, over 400 water services infrastructure schemes have been completed by the Department, many in hubs and gateways. The completion of major wastewater infrastructure projects in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway are cases in point. In the hub town of Ennis, the Department is providing substantial funding towards new long-term water services infrastructure which will serve the objectives of the national spatial strategy and benefit the residential and business communities in the town.

Three major water supply scheme projects are included in the Department's Water Services Investment Programme 2007 to 2009. A new water treatment plant is being constructed as part of the Ennis town water supply treatment scheme. I understand the council signed the €8.3 million contract in July 2007 and work will be finished in February 2009. The Ennis town water supply augmentation scheme, which will supplement the Ennis supply with water from Castl lake, is in the programme at an estimated cost of €6.3 million. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government approved Clare County Council's proposals to lay the pipework for the scheme in conjunction with the Ennis Road bypass and completion of these works is a matter for the council.

The water services investment programme also contains the €21 million Castl lake water supply scheme, which will improve the Castl lake source to cater for future needs. I understand the Department is awaiting a brief from Clare County Council for the appointment of consultants to draw up the preliminary report for the scheme. Also included in the programme is the Ennis-Clarecastle sewerage scheme which will cost in the region of €58 million.

The Minister is aware that there have been problems with the town's present water supply for some time and there is a continuing precautionary boil water regime in place for certain groups, such as the elderly, the very young and people who are immuno-compromised. This is not what should be expected in this day and age. However, I understand the council has tried to minimise the problems by installing a temporary water treatment plant while the new permanent €8.3 million treatment works is constructed. The Minister provided special local government fund assistance towards the running costs of this temporary plant in 2006 and 2007 and will soon announce the 2008 round of allocations.

I understand the temporary plant has been unable to meet demand in recent days. Clearly, it would be much better if this situation had not come about. However, a temporary plant is just that and cannot be expected to perform as well as the new permanent treatment facility which will come on stream next year. The Minister shares what must be the view of everyone in the town that progress with the new plant must be kept on track in terms of time and I understand Clare County Council is doing everything possible to ensure it is completed on time. In the meantime, it is a matter for the council, as the statutory water services authority, to take whatever steps are needed to ensure the requirements of all consumers in the town are accommodated to the greatest extent possible.

### **Water Quality.**

**Deputy Lucinda Creighton:** I thank the Ceann Comhairle for the opportunity to raise this issue. It was interesting to listen to the Minister of State's response to the issue raised by

Deputy Joe Carey regarding the Ennis water supply. I hope the state-of-the-art sewerage plant scheduled to come on stream next year will be much more successful than the Ringsend plant in my constituency of Dublin South-East where the entire process has been farcical, to say the least.

I will raise two connected and significant issues. First, as reported in the media in the past week, the Ringsend sewerage treatment plant is operating at between 20% and 30% above its capacity. I have found it difficult to obtain concrete information, other than a submission to An Bord Pleanála, from Dublin City Council on this matter. It is astonishing that the Minister has claimed population growth in Dublin city could not be predicted. The CSO's prediction of even greater population growth than we have experienced contradicts the Minister's bizarre and ridiculous claim, made on the national broadcaster, that he did know what population growth was expected in the capital city.

Second, Dublin City Council paid a startling sum of money to the ABA consortium which has operated the Ringsend sewage treatment plant in a shameful fashion. Not only was the sum of €38 million paid out, but it was sanctioned by the Minister who represents the constituency in which the plant is located. It is extraordinary that the Minister who sanctioned this payment has, in press statements and media interviews, called for an investigation into how the payment was made and went wrong. This would be laughable if it were not so serious.

The reason I object to the payment of a substantial sum to the ABA consortium is that it did not honour the contract it signed up to in terms of operating the sewage treatment plant in Ringsend. In response to a recent question I submitted to Dublin City Council, I received an extraordinary update in which the council detailed the short-term remedial works which have been done at the plant since 2006. The company covered channels, installed additional odour control units and improved sludge handling and drying. These steps should have been taken from day one. The plant was sold to the people of Dublin as a state-of-the-art facility in 2003.

The long-term works referred to in the council's reply included the covering of the primary treatment tanks. A sewage treatment plant was built in the centre of large urban population without the tanks being covered up and Dublin City Council is surprised to learn that an odour was emanating from the facility. The company which constructed the plant clearly did not do what it should have done to ensure it was of an adequate standard to serve the population of Dublin. Having failed to do this work, Dublin City Council did not have the capacity to demand from the company any form of accountability. The ABA consortium should have paid for the remedial works but was instead paid by Dublin City Council to do works it should have done in the first instance. It is a fundamental flaw of the public-private partnership process that the contracts signed do not include penalty clauses. This is a major problem across the board.

I wish Deputy Joe Carey luck regarding the sewage treatment plant in County Clare. I hope it is not the disaster we, in Dublin South-East, have had to endure for the past five years.

**Deputy Barry Andrews:** I am pleased to reassure the House, on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy Gormley, that there is no imminent threat to water quality in Dublin Bay. This is clearly demonstrated by the Environmental Protection Agency's bathing water quality report for 2007, which shows all bathing areas from Skerries to Killiney comply with EU standards. Indeed, Dollymount Strand has also gained a blue flag in recognition of premium water quality.

I am also pleased to confirm that Dublin City Council reports that the Ringsend plant consistently meets the required effluent standards for treated waste water. The Minister is aware of suggestions in recent days that the plant is operating beyond capacity but this needs to be

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qualified in order for the full picture to be seen. Capacity can be calculated in a number of ways, namely, from influent flow, biochemical oxygen demand, BOD, suspended solids, chemical oxygen demand and nutrients, each of which would give a different capacity figure. When a plant is being designed, it must have sufficient capability to deal with load fluctuations higher than the design average on all these parameters.

The design capacity of the Ringsend plant is a nominal 1.64 million population equivalent, average load, based on BOD. The plant provides secondary treatment to approximately 99% of waste water arising in the Dublin region. It deals with the waste water treatment needs of approximately 1.1 million people, with the non-domestic load associated with areas as far apart as Dún Laoghaire, Ratoath, Ashbourne and Portmarnock. The critical fact is that the required effluent standards are being met. This has transformed water quality in Dublin Bay and that improvement is being maintained.

While water quality in Dublin Bay has greatly improved, the Minister is aware that there were protracted delays during the commissioning and testing of the new plant in 2002, when difficulties were experienced in achieving the required performance standards. In particular, he is conscious of the odour problems that were experienced by residents in his and Deputy Creighton's constituency within a short time of the plant coming into operation and that have occurred intermittently since. Works under way to resolve this issue are due for completion later this year.

To resolve as many as possible of the questions surrounding the design and capacity of the plant and past efforts to deal with the odour issue, the Minister is arranging for an independent examination of the design parameters of the works to determine whether they adequately addressed existing and projected loads at the time they were approved. A broad range of issues will be considered during this examination. These include the appropriateness of the design capacity of the plant, having regard to the information available at that time; the volume and timing of actual waste water loads going to the plant by comparison to the load projections when the design capacity was determined; and the factors that contributed to the odour problems and the effectiveness of the actions taken to deal with such odours. The Minister expects to be in a position very shortly to appoint a suitably qualified person to carry out the examination and report back to him before the end of the summer.

The Dáil adjourned at 5.20 p.m. until 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 8 July 2008.

## Written Answers.

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**The following are questions tabled by Members for written response and the ministerial replies as received on the day from the Departments [unrevised].**

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*Questions Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive, answered orally.*

### **Schools Refurbishment.**

7. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the summer works scheme. [26183/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** In 2003/2004, my Department moved towards a model of devolving funding, responsibility and authority for building projects directly to school management authorities. The intention was to improve the quality of the school building infrastructure in a structured and prioritised manner, to improve efficiency in the use of resources and to achieve value for money. The Summer Works Scheme introduced in 2004, was one such solution.

The purpose of the Summer Works Scheme was to ensure precise targeting of funding for smaller scale works by using a time-bound process, from application to implementation, which would be open to all recognised schools. The works would be carried out in the summer months to prevent disruption to schools.

Under the terms of the Scheme, school authorities are empowered to manage these works with guidance from, and minimal interaction with, my Department.

The Scheme has enabled the Department and school authorities to address deficiencies arising from the historic under-investment in school infrastructure over the years. This is particularly the case in relation to upgrading of gas, mechanics and electrics and addressing structural defects. Projects to facilitate inclusion and access for special needs pupils are also a feature of the scheme.

Since its inception, the scheme has been refined annually to incorporate feedback both from school authorities and from staff administering the Scheme. It has also been amended where necessary to reflect any changes in Public Procurement Procedures and Health and Safety regulations.

Since the Summer Works Scheme was introduced, over 3,000 projects, costing in excess of €300 million, have been completed. With so many smaller projects having been completed over



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the past few years, the particular emphasis in 2008 is on providing sufficient school places in developing areas, while also delivering improvements in the quality of existing primary and post-primary school accommodation throughout the country. Accordingly my Department is focusing on delivering as many large projects as possible in 2008 and funding was not made available for a Summer Works Scheme this year.

However, I recognise the benefits of the scheme in addressing the needs of schools and I intend to have a Summer Works Scheme in 2009.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

8. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when it is intended to restore the school building programme to the scale indicated in 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26052/08]

10. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will confirm that capital investment will amount to almost €830 million in 2008 of which less than €600 million will be invested in school buildings, including the completion of work on 67 large scale projects, the opening of 27 new schools in rapidly developing areas in September 2008 and construction on work on more than 150 devolved projects under the previous permanent accommodation schemes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26073/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 8 and 10 together.

My Department’s total capital allocation for 2008 is €827m. Just under €600m of this allocation will be invested in school buildings.

The extent of the school building and modernisation programme is determined by the annual capital allocation. This has grown steadily in recent years from just under €400m in 2004 to €542m in 2007 and to over €586m this year.

The principal component of the school building and modernisation programme is the delivery of large scale projects which consists of either new schools or major extensions or refurbishments of existing schools.

In 2007, a total of 16 new schools were completed together with 44 extension/refurbishment projects giving an overall total of 60 large scale projects completed in 2007.

The expected completion of large scale projects in 2008 will consist of 21 new schools and 46 extension/refurbishment projects giving an overall total of 67 large scale projects completing in 2008.

An additional feature of the 2008 school building and modernisation programme is the provision of new schools in developing areas under an accelerated programme. To cater for the anticipated increases in the school-going population, my Department has established a Developing Areas Unit to identify areas of rapid population growth, to assess the educational needs in these areas and to plan solutions for the accommodation needs identified.

As part of a fast-track programme of construction for September 2008, the Department is building six 16-classroom schools, 20 eight-classroom schools and a number of smaller projects in those areas where school accommodation is under greatest pressure.

Under the Permanent Accommodation and Small Schools Scheme in 2007, a total of 130 projects were completed. To date in 2008, a total of 52 projects under these devolved projects have been completed while a further 174 projects are currently under construction. In addition,

a further 148 devolved projects have not yet gone on site but it is expected that the majority of these will be under construction before year-end.

With such a high level of activity underway, the completion of buildings in 2008 under these devolved schemes will significantly exceed the number of projects completed in 2007.

As I have already stated, the capital allocation on the Primary and Post-Primary sectors for 2008 is over €40m greater than the allocation in 2007. However, I should point out that a supplementary estimate and internal adjustments in 2007 gave a final outturn for that year of €646m of which over €30m was in respect of a technical adjustment in respect of payments to the OPW the previous year.

Decisions in respect of the expenditure of the annual allocation are made on the basis of the elements of the school building and modernisation programme that are most pressing in terms of need.

As the programme for the delivery of large scale projects and the purchase of sites is a larger component of the 2008 school building and modernisation programme than in previous years, it was not possible to have a Summer Works Scheme this year. Because over 250 projects under the devolved Permanent Accommodation or Small Schools Schemes had not managed to commence construction at the beginning of 2008, it was decided not to add further projects to the programme without substantial progress taking place on those projects not yet on site.

The primary and post-primary capital allocation for 2008 is higher than the 2007 allocation and the combined output of traditional build schools and extension and refurbishment projects together with the schools fast-tracked for delivery in September 2008 will result in the practical completion of far more large scale projects than the level of output experienced in 2007. When the large scale projects are combined with the expected level of projects being completed under the Permanent Accommodation and Small Schools Schemes this year, it is clear that the scale of delivery in 2008 addressing accommodation needs is at an all time high.

As I have indicated previously to the House, I am currently in the process of reviewing my Department's school building and modernisation programme with my officials. I do not propose to make any further announcements on the school building programme until that review is completed.

### **School Accommodation.**

**9. Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if in respect to his Department's ongoing survey and analysis of prefab classrooms and resource rooms in the primary school system he will list the ownership of every prefab in use in primary schools including the name and townland of every primary school that has a prefab classroom or resource room, the name of the company, individual or organisation including his Department, renting the prefabs to each primary school and other miscellaneous owners; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26105/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** As the Deputy will be aware, my Department has surveyed schools regarding their use of prefabricated accommodation and is in the process of compiling this information. I will write to the Deputy regarding this survey and the information my Department has compiled from it.

My Department has undertaken an assessment of the rental of temporary accommodation with a view to identifying the point at which purchase of such accommodation provides better value for money than rental.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

As a result of this assessment, my Department now has a policy of purchasing temporary accommodation where the need for this is likely to last for more than three years. The effect of this change in policy will be to minimise the amount paid on the rental of accommodation.

The Permanent Accommodation Scheme was introduced in 2003 to reduce the need for prefabs. It was designed to give value for money in terms of providing permanent accommodation in place of prefabs, where an accommodation need was likely to exist for a considerable length of time. Since its introduction, over €100m has been allocated to schools under the scheme and it has resulted in the provision of an additional 625 classrooms and 275 resource rooms in schools around the country. This is in addition to those classrooms provided under the major capital projects managed by my Department.

Had the Permanent Accommodation Scheme not been in place, a very significant proportion of those classrooms and resource rooms would have had to be provided using temporary accommodation such as prefabricated classrooms.

Despite this, it will continue to be necessary for prefabricated accommodation to be provided because competing priorities mean that it will not always be possible to have a permanent accommodation solution in place in a short time-frame. My Department will continue to provide funding for such prefabricated accommodation and the decision on whether to rent or purchase will depend on the likely length of time it will be required. In all cases, the approach will be to ensure best value for money.

*Question No. 10 answered with Question No. 8.*

#### **School Enrolments.**

11. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he is to establish an enrolment commissioner-admissions officer; if this appointment is contrary to the spirit of the recommendations of the Cromien report 2000 in the context of an audit of school enrolment policies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26069/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The audit of school enrolment policies, published on my Department’s website on 28 April last, looked at the enrolment of Traveller children, newcomer children and children with special education needs in almost 2,000 schools at primary and post-primary level. The audit also looked at the written enrolment policies of a proportion of these schools and, more tellingly, how these policies translate into practice in terms of actual enrolment patterns.

At a general level, the audit finds no evidence of any system wide enrolment practices that give rise to concern. The audit does give rise to wider policy questions relating to:

- The need for enhanced information for parents about their rights should a school refuse to enrol their child.
- Those aspects of the written enrolment policies of schools which may be deemed exclusionary, e.g. pre-enrolling children from birth or providing preference to children of past pupils, thereby putting newcomers to communities at a disadvantage.
- The potential for improved inter-school co-operation in a given area in order to address enrolment anomalies.
- Possible proposals for intervention in local admissions where inter-school co-operation is not achieved.

- How identified problems can best be addressed.

A process of consultation with the main education partners on possible follow-up policy responses was commenced at the end of April, with a deadline for receipt of submissions of 6 June 2008. As part of this consultation process, specific questions were posed around the policy issues and possible approaches identified above. The potential role of a designated officer with powers of intervention in local school admissions, where inter-school co-operation cannot be achieved, is one possible approach on which specific views were sought. Under this particular proposal, it is envisaged that such powers would only be used in exceptional circumstances and as such I am satisfied that it would not run counter to the spirit of the Cromien Report recommendations.

The responses received under the consultation process are now under consideration and it is my intention to take account of all views expressed before formulating any specific proposals for action in order to address any anomalous enrolment practice that has been identified by the audit.

### **Telecommunications Services.**

12. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Minister for Education and Science the percentage and number of schools that have broadband; his views on the acceptable minimum download speed a school should have; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [21361/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** My Department is providing broadband connectivity to recognised primary and post-primary schools under the Schools Broadband Access Programme. This programme is being undertaken in partnership with industry in the context of a Government — IBEC/TIF (Telecommunications and Internet Federation) Agreement to provide local broadband connectivity to schools.

The Programme has three elements — local connectivity to schools, a national broadband network and a broadband support service desk. Schools connectivity is being routed to the Internet through a national broadband network, which is supported by HEAnet and provides centrally managed services for schools such as security, anti-spam/anti-virus and content filtering. The broadband support service desk has been established to interface between the network, the local broadband service Access Providers and schools. It is managed by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE).

A competitive, technology neutral, central procurement process for the provision of local connectivity for schools was undertaken based on a tiered bandwidth provision, ranging from 0.5 Megabits per second (Mbps) in the case of small primary schools up to 2 Mbps for larger post-primary schools. Contracts were finalised in 2005 with six Service Providers for the provision of local access connectivity to 3,925 schools and with a further Provider for the installation of a broadband router at school level where appropriate. The 3,925 initial individual school awards involved a range of technologies. Roll-out commenced in June 2005. The total number of schools involved in the Programme has been adjusted in the meantime to reflect a number of school openings, closures and amalgamations and stands currently at 3,936. As of 24th June, 2008, 3,901 (99%) have had their local connectivity installed and of these 3,899 have had their router capability installed and tested. These figures have been updated to remove the inadvertent double counting of six schools that had amalgamated, following their initial broadband installations.

The breakdown of technologies across the 3,901 local connectivity installations is 27% fixed line services, 26% wireless services and 47% satellite services. Having regard to the usage levels observed by HEAnet, my Department has procured additional bandwidth from its two satellite

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

providers to improve the broadband connection speeds for schools on this portion of the Schools Broadband Network. The situation continues to be monitored closely. Increased bandwidths have also been provided to some schools with fixed line services as a consequence of improvements in the wholesale broadband market. Over 650 schools are now receiving bandwidths of 3Mbps or higher. In addition, my Department has migrated schools to superior alternative technologies, where feasible.

A further 72 schools have had broadband access provided under the Hermes and Advanced Deployment programmes and are not included in the 3,901 figure. The split of technologies across these schools is 60% fixed line, 35% wireless and 5% satellite.

Looking to the future, my colleague, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources has this morning launched the Next Generation Broadband Policy Paper which includes the objective of equipping second-level schools with 100Mbps per second of broadband connectivity and installing local area networks. I look forward to working with my colleague, Minister Ryan, in the pursuit of this objective. Furthermore, my Department will shortly issue a Request for Tenders for the next round of service under the existing Schools Broadband Programme and having regard to the general developments in broadband availability nationally, improved service offerings are expected to be received under the new tender process.

#### **Departmental Funding.**

13. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will ensure that between his Department and the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism funding for some form of undergraduate acting programme will be guaranteed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24572/08]

36. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the plans he has to reinstate an undergraduate acting programme here in view of the fact that the programme run by Trinity College has been discontinued; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [24570/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 13 and 36 together.

Universities such as Trinity College Dublin are autonomous academically independent institutions within the meaning of the Universities Act, 1997. My Department does not have any function in relation to their day to day operational affairs. Universities receive a block grant from the Higher Education Authority and it is a matter for each college to determine how it is allocated internally. The decision of any third level institution to provide, or to discontinue, any programme of study is a matter for the institution concerned and it would, therefore, not be appropriate for me to intervene in this matter.

#### **Inquiry into Child Abuse.**

14. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will ask the accounting officer to formally request the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse to publish the list of legal firms, solicitors and barristers who were paid legal fees and the amount paid; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26066/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse was established under statute to investigate child abuse in institutions in the State, to enable persons who have suffered such abuse to give evidence to committees of the



Commission and to prepare and publish a report of findings and recommendations considered appropriate for the alleviation of the effects of past child abuse and for the protection of children. The Commission is independent in the performance of its functions in accordance with the terms of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Act.

My Department understands that the Commission has no objection to providing this information. My Department is writing to the Commission to formally request the information. My Department will communicate with the Deputy when it has received a response.

### **School Curriculum.**

15. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he has further plans to reform the provision of English as an additional language education in schools to cater for the varying levels of English of international students. [26345/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Conor Lenihan):** In May of 2007, the Department of Education and Science issued a circular to the Management Authorities in primary and post primary schools outlining the resources available to meet the varying levels of needs of pupils for whom English is a second language. This circular has facilitated a significant expansion in the appointment of language support teachers.

There are now almost 2,000 language support teachers in primary and post primary schools, at a cost of some €120 million per annum, compared with 262 in the 2001/02 school year. The circular removed a previous limit of two language support teachers per school.

It also extended the provision of language support beyond two years for a pupil, where a specific request is made to the Department. In fact, it is now possible for some schools with over 121 students with English language needs to have 6 language support teachers. Schools with less than the 14 such pupils needed to qualify for one support teacher are provided with financial resources to assist them. In addition to providing additional teachers a number of other steps have been taken.

Two copies of the “Primary School Assessment Kit”, prepared by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) have been circulated by my Department to all primary schools in recent weeks. This kit will enable teachers to carry out initial and on-going assessments of the language proficiency of newcomer children. The Assessment Kit has also been placed on the Department’s website. It is proposed to have an assessment kit for post-primary schools available later in the year.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has prepared guidelines for teachers in primary schools to assist them in meeting the language and learning needs of children for whom English is an additional language so that they can access all areas of the primary school curriculum.

The Inspectorate of the Department is also conducting an evaluation of the provision of English as an Additional Language (EAL) in a number of primary and post-primary schools in 2008 and 2009. A report on their evaluation will be prepared for mid 2009. The objectives of the evaluation are to examine the provision and the quality of teaching of English as an additional language in primary and post-primary schools. The evaluation will also review the quality of learning achieved by the migrant students, the effectiveness of supports and the inclusion of services for these students in whole-school planning.

At the request of the Department of Education and Science the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has undertaken a large-scale study into how an increasing diversity of students impacts upon resource requirements and day to day teaching and learning in

[Deputy Conor Lenihan.]

primary and post-primary schools. It is expected that this study will be completed in autumn 2008.

The Department is also participating in an OECD review of migrant education policy and practice. This review will be carried out by a team of OECD experts. This review is expected to be completed in autumn 2009. I will evaluate the findings of the Inspectorate's research and, based on their findings, and those of the ESRI, OECD and others, I will consider if any further reform is necessary in relation to the provision of English as an additional language in schools.

### **Third Level Grants.**

16. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the way he will address the fact that tens of thousands of young people are being priced out of higher education due to their parents' income being only slightly above the threshold to qualify for grants.

[26341/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** The purpose of the student grant is to contribute towards the maintenance costs associated with going to college where parental means are likely to be insufficient to meet those costs. I'm sure that the Deputy will agree with me that income thresholds are necessary, therefore, to ensure that this support is properly targeted towards those who are most in need of this assistance.

The reckonable income limits for ordinary maintenance grants were increased by 3.5% for the 2007/2008 academic year. This increase was in line with the increase in the average industrial wage for the September 2005 to September 2006 reference period. The top limit for standard rate grant eligibility where there are less than four dependent children was increased from €46,700 to €48,355, aiming to ensure that more students from households with moderate incomes will not have to pay the Student Service Charge of €825.

I should also say that the prescribed income limit for the special rate of maintenance grant for the academic year 2007/2008 was increased by 7.8% to €18,055 in line with the relevant increases in social welfare payments.

In September 2003, my Department doubled the number of qualifying thresholds from two to four, allowing qualification for 100%, 75%, 50% and 25% rates of grant. This broadening of the income thresholds benefited an estimated 5,000 additional students. Some 37% of the student population at third level now qualifies for some level of student grant assistance. In addition, it must be remembered that over 90% of undergraduate students, at all income levels, avail of Government support for free fees at a cost to the Exchequer of €346 million in 2007.

I am committed to delivering ongoing improvements in my Department's student maintenance grant schemes, including increasing the rates and income limits, as resources permit.

My Department, with the assistance of the National Access Office of the Higher Education Authority, monitors the trends in access to higher education for all socio-economic groups in order to address any inequities arising in the system. For example, the most recent data available indicate that the lowest levels of participation are now found within a socio-economic group called the "non-manual" group — 27% as against the national average of 55%.

The level of participation in higher education among this very diverse group is a complex issue that extends beyond financial barriers. A study, commissioned by the HEA, is currently being carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute on the participation in higher education of the non-manual socio-economic group. The key aim is to develop a better understanding of educational participation among young people from this group so that strategies can be developed which will support them in accessing and completing higher education.

### State Examinations.

17. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will change the name of the leaving certificate to a new title which would indicate that it is an entrance examination into third level education in view of the commitment in the programme for Government 2007 to increase the percentage of the population participating in third level education; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26075/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I do not propose to adopt a name change for the Leaving Certificate that would cast it in a narrow light with a sole focus on entrance to third level programmes.

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual and the Leaving Certificate comes at an important point in that process, namely, the end of second-level education.

The Leaving Certificate is designed as a measure of achievement, rather than a predictor of academic success or an indicator of vocational suitability, though clearly it is utilised widely in the context of admission to third level courses. Its primary purpose is to certify attainment at the end of a two-year course, rather than to provide a starting point for a third level course. The Leaving Certificate fulfils a valuable function for a much wider range of students than those who intend to take up third level courses immediately, even in times of maximum desired uptake levels.

In considering this matter we need to reflect on the broader purposes that the examination serves. The Leaving Certificate course is intended to prepare students for further education or training, for entry into employment and for their role as participative, enterprising citizens. To that end there are in fact three separate Leaving Certificate programmes, each of which lasts for two years and culminates in the award of a Leaving Certificate upon completion.

The majority of senior cycle students (68%) take the established Leaving Certificate. Typically, students take six or seven subjects in which they undergo written terminal examinations along with oral and aural examinations for Irish and modern languages. Practical tests and project work form part of the assessment for some subjects.

Some 26% of students take the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). This is best described as a Leaving Certificate with a strong vocational dimension. LCVP students must take at least five Leaving Certificate subjects along with two link modules — one on preparation for the world of work and the other on enterprise education. Assessment comprises two elements — a written examination and coursework.

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is taken by around 6% of students. It is aimed at preparing students for adult and working life and it is a person-centred course involving a cross-curricular approach rather than a subject-based structure. Assessment for the LCA is carried out over the two years of the programme.

The Leaving Certificate has a wide variety of users. Foremost amongst these are third level institutions who, since 1992, use a common points system based on grades achieved in Leaving Certificate subjects. In addition, employers and training providers use the Leaving Certificate extensively as a selection tool. FÁS also accepts the LCA as a qualification for entry to standards-based apprenticeships.

On that basis I believe it would be unwise to change the title of the Leaving Certificate to reflect its use by third level institutions for selection purposes.

### Special Educational Needs.

18. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will review the recent decision by a special educational needs organiser to confirm reduced access to special needs assistants for pupils in schools, such as a school (details supplied) in Inisowen, County Donegal. [26344/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As the Deputy may be aware, the National Council for Special Education is responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), for allocating resource teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs) to schools to support children with special needs. Applications for SNAs may be considered by the NCSE where a pupil has a significant medical need for such assistance, a significant impairment of physical or sensory function or where their behaviour is such that they are a danger to themselves or to other pupils. A pupil’s level of care may diminish over time as the child matures. Pupils may move to a different school or on to post-primary school. In such situations, the NCSE will review and adjust the SNA support required in the school. The NCSE operates within my Department’s criteria in allocating such support.

All schools have the names and contact details of their local SENO. Parents may also contact their local SENO directly to discuss their child’s special educational needs, using the contact details available on [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

The NCSE will undertake to review a decision taken by a SENO on foot of a request from a school or parents/guardians, when accompanied by relevant additional information, which may not have been to hand at the time of the decision. The NCSE has outlined this process in its Circular 01/05.

I have arranged for the details supplied by the Deputy to be forwarded to the NCSE for their attention and direct reply.

### Decentralisation Programme.

19. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Education and Science the recommendations of the general analysis and conclusions of the Cromien report 2000 by reference to specific paragraph numbers which have been accepted and implemented in full or in part; the way the decentralisation programme is impacting on the changes that are taking place; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26063/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** In June 2001, the then Minister for Education and Science announced that the Government had approved a programme of structural reform of the Department arising from the recommendations in the Cromien report.

The programme consisted of:

- i. The establishment of a State Examinations Commission (SEC) (para. 32).
- ii. The establishment of a National Council for Special Education (NCSE) (para. 28).
- iii. The establishment of a framework of regional offices of the Department (paras 49 to 52).
- iv. Bringing forward legislation to extend the remit of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to the Institutes of Technology (para 37).

The SEC has operated from Athlone since its establishment in 2003. The NCSE was established in 2003 by statutory instrument and re-established by the Education for Persons with Special

Educational Needs Act 2004 (ESPEN). It is based in Trim, with a regionalised network of Special Educational Needs Organisers.

A network of 10 regional offices has been established, with offices located in Findlater Street, Dublin, Tallaght, Dublin, Naas, Mullingar, Limerick, Navan, Sligo, Waterford, Cork and Galway. As this network was in the process of development from 2005 to 2007, managing high staff turnover arising as a consequence of decentralisation during that period was challenging. Turnover in the regional offices is now at normal levels and a recurrence of high levels of turnover is not anticipated. The Directorate of Regional Services has recently decentralised from Dublin to Mullingar.

The Institutes of Technology Act 2006 extended the remit of the HEA to co-ordinate and fund the Institutes of Technology. Decentralisation does not impact on this arrangement.

In addition to the reforms approved by Government, my predecessors indicated throughout 2001 and 2002 that the reform of the Department would also include regulatory reform and appellate processes to under-pin key allocation functions, along with the implementation of efficiency measures designed to bring the Department's procedures and processes more into line with modern administrative practice. A range of measures have been introduced since 2001 — many of which are in line with recommendations in the Cromien report. Examples include:

- Establishment of independent Appeals Boards in connection with teacher allocation.
- Establishment of School Transport Appeals Boards.

Continuing implementation of EPSEN will provide a statutory appeal process. The Student Support Bill 2008, when enacted, will provide for an appeal process.

Responsibility for the operation of payrolls for schools was previously spread over several sections, my Department has since set up a Central Payroll Division, catering for approximately 70,000 school based employees, along with a web based on line claims systems for primary and second level schools.

### **School Transport.**

20. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Education and Science the action he has taken to ensure that the increase in the cost of diesel will have no negative impact on the provision of the school transport system for the academic year 2008-09; if discussions have taken place or will take place between his Department and representatives of the school transport providers; if there are cost implications or service provision implications arising from the substantial increase in the price of diesel; and if he will make a statement on the matter.  
[26067/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey):** The increase in diesel prices arising from the higher cost of oil is an international phenomenon affecting all countries and all sectors of the economy and society. These increases will naturally have an impact on the cost of school transport services.

Bus Éireann is responsible for the operation of the School Transport Scheme on behalf of my Department. Approximately 135,000 children avail of school transport services on a daily basis using some 3,300 private contractors' vehicles and 630 Bus Éireann vehicles.

Negotiations with school bus operators regarding school bus contracts are a matter between Bus Éireann and the individual contractors and these negotiations take place prior to the commencement of the new school year in September. At this stage, it would be premature for me to comment on the outcome of such negotiations.



[Deputy Seán Haughey.]

It would not be appropriate for my Department to engage directly with representatives of school transport providers in relation to these issues.

### **Proposed Legislation.**

21. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Education and Science when he will publish the Education Ireland Bill; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26068/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** Education Ireland is a new body which is to be established in line with the recommendations of the Report on the Internationalisation of Education Services. The new body will be responsible for promoting the development of Ireland as a centre of excellence for international education. It will bring together, and build upon, the work of two existing bodies — International Education Board Ireland (IEBI), which promotes Irish third-level education overseas, and the Advisory Council for English Language Schools (ACELS), which undertakes voluntary regulation of the English language sector.

Education Ireland’s specific functions will include:

- promoting Irish educational services abroad;
- awarding a Quality Mark to qualifying institutions;
- operating a code of conduct for the pastoral care of international students;
- regulating and certifying English language schools.

Education Ireland will also prepare, and submit to me, strategic plans for the development of international education services.

In order to expedite the establishment of Education Ireland, my Department is currently finalising arrangements to establish the body in the first instance as a limited company, with a view to putting it on a statutory basis as soon as possible thereafter.

Work on drafting the General Scheme of the Education Ireland Bill, which will put the body on a statutory basis, is underway within my Department with a view to having Government approval before the end of this year. Following drafting by the Parliamentary Counsel I would expect to be in a position to publish the Bill in the first half of 2009.

### **Language Support.**

22. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the reason his Department has decided to terminate at short notice the funding to Integrate Ireland Language and Training in view of the vital services it provides to the many newcomers who have arrived here and who wish to integrate themselves and their children in society and for which they need special language training; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26101/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Conor Lenihan):** Integrate Ireland Language and Training Ltd. (IILT) approached my Department earlier this year with a proposal to withdraw from direct tuition for adult refugees and with a request that this tuition be mainstreamed.

IILT envisaged continuing direct tuition for a group of up to 200 programme refugees.

My Department accepted that mainstreaming of service provision was appropriate as it accords with the overall approach to provision of services to migrants as set out in “Migration

Nation” — a statement on integration strategy and diversity management which I recently launched.

In doing so the Department decided that all provision should be mainstreamed and provided by VECs as it would be less efficient to seek to continue with a small element of provision by IILT.

The funding allocated to IILT will now be redirected to provide for the continuation of this service through the VEC network.

The Irish Vocational Education Association has confirmed that it is happy to cooperate and collaborate with my Department in delivery of necessary English language services.

The VEC sector has already developed best practice in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision. The sector is already providing English language services for those whose first language is not English.

At present services are provided to over 12,000 people annually which clearly demonstrates the capacity of the VECs in this area. A further advantage of mainstreaming such provision through the VEC sector is the fact that the VECs have a nationwide network across all counties and cities that can readily provide classes where needed in the country using their facilities in schools and centres.

#### **State Bodies.**

23. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 170 of 5 June 2008, when he expects to be in a position to list all bodies, agencies, commissions or quangos reporting to his Department and the name, the purpose, the annual budget, the name of the chief executive-manager, the number of full-time staff employed and the date of its establishment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26102/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The information requested by the Deputy has been collated and will be sent to him shortly.

#### **Parliamentary Questions.**

24. **Deputy Michael D’Arcy** asked the Minister for Education and Science if other Deputies in the Houses of the Oireachtas have been misled in reply to parliamentary questions as this Deputy was with the response given to Parliamentary Question Nos. 257 and 258 of 20 February 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [22775/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I am happy to clarify this matter for the Deputy and also to assure him that there was no attempt to mislead him in the reply to his earlier questions. At the time of his previous Parliamentary Questions on 20th February 2008, the issue of patronage of the two new primary school buildings in Gorey referred to by the Deputy had not been decided and finalised.

The Department had made a written proposal to the Patrons of the two existing primary schools in Gorey seeking their formal agreement to relocate their existing schools to the new school buildings for which planning permission had been applied. These written proposals were forwarded to the patron bodies of the schools concerned on 11th February 2008. No formal response to these proposals had been received from the Patrons at the time of the earlier Parliamentary Questions and therefore it was not possible to state that the issue of patronage had been decided and finalised at the time.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Detailed agreement to these proposals were subsequently achieved with the Patrons and arrangements are well advanced for the two schools concerned to move to the new school buildings at the commencement of the new school year. I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **State Examinations.**

25. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Education and Science the responsibilities he has in consultation with the State Examinations Board in making changes in the leaving certificate timetable; if he was consulted and approved the changed schedule which this year placed chemistry on the same day as English paper two; if he will evaluate the impact of this change upon those pupils who sat both exams; if he will publish his conclusions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26098/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The new Leaving Certificate examination schedule for 2008 was agreed with a working group representing the Partners in Education, and was designed to reduce the demand on students especially during the first week of the examinations. It advanced Chemistry, which is sat by some 7000 students, and Geography, sat by some 25000 students, to Thursday and Friday respectively of the first week, which, along with Home Economics which is sat by some 12000 students, ensured that the majority of students got a break of at least one half day during this intensive phase. The new timetable was designed to reduce the writing burden on students by introducing a new mix of subjects between those that involve concentrated writing and those that involve less such as mathematical or scientific papers.

I am delighted to say that the new timetable meant that there were only 64 students who did not get a half day off in the first week of the 2008 Leaving Certificate exams. This is a vast improvement on 2007 where there were 11,080 students who did not get a half day.

I met with more than 90 students on Tuesday last who have just completed the Leaving Certificate to hear their views on the new timetable. The very valuable feedback which I received from the students will be taken into account in our consideration of any future changes to the Leaving Certificate timetable.

### **Pupil-Teacher Ratio.**

26. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when it is intended to deliver on the pre election promise to reduce class sizes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26051/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The Programme for Government sets out the overarching policy position in relation to the provision of additional teachers and on reductions in class size over the life of the Government.

The Programme contains a commitment to increase the number of primary teachers by at least 4000 and on that basis to make further progress on reducing class sizes.

Budget 2008 provided my Department with €4.6 billion or €380 million extra for teacher pay and pensions. This was a very substantial level of additional investment in the terms of the economic environment on which the budget was based. That allocation provides for paying for over 2000 extra primary teachers more than the number in schools when the Government took office last Summer. It covers the additional teachers that went into schools last September for the previously announced reduction to a 27 to 1 based staffing schedule along with additional

teachers this school year and in the coming school year to meet increasing enrolments, to provide for special needs and the language requirements of newcomer children.

This means that in terms of the overall commitment to provide at least 4000 additional teachers the Government in its first two years in office will be well ahead of target.

All Programme for Government commitments to improve public services including those relating to class size are contingent on the economic and budgetary environment and the need for prudent expenditure and fiscal management. Even since the presentation of Budget 2008 last December there have been significant alterations in the external and domestic environment. In that context any reasonable observer would regard the fact that the Government has already taken measures that will see the allocation of over 2000 additional teachers to primary schools as a considerable investment all things considered.

### **Health Promotion.**

27. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he has satisfied himself that enough is being done to promote healthy eating in schools. [26342/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The subjects Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Physical Education (PE), cover, among elements of the syllabus, the areas of healthy eating, healthy lifestyle, physical health, body care, exercise, relaxation and diet. The concepts of ‘Balanced Eating’ and ‘Healthy Exercise’ underlie the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle syllabi in the Home Economics curriculum at post-primary level.

Considerable progress has been made by my Department in the promotion of healthy eating in schools. This includes, inter alia:

- Schools have worked on devising healthy lunches policies as part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Physical Education (PE).
- The Post-Primary School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI) has a number of activities in place to promote healthy living in schools.
- The SPHE Support Service offers support for policy development which includes healthy eating policies.
- The Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and the School Development Planning Support (SDPS) service have prepared planning templates (with prompts) for schools to assist them in school planning for the implementation of PE curriculum and the wider aspects of physical activity and school sport.
- The majority of schools currently participating in the School Completion Programme, under the DEIS action plan, operate breakfast clubs or other meal provision, in accordance with nutritional guidelines issued by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Schools are also encouraged to promote a whole school approach to SPHE which engages the school community, parents and students in implementing strategies to promote healthy lifestyles, building on the success of the ‘Health Promoting School’ initiative.

In addition, my Department has, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Children, prepared a publication promoting Healthy Eating Policy in second-level schools. This book complements the earlier publications on Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-Schools, and Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools, published by the Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health and Children.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

My Department also participates in initiatives such as National Healthy Eating Week, which is promoted by the Department of Health and Children in co-operation with my Department and the Association of Teachers of Home Economics. It is a themed week during which activities to promote the concept of healthy eating to the whole school are organised and delivered through the medium of Home Economics including cookery demonstrations, projects, and displays.

### **School Accommodation.**

28. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary schools in County Mayo; the number of these schools that have prefabs; the number of prefabs; the age of the oldest prefab; the age of the youngest prefab; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26100/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As the Deputy will be aware, my Department contacted approximately 900 schools in September 2007, who were renting temporary accommodation, and asked them to complete a questionnaire regarding the stock of temporary accommodation in their schools. My Department is in the process of compiling this information.

I will write to the Deputy in relation to this survey and the information gathered, as it relates to the issues he has raised.

### **School Text Books.**

29. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Education and Science the steps he has taken to encourage secondary schools to develop and promote a second hand market for standard text books in the junior and senior cycle especially when there has been no change in the syllabus, in order to reduce the cost of a range of school books which can be as high as €250 in first year of secondary school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26078/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** A consultancy report, which was submitted to my Department in 1993, dealt with the factors which contribute to the cost of school text books. The main conclusion of that report was that book rental schemes are the most practical way of limiting the cost of school books to parents.

The report, copies of which were sent to all schools, contains a number of useful suggestions, including a Code of Good Practice for successful operation of book rental schemes. My Department endorsed the recommendations and urged school authorities to put in place book rental schemes to the greatest extent possible.

At post primary level, in addition to the provision of grants towards the cost of providing school textbooks for needy pupils, my Department also provides seed capital funding towards the cost of establishing book loan/rental schemes in schools designated as disadvantaged and/or schools which participate in schemes designed to combat educational disadvantage. The intention is to provide some specific financial support for the introduction or expansion of book loan/rental schemes in individual schools on an annual basis. This funding is made available for a maximum of five or six years, depending on whether a school offers a Transition Year programme. It is envisaged that schools which receive seed capital will be in a position to establish sustainable book loan/rental schemes which, after the initial special assistance, will operate on a self-financing basis where ongoing costs will be met by fee income, which can be subsidised in the case of needy pupils from the general book grant scheme allocation. Funding in respect of seed capital amounts to €0.5m in 2008.



Schools are also free to operate second-hand book exchanges and I consider that locally operated rental or exchange schemes are the most appropriate and efficient way to address the issue of the cost of school books.

### **Health Promotion.**

30. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Education and Science his views on whether nutrition should be taught in primary schools. [26343/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a mandatory part of all programmes for primary students, and its implementation is being assisted by a full-time support service. The programme begins in the infant classes and specifically addresses the need for regular exercise, and examines food and nutrition issues and the need for a balanced diet. The objective is that by fifth and sixth classes, pupils are equipped to take responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet, and in that context, exploring and examining the food pyramid. These themes are continued in the SPHE programme at junior cycle, as well as in the Home Economics, PE and Science curricula.

Health and well-being along with food and nutrition are two areas dealt with under the “taking care of my body” unit of SPHE at primary level. SPHE is presented in three strands: Myself, Myself and others and Myself and the wider world.

The strand “Myself” is concerned with the personal development of the individual child and his/her health and well-being. This strand also contributes to children establishing ways of thinking, feeling and acting that can help to promote and maintain health and well-being both now and in the future. Part of this strand deals with food and nutrition and enables the child to:

- become aware of the importance of food for growth and development
- explore food preferences and their role in a balanced diet
- discuss and explore some qualities and categories of food
- realise the importance of good hygiene when preparing food to eat.

Physical education is also part of the curriculum at primary and at post-primary level and plays a key role not just in giving students an opportunity to exercise during the school day but also in encouraging a positive attitude towards physical activity which students will hopefully carry with them into adult life.

### **Early School Leavers.**

31. **Deputy Kathleen Lynch** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he is reviewing the operation and effectiveness of the school completion programme; the number of primary schools that are participating; the number of pupils and the cost per pupil; the cost for 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26064/08]

43. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Education and Science the name, address and role number of the 224 post primary schools and 468 primary schools that participated in the school completion programme in 2007-08; if all of these school will continue to participate in 2008-09; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26071/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 31 and 43 together.

[Deputy Seán Haughey.]

The information requested by the Deputy in relation to the 124 School Completion Programme sites, comprising 224 post-primary and 468 primary schools currently participating in the School Completion Programme, is attached. These projects will continue to be funded for the duration of the DEIS Action Plan.

€28.8million was allocated to the School Completion Programme in 2007 with €31 million allocated for 2008. The programme is funded on a multi-annual basis under the National Development Plan (NDP) and was assisted under the European Social Fund (ESF) up to 2007.

The School Completion Programme encompasses both primary and post-primary levels and focuses on young people between the ages of 4 and 18 years and is designed to deal with issues of both concentrated and regionally dispersed disadvantage. SCP is a key component of DEIS ( Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools) the action plan for educational inclusion, which discriminates positively in favour of children and young people who are at risk of early school leaving.

19,059 young people were targeted in-school under the School Completion Programme in 2006/2007. This figure has increased to approx. 36,000 in 2007/2008 with the inclusion of new schools under DEIS.

SCP projects target and focus programme resources in the first instance on the individual young people who are most at risk of early school leaving. Additionally, some strategies may include a wider group (e.g. in the case of sporting and leisure activities) or the entire school population (e.g. where tracking attendance is involved).

The level of funding allocated to projects is dependant on the submission of their annual Retention plan and taking into account the level of disadvantage in the schools involved in each project, the target group selected for intensive supports, the salaries of personnel employed and the overall level of funding available to the programme.

#### **Site Acquisitions.**

32. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 97 of 9 April 2008, if his Department will accept the offer of a site for a new premises for a school (details supplied) in County Cork; if so, when he expects building works on the new school to begin; if not, his plans to rectify the current accommodation problems suffered by the school and its students; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26309/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As part of the Programme for Government, a Developing Areas Unit was set up recently in my Department to focus on the school accommodation needs of rapidly developing areas, including the area to which the Deputy refers. The main emphasis in 2008 is on providing sufficient school places in these developing areas, as well as delivering improvements in the quality of existing primary and post-primary school accommodation throughout the country.

In this context, the status of all schools in the area referred to by the Deputy are being assessed. The school referred to by the Deputy is being included in this assessment.

On the matter of the offer of the new site, I am pleased to inform the Deputy that following a technical examination of the two acre site in question, my officials wrote to the local developer requesting contract documents. A reply is awaited.

As an interim measure while the school are awaiting their permanent building, my Department has sanctioned the rental of temporary premises and accommodation in order for the school to operate.

As is the case with all large capital projects currently on hand within the Unit, their progression will be considered in the context of the multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

### **School Accommodation.**

33. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Education and Science the amount each owner of prefab classrooms or resource rooms who has rented those prefab to a primary school has been paid either directly or indirectly by his Department for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26062/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** Expenditure on the rental of temporary accommodation at primary level for each of the years 2004, 2005 and 2006 was €11.3m, €15.7m and €24.51m respectively. The information sought by the Deputy regarding the amount of rental payments made to individual suppliers is not readily available in my Department and given the number of payments involved it would require a very large amount of staff time to assemble. The Deputy will appreciate that the matter is complicated by the fact that my Department provides grant aid (less the local contribution) to approved schools to meet rental costs. However, the actual contract is between the school and the supplier of the accommodation.

### **Disadvantaged Status.**

34. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 477 of 8 May 2008 the location of each school which is being assisted under the DEIS action plan for education inclusion; the number of pupils affected in each school; the role of the National Education Welfare Board in the areas where the schools are located; the outcomes that have occurred to date in improving the attendance or retention of pupils at risk; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26070/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey):** The information requested by the Deputy in relation to the schools which have been identified for inclusion in DEIS, the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, is attached. A total of 90,000 children attend primary and 61,000 children attend post-primary schools participating in DEIS.

In the region of €800 million will be spent by the Department this year on tackling educational disadvantage at all levels — from pre-school to further and higher education. This represents an increase of nearly €70 million on the comparable 2007 figure and is testament to the Government's determination to prioritise social inclusion and ensure that all our children and young people get the supports they need to do well at school. Social inclusion measures across all Government departments have also been prioritised under the Towards 2016 agreement, the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-16 and the National Development Plan.

Enhancing attendance, progression, retention and attainment are central to DEIS which is being implemented at present. The action plan represents a shift in emphasis away from individual initiatives, each addressing a particular aspect of the problem, with the new plan adopting a multi-faceted and more integrated approach. This is the first time that an integrated educational inclusion strategy has been developed for 3-18 year olds in this country.

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 established the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) as the national body with responsibility for school attendance. The Act provides a comprehensive framework, promoting regular school attendance and tackling the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving. The general functions of the Board are to ensure that

[Deputy Seán Haughey.]

each child attends a recognized school or otherwise receives a certain minimum education. The Board operates through 5 regional teams, with bases in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. A service is provided from 26 locations nationwide.

Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) are appointed and deployed throughout the country to discharge the Board's functions locally. The NEWB's network of EWOs is the key means by which the Board delivers on its statutory remit to ensure that each child attends and benefits from education. EWOs employ a welfare oriented approach in the interests of the children and young people who do not attend school regularly, working collaboratively with schools, parents and other agencies in meeting the needs of the children and the young people concerned.

In deploying its service staff, from its earliest development, the NEWB has prioritised the provision of services to the most disadvantaged areas and the most at-risk groups. This deployment includes areas designated under the Government's RAPID programme and to schools in the DEIS programme. There is a significant overlap between RAPID areas and the most disadvantaged areas identified under DEIS. EWOs provide an intensive service in these areas.

Under Towards 2016 commitment was made that an additional 100 posts in total would be provided for the NEWB and the National Educational Psychological Service by the end of 2009, to help further address absenteeism, early school leaving, behavioural problems and special needs. 15 of these posts were sanctioned for the NEWB in 2007. As new posts come on stream, DEIS designated schools will receive priority attention. EWO's respond to referrals from schools and every effort is made to work with those children most at risk and where schools indicate particular concerns. The NEWB also gives priority to children who have no school place or who have been expelled or who have been referred by the courts regardless of location.

Early analysis of attendance data has shown improvement in areas. However, more in-depth studies are required to measure outcomes in respect of attendance and retention in the long term.

The service provided by the NEWB is just one aspect of the comprehensive framework that this Government has put in place to support schools, families and young people themselves.

The range of curricula available to students has also been widened by promoting the Junior Certificate Schools Programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme in addition to the traditional Junior and Leaving Certificate curricula.

Preventative measures have also been put in place such as the School Completion Programme and the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. The number of projects participating in the School Completion Programme has increased under DEIS to 124 projects spanning 26 counties, comprising 224 post-primary schools and 468 primary schools and targeting approx. 36,000 young people. A total of 450 local HSCL coordinators provide HSCL services to 691 schools (370 Primary and 281 Post primary), with an additional 80 posts made available in 2006 to extend Home School Community Liaison services to all schools selected to participate in DEIS that did not have such services. The previous Minister for this Department Mary Hanafin T.D., also extended a commitment to schools not selected to participate in DEIS but already in the HSCL scheme, to continue to support these schools in their efforts to deal with educational disadvantage among their students in line with both their size and level of disadvantage.

The latest Retention Report published by the Department in March this year provides data on the cohort of pupils who entered the first year of the junior cycle in 1997, 1998 and 1999 and most of whom completed their senior cycle five to six years following the year of intake. This is the third such report tracking pupil retention and the trend is showing yearly improve-

ments in retention rates. It is compiled from data on the Department's Post Primary Pupils Database and tracks students in State aided schools (with an estimate of those attaining their Leaving Cert in private institutions). It does not take into account students pursuing other educational pathways such as Youthreach or apprenticeship training.

Key results from the report are:

- Retention rates have been increasing slightly year-on-year since 1996. The national unadjusted retention rate for the 1999 cohort is 80.5% compared to 77.8% in 1996.
- When an adjustment is made for external candidates who complete their Leaving Cert in privately funded institutions, emigration and deaths, the national retention rate is 83.7% compared to 81.3% in 1996.

In relation to second chance educational opportunities for young people who left school early, this Government has shown a sustained commitment to providing greater opportunities in the adult and further education sectors. Many such young people take up places in Youthreach centres, while others pursue options such as FÁS apprenticeships.

### **School Accommodation.**

35. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the commercial companies who supply prefab classrooms and resource rooms to primary schools on a rental basis on which rent is paid in whole or in part by his Department are required to produce a tax clearance certificate to either the board of management or his Department before a rental contract is signed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26104/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** My Department currently provides grant-aid towards the provision of temporary school accommodation to the management authorities of education providers where it is established that a need for such temporary accommodation exists.

Generally, where primary schools require temporary accommodation, the Board of Management is responsible for acquiring temporary accommodation and the rental contract is between the Board of Management and the supplying contractor. My Department provides grant-aid to the individual school authorities towards the costs of procuring the accommodation. Such grant-aid is paid at a rate of 95% for schools with permanent recognition and 75% for schools with provisional recognition. Schools are expected to pay a local contribution of the balance, with a threshold on the local contribution of €3,175.

While payment of State / Public Authority Grants, subsidies and similar type payments, by Government Departments and public authorities, of a value of €10,000 or more, is subject to the person holding a current tax clearance certificate, Section 4.1 (iii) and 4.1(ii) of Circular 44/2006 Revised Tax Clearance Procedures for Grants and similar type payments excludes schools from this requirement.

Increasingly, where new schools are established in rapidly developing areas, my Department directly provides the accommodation for schools from the start, and in these cases, the issue of local contributions and co-funding of the rental accommodation does not arise. The rental contract is between my Department and the supplying contractor. In these instances my Department require details of the relevant supplying contractor's Tax Clearance Certificate and the expiry date of such.

*Question No. 36 answered with Question No. 13.*



**Schools Building Projects.**

37. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Minister for Education and Science the name, address and capacity of the 67 large scale projects and the 27 new schools mentioned as being included in the capital allocation of almost €830 million in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26074/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The information sought by the Deputy is given in the tabular statements. The expected completion of large scale projects in 2008 will consist of 21 new schools and 46 extension/refurbishment projects giving an overall total of 67 large scale projects due to be completed in 2008.

An additional feature of the 2008 school building and modernisation programme is the provision of new schools in developing areas under an accelerated programme. To cater for the anticipated increases in the school-going population, my Department has established a Developing Areas Unit to identify areas of rapid population growth, to assess the educational needs in these areas and to plan solutions for the accommodation needs identified.

As part of a fast-track programme of construction for September 2008, the Department is building 26 schools and a number of smaller projects in those areas where school accommodation is under greatest pressure.

Primary

	County	Roll No.	School	Project	Size of school on completion of building project
1	Carlow	14837L	SN Peadar agus Pol Baillon Carlow	Extension	8 Classrooms
2	Cavan	11541V	Dromali SN Cavan	Extension	8 Classrooms
3	Cavan	19983B	St Clares NS Ballyjamesduff	New School	14 Classrooms
4	Cork	18279A	Carrigaline 3 NS Carrigaline	Extension	8 Classrooms
5	Cork	19433M	Holy Family SS, Charleville	New School	11 Classrooms
6	Cork	20204E	Kilworth NS, Cork	New School	8 Classrooms
7	Donegal	17036P	SN Naomh Colmchille Killmacrennan	New School	8 Classrooms
8	Donegal	19553W	Dungloe Central	Extension	16 Classrooms
9	Dublin	16786H	St. Brigid's Convent NS, The Coombe	New School	12 Classrooms
10	Dublin	19015R	St. Joseph's Girls NS, Finglas, Dublin 11	Refurbishment	10 Classrooms
11	Dublin	19945Q	Rathfarnham Educate Together Loreto Avenue	Extension	9 Classrooms
12	Dublin	19946S	Rutland St NS Dublin 1	New School	9 classrooms + 6 classroom Pre school
13	Dublin	20048O	Gaelscoil Lios na nOg, Dublin 6	Extension	9 Classrooms
14	Dublin	20060G	Monkstown Educate Together NS	New School	16 Classroom GRD school
15	Dublin	20091R	St Peters NS Phibsboro	Extension	16 Classrooms
16	Dublin	20186F	Castiaheany Educate Together, Ongar, D 15	New School	16 Classroom GRD school
17	Galway	17198S	SN Muire Gan Smaí	Extension	12 Classrooms
18	Galway	17485C	Briarhill NS	Extension	7 Classrooms
19	Galway	17771W	Lisheenkyle NS	Extension	6 Classrooms
20	Galway	20115F	Scoil Einne, Spiddeal	Extension	8 Classrooms
21	Kerry	19548G	Nano Nagle NS Lixnaw	Extension	12 Classrooms
22	Kildare	00779U	Presentation Convent, Maynooth	Extension	18 Classrooms
23	Kildare	08099P	St Laurence's NS, Sallins	Extension	24 Classrooms
24	Kilkenny	15340I	Carrigeen NS	Extension	5 Classrooms
25	Laois	15556I	Portarlington Convent NS	New School	16 Classroom GRD school
26	Laois	16617H	Ballyadams NS	Extension	6 Classrooms
27	Laois	20118L	Scoil Bhride Clonaslee	Extension	6 Classrooms

Primary — continued

	County	Roll No.	School	Project	Size of school on completion of building project
28	Leitrim	20203C	Mohill NS	Extension	10 Classrooms
29	Limerick	08926B	St Nicholas Church of Ireland School, Adare	Extension	4 Classrooms
30	Louth	17124M	Ardee Monastery	Extension	9 Classrooms
31	Mayo	15866A	Carrakennedy NS, Westport	New School	3 Classrooms
32	Mayo	19916J	St Peter's NS	Extension	9 Classrooms
33	Meath	18044T	SN Naomh Padraig, Stamullen	New School	16 Classrooms
34	Monaghan	20120V	Scoil Chroi Ro Naoifa Clones	New School	8 Classroom GRD school
35	Offaly	11203B	St Kieran's NS, Clareen	Extension	4 Classrooms
36	Sligo	19688W	Dromore West Central NS	New School	6 Classrooms
37	Tipperary	18207V	SN Baile an Atha	Extension	12 Classrooms
38	Tipperary	19968F	Gaelscoil Durlas Eile	New School	8 Classrooms
39	Waterford	13635R	Ballyduff NS, Kilmeaden	Extension	6 Classrooms
40	Waterford	18462O	Scoil Lorcaín	Extension	16 Classrooms
41	Waterford	19539F	St. Pauls Junior School, Lisduggan	Extension	16 Classrooms
42	Waterford	19853L	Gaelscoil Portláirge	Extension	8 Classrooms
43	Westmeath	16914N	Baile Coireil NS, Coralstown	New School	4 classrooms
44	Westmeath	19948W	SN gCeithre Maistrí, Diseart Mhuire	New School	16 Classrooms
45	Wexford	14254K	SN Mhuire, Danescastle	Extension	6 Classrooms
46	Wexford	16145P	Loreto Primary School Gorey	Extension	21 Classrooms
47	Wexford	19739N	Scoil Mhuire Coolcotts	Extension	20 classrooms + 2 classroom autistic unit
48	Wicklow	06176U	Blessington 1 NS	New School	8 Classrooms

Post-Primary

	County	Roll No.	School	Project	Long Term Projected Enrolment
1	Cork	62200H	Colaiste Muire Crosshaven	Extension/Refurb	325
2	Cork	62320R	St Mary's Secondary School, Macroom	Extension	375
3	Cork	62560O	Colaiste Christí Ri, Capwell Road, Cork	PE Hall	750
4	Donegal	71242B	Gairm Scoil Chú Uladh Leifear	Extension + PE Hall	200
5	Donegal	81010J	St Columba's Community School, Glenties	Extension	500
6	Dublin	60511O	Beneavin De La Salle Finglas Dublin 11	Extension	450
7	Dublin	70342A	Senior College Ballyfermot	PE Hall	1400
8	Dublin	91305L	Ballinteer Community School	New School	600
9	Leitrim	76089V	Mohill Community College, Mohill	New School + PE Hall	525
10	Limerick	64220A	St Clements College, South Circular Road	New School + PE Hall	575
11	Limerick	71920T	St Nessan's Community College	New School	750
12	Limerick	76073G	Castletroy CC	Extension	1000
13	Mayo	64630T	Jesus and Mary Gortnor Abbey Crossmolina	Extension/Refurb	500
14	Mayo	72130S	St Patrick's College Laeken Cross Killala	Extension PE Hall	375
15	Tipperary	65340P	Presentation SS, Clonmel	Roof Project	475
16	Westmeath	63210P	Our Lady's Bower SS, Retreat Rd, Athlone	Extension/Refurb + PE Hall	675
17	Wexford	71650Q	Kilmuckridge Vocational School	Extension	200
18	Wicklow	61820J	Loreto S.S. Bray	PE Hall	846
19	Wicklow	70800E	St Kevin's Community College, Dunlavin	Extension	500

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

## Developing Area Building Projects

Area	Project
Balbriggan — Castlelands	16 classroom school
Porterstown (Diswellstown/Kellystown)	16 classroom school
Mullingar — Grange	16 classroom school
Lusk	16 classroom school
Celbridge	16 classroom school <sup>1</sup>
Skerries — Kelly’s Bay	8 classroom school
Swords — Thornley Green, Applewood	8 classroom school
Balbriggan — Castlelands	8 classroom school
Lucan — Clonburris	8 classroom school
Drogheda — Aston Gate	8 classroom school
Kinnegad	8 classroom school
Tullamore	8 classroom school
Athy	8 classroom school
Rochestown	8 classroom school
Greystones (2 schools)	Two 8 classroom schools
Gorey (2 schools)	Two 8 classroom schools
Tyrrellstown	8 classroom school
Phibblestown <sup>2</sup>	8 classroom school plus accommodation to cater for up to 180 post-primary students
Belmayne (2 schools)	Two 8 classroom schools
Naas	8 classroom school
Maynooth	8 classroom school
Portlaoise	8 classroom school
Carlow	8 classroom school

<sup>1</sup> This project was originally announced as 2 eight classroom schools.

<sup>2</sup> This project was originally announced as 1 eight classroom school (New VEC Community Primary School). What will be delivered in 2008 will be 1 eight classroom primary school plus accommodation to cater for up to 180 post-primary pupils.

### Information and Communications Technology.

38. **Deputy Michael D’Arcy** asked the Minister for Education and Science the situation regarding funding for information technology equipment for schools; if there is funding available; the level of funding; the criteria for schools applying; and if special consideration is given to schools designated as disadvantaged. [23112/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The Deputy will be aware that my predecessor appointed a strategy group to advise on the priorities for expenditure on information and communications technology in schools, having regard to the provision in the National Development Plan for the investment of €252m in the ICT in Schools Programme. I intend to publish the group’s report shortly. The report will cover areas of required investment over the lifetime of the national development plan. At its core will be the embedding of information and communications technology in the teaching and learning culture of schools. This will require continuing investment in teacher professional development to build further on the impressive teacher participation levels which have been evident to date. It will require the



continuing maintenance of a national broadband network for schools, the upgrading and renewal of hardware and the provision of software and digital content.

Decisions on the timing and amount of expenditure in this area this year must be made in the overall context of the current budgetary situation. I am required to work within the budget set for the Department of Education and Science. My officials and I are reviewing the overall financial position with regard to spending trends and emerging pressures. Following this review, I anticipate that I will be in a position to make decisions on specific areas of expenditure.

Turning to the specific position of disadvantaged schools, these schools are benefiting from the €3.4m ICT Grant Scheme for DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) Schools from the Dormant Accounts (Educational Disadvantage) Fund. Having approved the applications under the scheme last year, my Department has issued grants amounting to €3.1m to schools so far this year. The establishment of a €1m Fund from the Dormant Accounts (Educational Disadvantage) Fund to assist up to 100 DEIS schools achieve Digital School Status was announced earlier this year. My officials are finalising the scheme arrangements with the National Centre for Technology in Education and I will be announcing the details in due course.

### **School Text Books.**

39. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Minister for Education and Science the average cost of a set of text books for the three years of the junior certificate; the role his Department has in recommending, directing or otherwise authorising official texts books for each subject of the junior certificate course; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26077/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** My Department does not have information on the average cost of a set of text books for the three years of the Junior Certificate cycle.

Apart from a small number of prescribed texts at second-level, mainly in the case of language subjects, decisions on which textbooks to use in first and second-level schools are taken at school level. My Department does not approve, commission, sponsor or endorse educational text-books. Books are commissioned and published by educational publishers, and schools select their books from those available from a number of publishers.

My Department operates a grant scheme towards the cost of providing school textbooks for pupils from low-income families in schools at first and second-level. Schools are notified of the scheme each year by circular letter. Principal teachers administer the book grant schemes in schools in a flexible way under the terms of the schemes based on their knowledge of particular circumstances in individual cases. Many schools operate book rental schemes and second-hand book exchanges.

A total of €8m has been provided in my Department’s Estimate in 2008 in respect of the School Books Grant Scheme at second-level.

### **School Attendance.**

40. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Education and Science the relationship between his Department and its various agencies, including the National Education Welfare Board, the Garda National Immigration Bureau and the Reception and Integration Agency, in order to ensure that young adults attending secondary school are not arbitrarily removed from one area to another causing them to leave the secondary school into which they have settled as either refugees, asylum seekers or unaccompanied children, as described to his predecessor at a meeting in his Department on 22 April 2008 and representatives of the SSN group, all of

[Deputy Joanna Tuffy.]

which are Dublin based inner city secondary DEIS one-band schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26103/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Conor Lenihan):** It is important to note that the meeting referred to in the question was about second level DEIS One band schools that are located in inner city Dublin. The Garda National Immigration Bureau and the Reception and Integration Agency are not agencies of the Department of Education and Science but instead come under the remit of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Department of Education and Science has a member of staff seconded to the Reception and Integration Agency.

On the other hand, the National Educational Welfare Board does come under the remit of the Department of Education and Science.

With regard to moving young adults from one area to another the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform draws a clear distinction between three categories of persons.

Firstly, refugees are recognised by that Minister as being persons entitled to protection under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees, as incorporated into Irish law. Such persons have, in essence, the same residency rights as Irish citizens and are free to live and attend schools where ever they wish, throughout the country.

The second category comprises asylum seekers who can opt to be accommodated by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA). RIA is responsible for the accommodation of asylum seekers under the system of Direct Provision.

I understand from the RIA that the position is as follows.

Generally, asylum seekers are accommodated in Dublin based reception centres for a few weeks and thereafter are dispersed to centres around the country in accordance with the long standing Government policy in this regard.

Generally, once a family is dispersed there is no need to move that family further unless (i) RIA has a requirement to close that centre or (ii) there are overwhelming individual reasons to transfer that family.

In relation to the former, accommodation provision is a demand led process driven by factors over which the RIA has no control. It is obliged to adjust its accommodation portfolio to reflect current demands. Where a centre has to be closed down, RIA deals with the resultant moves sensitively, taking account, amongst other factors, of the need to ensure that disruption to education is minimised. Similar account is taken when a move arises because of individual family circumstances.

It needs to be understood that disruption of an asylum seeker's education can arise for a number of diverse reasons such as the family itself seeking a transfer or because of removal by the Garda National Immigration Bureau to another State by way of deportation or Dublin II removal.

The third category comprises separated children seeking asylum (SCSA) — otherwise known as unaccompanied minors. Responsibility for accommodating separated children seeking asylum (SCSA), aged under 18, lies with the Health Services Executive (HSE). In general, the HSE provides such accommodation until they reach the age of 18 years.

However, under the Childcare Act, 1991, it is within the scope of the HSE to continue the care of those separated children over 18 whom the HSE consider 'vulnerable'. The RIA does not insist on SCSA's aged 18 years and over, who are awaiting a decision on their application for asylum, moving on to adult accommodation if the HSE has, for example, raised the issue

of them being in a current Leaving Certificate year. Any decision to move this group lie solely with the HSE.

In summary, the Department of Education and Science has no part to play in the removal from one area to another of the categories of people specified above.

### **Teaching Council.**

41. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Education and Science if agreement has been reached between the Teaching Council, all the teachers' unions, and his Department regarding the implementation of the Teacher Council Act 2001; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26065/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** My Department works closely with the Teaching Council to ensure that the Council is in a position to fully discharge the relevant functions of the Teaching Council Act. My Department was in close communication with the Teaching Council and with teachers' representative bodies over the course of the last year, to ensure all parties were aware of the implications and methods of fee-collection and to ensure a smooth transition to the Council becoming a self-funding body.

Most sections of the Act are in operation, however, a small number of provisions have not been commenced. While no dates have been set for the commencement of these provisions they will be commenced when it is feasible to do so. My Department will continue to be in dialogue with all the relevant stakeholders as the commencement process continues.

### **Irish Language.**

42. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Education and Science the developments that have taken place upon receipt of submissions from parents, teachers and Irish language groups in relation to Tumoideachas; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26338/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** A Regulatory Impact Assessment screening is required where a significant SI is planned. Section 30 of the Education Act also obliges the Minister to consult when making regulations to prescribe the curriculum. The RIA Screening is the mechanism through which the consultation is taking place.

A draft Statutory Instrument and a Regulatory Impact screening document was issued to the following bodies for consultation:

- The National Parents Council — Primary
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation
- Educate Together
- Church of Ireland Board of Education
- Catholic Primary School Managers' Association
- Chief Rabbi of Ireland
- Islamic Culture of Ireland
- Educate Together
- Gaelscoileanna
- An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta

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- Foras na Gaeilge
- Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge
- Eagraíocht na Scoileanna Gaeltachta
- An Foras Patrúnachta
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
- National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education Schools Irish Primary Principals’ Network

The deadline for feedback was extended to 31 May 2008. The submissions received are being considered. It is intended that views of the organisations consulted will be summarised and included in a finalised Regulatory Impact Screening document and published on the Department’s website.

*Question No. 43 answered with Question No. 31.*

#### **Vocational Education Committees.**

44. **Deputy Seán Barrett** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will make arrangements for vocational educational committee services to be made available to special needs schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [25179/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** It is not clear from the Deputy’s question as to the nature of the vocational educational committee services being referred to. My officials have sought clarification from the Deputy’s office and a further response will be provided following receipt of this clarification.

#### **Third Level Education.**

45. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will commit to ensuring the proper dispersion of the student services charge by higher education institutions; and if he will guarantee that all moneys collected through the student services charge will be invested in student services and not used to pay down institutional debt. [26340/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The student services charge is levied by third level institutions to defray the costs of examinations, registration and students services. The charge was €825 for the 2007/08 academic year. I should point out that the charge does not represent the total allocation towards student services from institutions budgets. The Institutions are autonomous bodies and as such determine the internal disbursement of funding, including funding of student services.

All students who are eligible for means tested student support have the student charge paid on their behalf by the Local Authorities or the Vocational Education Committees, in addition to any maintenance grant and tuition fee grant they are entitled to.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) issued a Framework of Good Practice for the Provision of Student Services to the publicly funded Higher Education institutions in 1998. Particular reference was made to the principles of transparency and accountability. The Framework consists of guidelines to establish an appropriate system of consultation with students in the allocation of funding from the charge and in the determination of student services to be funded from this source. The HEA has periodically written to all institutions to remind them of their

function in relation to the student services charge and requesting confirmation that correct procedures are in place, in accordance with the Framework of Good Practice. I understand from the HEA that the Authority recently wrote once again to all institutions in relation to the charge reminding them of this Framework.

I am satisfied that the HEA considers, generally, that the Framework has operated quite well in the sector.

#### **Site Acquisitions.**

46. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the three acre site assigned for the new school (details supplied) in County Tipperary which the Office of Public Works was negotiating to purchase from the Health Service Executive has been purchased by the local authority; the alternative plans he has to provide for a new building for this 200 pupil school which has been renting an 1830 sub-standard premises since 1994 at an enormous cost to the taxpayer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26099/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I wish to advise the Deputy that the Office of Public Works (OPW), which acts on behalf of my Department in relation to site acquisitions generally, has been asked to source a suitable site for the school in question. My Department is advised that the Health Service Executive (HSE) have formally conveyed its approval to dispose of lands either to South Tipperary County Council or directly to the OPW. While negotiations between the OPW and the HSE are currently underway I am not in a position to say at this stage when the acquisition will be concluded.

#### **Psychological Service.**

47. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 104 of 21 May 2008, the number of additional educational psychologists recruited to implement the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004; the number of educational psychologists employed by his Department each year since 2004 to date in 2008 respectively; the conclusions of his Department’s review of the scheme for commissioning private assessments; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26310/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As the Deputy will be aware all primary and post-primary schools have access to psychological assessments either directly through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments (SCPA). Schools that do not currently have NEPS psychologists assigned to them may avail of the SCPA, whereby the school can have an assessment carried out by a member of the panel of private psychologists approved and paid for by NEPS.

I can inform the Deputy that the number of educational psychologists employed by my Department for each year from 2004 to 2008 is as follows: 2004 — 128, 2005 — 123, 2006 — 127, 2007 — 138. The figure currently stands at 137.

In the current year under the terms of the T 2016 agreement my Department is committed to the expansion of psychologist numbers in the NEPS service to 169 and again in 2009 to 200. In this connection and following a national recruitment competition organised by the Public Appointments Service, a panel of suitable candidates has been formed. Currently some 33 panellists have been offered specific appointments within the NEPS regional structure, some 30 have accepted the post offered and of these 13 have passed through the requisite Garda vetting process and are finalising arrangements with my Department’s Personnel Section. This process will continue until the available posts are filled.



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It is envisaged in this regard that the new recruits will be in place by the commencement of the new academic year in the order of the commitment as outlined above. Additionally it is envisaged that the undertaking in respect of 2009, a further 31 posts, panellists will be processed through this system to commence employment in the service early in the new calendar year.

Further expansion or reorganisation of the service, including the SCPA, is being considered in the wider context of my Department’s response to the full implementation of the EPSEN Act. In this regard my Department is now at an advanced stage in finalising proposals to facilitate implementation of the remaining sections of the Act, including the provisions in respect of assessment and individual education plans (IEPs). The time taken to finalise proposals reflects the complexities involved, the need for consultation across the wide range of people and sectors involved, the need to align with the requirements of the Disability Act, 2005 and define how the Health Service Executive (HSE) and NCSE will work together under both acts.

My Department’s priority is to ensure that the necessary training, guidance and supports are in place to facilitate the commencement of the remaining sections of the Act. It must also be acknowledged that, during this necessary period of preparation and planning for the roll-out of the EPSEN Act, my Department continues to expand capacity and services for students with special educational needs across the schools network through the work of the National Council for Special Education.

#### **School Enrolments.**

48. **Deputy Kathleen Lynch** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of post primary school pupils; the number of boys and girls in first, second, third, transition, fifth and sixth year for 2006-07 and 2007-08; and if he will make a statement on the matter.  
[26072/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The number of post-primary school pupils in the 2006/2007 school year was 301,186. The numbers of post-primary school pupils for that school year by class group, as requested by the Deputy is:

##### *Boys*

1st 28,208; 2nd 28,534; 3rd 28,771; transition 12,546; 5th 27,946; 6th 23,914;

##### *Girls*

1st 27,026; 2nd 27,633; 3rd 28,410; transition 14,533; 5th 28,078; 6th 25,587;

The processing of the October Returns for the 2007/2008 is not yet fully complete. However, the provisional number of post-primary school pupils in the 2007/2008 school year was 302,919. The provisional number of post-primary school pupils for that school year by class group is:

##### *Boys*

1st 28,487; 2nd 28,444; 3rd 28,322; transition 12,818; 5th 28,050; 6th 25,136;

##### *Girls*

1st 27,739; 2nd 27,254; 3rd 27,541; transition 14,943; 5th 28,471; 6th 25,714;

Figures for each school year reflect the enrolment at the 30th September.

### Teaching Qualifications.

49. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Education and Science the consideration he has given to the future of the highly specialised and uniquely qualified ESOL teachers who for the past nine years have successfully provided for the language and integration needs of refugees and who are due to be made redundant in July 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26276/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Conor Lenihan):** Integrate Ireland Language and Training Ltd. (IILT) approached my Department earlier this year with a proposal to withdraw from direct tuition for adult refugees and with a request that this tuition be mainstreamed. IILT envisaged continuing direct tuition for a group of up to 200 programme refugees. My Department accepted that mainstreaming of service provision was appropriate as it accords with the overall approach to provision of services to migrants as set out in "Migration Nation" — a statement on integration strategy and diversity management which I recently launched. In doing so the Department decided that all provision should be mainstreamed and provided by VECs as it would be less efficient to seek to continue with a small element of provision by IILT.

The funding allocated to IILT will now be redirected to provide for the continuation of this service through the VEC network. The Irish Vocational Education Association has confirmed that it is happy to cooperate and collaborate with my Department in delivery of necessary English language services. The VEC sector has already developed best practice in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision. The sector is already providing English language services for those whose first language is not English. At present services are provided to over 12,000 people annually which clearly demonstrates the capacity of the VECs in this area. A further advantage of mainstreaming such provision through the VEC sector is the fact that the VECs have a nationwide network across all counties and cities that can readily provide classes where needed in the country using their facilities in schools and centres.

IILT is a limited company. The company will now enter voluntary liquidation as a solvent concern. The Company will comply with its statutory obligations in relation to redundancy payments for the staff concerned.

### School Text Books.

50. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the exploitation of parents and children who are obliged by some secondary schools to purchase new or revised editions of existing school text books when there has been no syllabus change for the year involved and the increased costs to pupils and parents associated with the new revised books; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26076/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** Apart from a small number of prescribed texts at second-level, mainly in the case of language subjects, decisions on which textbooks to use in first and second-level schools are taken at school level.

Syllabus planners are conscious of the need to avoid over frequent changes, primarily in order to minimise increases in the cost burden for parents. School authorities have been advised that books should be changed only to the extent that is absolutely necessary. However, textbooks have to be changed periodically to enable teachers to keep their own and their students' work educationally stimulating and to ensure that content and methodology are kept up to date.

My Department operates a grant scheme towards the cost of providing school textbooks for pupils from low-income families in schools at first and second-level. Schools are notified of the scheme each year by circular letter.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Principal teachers administer the book grant schemes in schools in a flexible way under the terms of the schemes based on their knowledge of particular circumstances in individual cases. Many schools operate book rental schemes and second-hand book exchanges.

A total of €8m has been provided in my Department’s Estimate in 2008 in respect of the School Books Grant Scheme at second-level.

### **Irish Language.**

51. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Education and Science the way he will provide incentives to encourage children from disadvantaged areas to attend Irish language courses in the Gaeltacht. [26339/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** My Department established a Gaeltacht Scholarship scheme in 2007. It is designed to enable children enrolled in designated disadvantaged post-primary schools to attend approved summer colleges for teaching Irish. The Galway Education Centre provides administrative support for the initiative.

Funding of €100,000 has been made available for the scheme for 2008. Applications for the 2008 scheme are still being processed and, to date, approximately 138 have been received.

### **Departmental Properties.**

52. **Deputy Fergus O’Dowd** asked the Minister for Finance the details of all properties rented, owned or leased by his Department in County Louth; the rent paid per annum; if car parking is leased or rented; if so, the location, owner and amount paid; if there is a tenancy or occupancy termination imminent; the reason given for same; the plans in place for relocation. [26454/08]

53. **Deputy Fergus O’Dowd** asked the Minister for Finance the details of all properties rented, owned or leased by his Department in County Louth; the rent paid per annum; if car parking is leased or rented; if so, the location, owner and amount paid; if there is tenancy or occupancy termination imminent; and the reason given for same; and the plans in place for relocation. [26456/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 52 and 53 together.

Further to Parliamentary Question No. 604, ref no 26456/08, the following documentation details the information pertaining to State-owned buildings plus buildings and car parking facilities that are leased by the Commissioners of Public Works on behalf of Government Departments.

With regard to tenancy/occupancy termination the Commissioners are investigating the feasibility of surrendering the lease on Dundalk Government Offices, Earl House. This property has been held on a 35-year lease without a break from 1975. It had been used to house mainly Revenue and a small number of Social, Community & Family Affairs staff. These have now relocated to new accommodation as part of a previous Government Decentralisation programme. The building is currently utilised as a storage facility for the Revenue Commissioners.

The following reply can also be used to respond to PQ ref no. 26454/08 which Deputy O’Dowd has put down to the Minister for Agriculture and Food for reply.

Property Code	Building Code	Occupant	Building Name	Address	Location	Gross Int Sqm	Type
P1126	B1126	OPW	Mid Louth Civic Services Centre (Part-Owned)	Fairgreen	Ardee		
P1127	B1127	N/A	Mouth of Boyne Former Coastguard Station	Beaulieu	Mouth of Boyne	0.0000	Res
P1129	B1129	Scfa	Drogheda Government Offices	The Mall	Drogheda	549.9974	Office
P1165	B1165	Garda	Drogheda Garda Station	Old Abbey Lane	Drogheda	477.7000	Garda Station
P1167	B1167	SCFA	Dundalk Social Welfare Office	Barrack Street	Dundalk	443.9141	Office
P1168	B1168	C&E, OPW, Revenue	Dundalk Custom House	Quay Street	Dundalk	382.9961	Office
P1172	B1172	Revenue	Dundalk Revenue Vima+Lorry Park	Newry Road	Dundalk	19300056	Office
P1173	B1173	Garda Siochana	Dundalk Garda Station	The Crescent	Dundalk	751.3000	Garda Station
P1174	B1174	N/A	Dundalk Military Barracks Drill Field	Barrack Street	Dundalk	0.0000	Military
P1206	B1206	N/A	Dundalk National School	Joclyn Street	Dundalk	0.0000	School National
P1943	B1943	Garda Siochana	Dunleer Garda Station + Married Quarters	Drogheda Road	Dunleer	137.6000	Garda Station + Married Quarters
P1961	B1961	N/A	Greenore Former Coastguard Station	Greenore	Greenore	0.0000	Former Coastguard Station
P2496	B2496	Garda Siochana	Hackballscross Garda Station	Castiblayney Road	Hackballscross	116.5700	Garda Station
P2788	B2788	Garda Siochana	Louth Garda Station + Married Quarters	Dundalk Road	Louth	110.0000	Garda Station + Married Quarters
P3648	B3648	N/A	Omeath Garda Station	Omeath	Omeath	91.8400	Garda Station
P399	B399	Garda Siochana	Soldiers Point F/Mer C/Guard Stn	Soldiers Point	Soldiers Point	0.0000	F/Mer C/Guard
P50	B50	Garda Siochana	Blackrock Garda Station	Sandy Lane	Blackrock	79.0000	Garda Station
P588	B588	Garda Siochana	Ardee Garda Station + Married Quarters	Jervis Street	Ardee	210.6000	Garda Station + Married Quarters
			Carlingford Garda Station + Married Quarters	Newry Street	Carlingford	269.3900	Garda Station + Married Quarters

Property Code	Building Code	Occupant	Building Name	Address	Location	Gross Int Sqm	Type
P623	B623	N/A	Carrickarnon Former Customs Post	Carrickarnon	Carrickarnon	0.00	Former Customs Post
P624	B624	Revenue	Carrickarnon Customs Office	Carrickarnon	Carrickarnon	170.30	Custom
P669	B4282	Garda Síochana	Castlebellingham Garda Station	Dundalk Road	Castlebellingham	31.30	Garda Station
P669	B4283	Garda Síochana	Castlebellingham Garda Station — Residence 1	Dundalk Road	Castlebellingham	568.32	Garda Station — Residence
P669	B4284	Garda Síochana	Castlebellingham Garda Station — Residence 2	Dundalk Road	Castlebellingham	568.32	Garda Station — Residence
P785	B785	Marine	Clogherhead Mes	Park Oriel	Clogherhead	34.65	Mar-Emer
P786	B786	Garda Síochana	Clogherhead Garda Station	Callystown	Clogherhead	51.50	Garda Station
P8076	B8078	Agriculture, Revenue, Opw, Scfa, Propation Service	Dundalk Government Office	Alphonsus Road	Dundalk	8,179.00	Office
P8137	B8129	N/A	Whitestown Signal Station	Whitestown	Whitestown	0.00	Misc
P8294	B8270	Garda Síochana	Dromad Garda Station	Clanrye Villa, Newry Road	Dromad	0.00	Garda Station
P8298	B8275	N/A	Oldbridge House	Oldbridge Estate, Donore	Drogheda	0.00	Heritage
P8298	B8405	N/A	Butlers House	Oldbridge Estate, Donore	Drogheda	0.00	Rest
P854	B854	Garda Síochana	Collon Garda Station + Married Quarters	Drogheda Street	Collon	261.10	Garda Station + Married Quarters
P9101	B8344	N/A	Westgate House	62/63 West St	Drogheda	0.00	Office



Lease Code	Lease Name	Occupant	Building Name	Address	Commence	Expiry	Annual Rent	Lease Type	Status	Annual Rent	Lease Type	Building Code	Status	Rentable Sqm	Landlord	Address	Type
Lse0016	Ardee William Street	Social, Community & Family Affairs	Ardee SWO	William Street, Ardee	12-Jul-93	03-Apr-11	140,00	Lease From Landlord	Temporary Date	33,450	Lease From Landlord	B52	Temporary Date	33,450	William Boylan	1 William Street, Ardee, Co Louth	Office
Lse0258	Drogheda Abbey Centre Customs & Excise	Revenue	Drogheda Customs & Excise	Abbey Shopping Centre, West Street, Drogheda	18-Sep-00	25-Dec-08	3,301.32	Lease From Landlord	Temporary Date	3,301.32	Lease From Landlord	B1125	Temporary Date	20,438	Tassel Ltd	Abbey Shopping Centre, West Street, Drogheda, Co Louth	Office
Lse0261	Drogheda Laurence St 23	Probation Service	Drogheda Probation & Welfare Service	23 Laurence Street, Drogheda	17-Sep-00	16-Sep-09	66,000	Lease From Landlord	Active	66,000	Lease From Landlord	B8103	Active	260,680	Robert & Audrey Murphy	13 Seabury Crescent, Malahide, Co Dublin	Office
Lse0262	Drogheda Port Customs	Revenue	Drogheda Customs & Excise	Stam Packet Quay, Drogheda	04-Mar-97	25-Dec-08	1,2697.38	Lease From Landlord	Temporary Date	1,2697.38	Lease From Landlord	B6236	Temporary Date	120,310	Patrick Monahan (Drogheda) Limited	Merchants Quay, Drogheda, Co Louth	Office
Lse0270	Dundalk Brook Buildings	OPW, Revenue	Dundalk Government Office	Brook Street, Ardee Road, Dundalk	01-Oct-97	31-Mar-10	35,000	Lease From Landlord	Active	35,000	Lease From Landlord	B1166	Active	277,580	Patrick Copas	31 Ladywell Terrace, Dundalk, Co Louth	Office
Lse0273	Dundalk Gov Off Earl House	Prison Service, Revenue, SCFA	Dundalk Government Office — Earl House	Earl House, 13-14 Earl Street, Dundalk	01-May-75	30-Apr-10	177,763.33	Lease From Landlord	Active	177,763.33	Lease From Landlord	B1171	Active	1,487,360	Northern Bank Limited	Co Louth	Office
Lse0274	Dundalk Railway Stn Garda	Garda	Dundalk Garda Office	Dundalk Railway Station, Dundalk	01-Jun-02	31-May-08	2800	Lease From Landlord	Active	2800	Lease From Landlord	B8079	Active	24,650	C I E Group Property Limited	Oriel Street, Dublin 1	Office
Lse0976	Drogheda Education Office	Education & Science	Drogheda Education Office	C O House, Industrial Estate, Drogheda	01-Dec-02	16-Mar-09	70,089.52	Lease From Landlord	Temporary Date	70,089.52	Lease From Landlord	B8149	Temporary Date	343,740	Atlantic Industries	Industrial Estate, Drogheda, Co Louth	Office
Lse1173	Drogheda Swo	Scfa	Drogheda SWO	Singleton House, Laurence Street, Drogheda	23-Sep-05	22-Aug-15	70,533	Lease From Landlord	Active	70,533	Lease From Landlord	B8257	Active	257,000	Mestika Limited	Balmoral, Kells Road, Navan, Co Meath	Office
Lse1206	Dundalk Education Office	Education & Science	Dundalk Education Office	Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dublin Road, Dundalk	01-Jan-05	30-Jun-10	13,200	Lease From Landlord	Active	13,200	Lease From Landlord	B8276	Active	66,000	Regional Dev. Centre	Dundalk Inst Tech, Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co Louth	Office
Lse1244	Dundalk Revenue Warehouse	Revenue	Dundalk Revenue Warehouse	Coos Road, Dundalk	01-Apr-06	29-Feb-16	130,000	Lease From Landlord	Active	130,000	Lease From Landlord	B8309	Active	1,584,000	Portway Trailers Ltd	Coos Road, Dundalk, Co Louth	Ware Hse
Lse1262	Dundalk Fairways Hotel	Driver Test Centre	Fairways Hotel, Dublin Road, Dundalk	Dublin Road, Dundalk	29-Jan-06	25-Dec-08	0	Lease From Landlord	Active	0	Lease From Landlord	B8323	Active	50	Premier Hotels Ltd	T/A Fairways Hotel, Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co Louth	DTC
Lse1563	Sustainable Energy Ireland	Sustainable Energy Ireland	Block 1 Fintabair Business Park	Floor 2, Block 1, Fintabair Bus Technology Park, Dundalk	03-Nov-07	02-Nov-10	96,000	Lease From Landlord	Active	96,000	Lease From Landlord	B8420	Active	617	Thomas Lynch & Timothy Boland	Diamor, Crossakiel, Kells, Co Meath	Office

Lease Code	Occupant	Lease Name	Address	Commence	Expiry	Lease Type	Status	Annual Rent	No of Spaces	Landlord	Address
Lse0383	Revenue	Greenore Customs Post Parking	Old Hotel Building, Greenore	01-Nov-78	25-Dec-07	Car Parking	Temporary Date	2,031.58	Not Specified	Greenore Ferry Services Limited	Greenore Co Louth
Lse1042	Scfa	Drogheda SWO Car Park	Haymarket Multistorey Carpark, Dyer Street, Drogheda	19-Nov-03	25-Dec-08	Car Parking	Temporary Date	8,800.00	8	Base Construction	T/A The Haymarket, Multi Storey Carpark, Dyer Street, Drogheda
Lse1183	Agriculture	Drogheda Agriculture Car Park	Fitzwilliam Court, Dyer Street, Drogheda	19-Dec-05	04-Dec-08	Car Parking	Temporary Date	18,150.00	12	Tasik Ltd	Balmoral, Navan, Co Meath
Lse1229	Probation Service	Drogheda Probation & Welfare Car Park	23 Laurence Street, Drogheda	10-Jul-06	31-Oct-07	Car Parking	Active	10,588.00	7	Tasik Ltd	Balmoral, Navan, Co Meath

### **Garda Stations.**

54. **Deputy Charlie O'Connor** asked the Minister for Finance if that funding will be made available for the planned redevelopment of Tallaght Garda Station, Dublin 24; his views on whether progress on this issue is clearly required; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26384/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh):** A sketch scheme is practically completed to provide for a redevelopment of the existing Garda Station site for both a Garda Station and a Courthouse. The feasibility study will require the approval of both client services before proceeding to detailed design.

Financial provision for projects proceeding to detailed design is provided for from the annual provision of the Garda Building Programme. Prioritisation of projects in that Programme is a matter for the Department of Justice, Equality, and Law Reform, and An Garda Síochána in the first instance.

### **Tax Code.**

55. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the estimated tax loss prevented by the introduction of Section 118B, Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, via section 21, Finance Act 2008; the main areas of avoidance giving rise to introduction to the section; the State and semi-State bodies involved in tax avoidance schemes prior to the introduction of the section; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26396/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that section 21 of the Finance Act 2008 clarified the tax treatment of what are known as “salary sacrifice” arrangements. These arrangements, which are in reality an application of a person’s remuneration, consist of benefits being purchased or provided by an employer with the employee effectively paying for the benefits by means of a reduction in remuneration. Section 21 also placed on a legislative basis two long-standing administrative concessions that operated in this area, namely, for:

- Travel passes given by an employer to an employee where the cost of the travel pass provided by the employer is matched by a corresponding reduction in the employee’s remuneration and
- a contribution by an employer to a Revenue approved profit sharing scheme where the contribution or part of the contribution by the employer is matched by a corresponding reduction in the employee’s remuneration.

In both cases, the new legislation ensures that a tax charge does not arise on that part of an employee’s remuneration used to buy the travel pass or to fund the profit sharing scheme.

In all other cases of salary sacrifice, the legislation copper-fastens the Revenue view that such schemes are ineffective for tax purposes and do not operate to reduce an employee’s taxable income. This position was outlined in an article in Tax Briefing 41, dated September 2000 which is available on [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

Over the last year or so, Revenue have become aware of a number of salary sacrifice arrangements, which as part of their motivation sought to reduce the taxable income of employees and thereby avoid PAYE, and employers and employees PRSI. While, as already stated, Revenue

dispute the effectiveness of such arrangements, the opportunity to copper-fasten this view was taken in the Finance Act 2008.

Schemes in this area that have come to the attention of Revenue include:

- Attempts to circumvent the limits on personal contributions to pension schemes by forgoing taxable salary and transferring the contribution from the hands of the employee to the employer by means of a reduction in salary, and
- Schemes designed to provide benefits, such as company cars, club fees or childcare, with the employer being recompensed by the employee foregoing taxable remuneration.

As stated, Revenue has never accepted that these schemes are effective for tax purposes and as such it is not possible to say what, if any, tax loss may have arisen in this area. As such schemes are discovered, on audit or otherwise, they will be challenged and any tax found due will be recovered, together with interest and penalties, if appropriate. If, as part of any settlement, any such case falls to be published in accordance with the terms of section 1086 (publication of names of tax defaulters) of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 then it will be published in accordance with that section but not otherwise.

56. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the number of claims made for one parent family credit, under section 462, Taxes Consolidated Act 1997 in each year from 2000 to 2008 inclusive; if he will provide an analysis of claims made by status of the claimant, that is widow/widower, lone parent, separated parent or divorced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26397/08]

57. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the number of claims made for one parent family credit, under section 462, Taxes Consolidated Act 1997 in each year from 2000 to 2008 inclusive, broken down by sex of the claimant; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26398/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 56 and 57 together.

I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the estimated numbers of income earners availing of the one parent family credit, under section 462, Taxes Consolidated Act 1997, broken down by personal status and by gender for the income tax years 2000/01 to 2008 inclusive are set out in the following tables to the extent to which they are available.

Breakdown by personal status

Income Tax Year	Widow/Widower	Other Lone Parent	Total one parent families
2000/01	10,350	90,850	101,200
2001	9,850	87,750	97,600
2002	9,950	92,800	102,750
2003	10,200	99,000	109,200
2004	9,300	92,400	101,700
2005	9,300	115,600	124,900
2006*	9,600	121,750	131,350
2007*	9,900	126,800	136,700
2008*	9,900	128,650	138,550

[Deputy Brian Lenihan.]

Breakdown by gender

Income Tax Year	Male	Female	Total one parent families
2000/01	28,950	72,250	101,200
2001	29,000	68,600	97,600
2002	32,400	70,350	102,750
2003	35,650	73,550	109,200
2004	38,300	63,400	101,700
2005	43,200	81,700	124,900
2006*	45,400	85,950	131,350
2007*	47,200	89,500	136,700
2008*	47,900	90,650	138,550

\*Provisional and likely to be revised.

Figures in the tables are rounded to the nearest fifty.

The numbers availing of the credit represent income earners who were in a position to absorb at least some of the one parent family tax credit and thereby give rise to an Exchequer cost. They do not include the numbers of potential claimants whose entitlements to other tax credits were sufficient to reduce their liability to tax to nil.

The figures for the years 2000/01 to 2005 inclusive are based on incomes data derived from income tax returns held on Revenue records and have been grossed up to an overall expected level to adjust for incompleteness in the numbers of returns on record at the time the data was extracted for analytical purposes. For the years 2006 to date the figures are estimates from the Revenue tax forecasting model using actual data for the year 2005 adjusted as necessary for income growth for the years in question.

The breakdown requested in relation to separated and divorced parents either could not be obtained or could not be obtained without conducting a protracted examination of the Revenue Commissioners' records.

58. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the number of the claims made for one parent family credit, under section 462, Taxes Consolidated Act 1997 in each year from 2000 to 2008 that were audited; the proportion of the claims examined that were rejected in each year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26399/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that credit claims and requests for refunds from PAYE taxpayers are checked on a tiered basis based on value. Larger claims are subject to a higher proportion of examination as they are thought to be higher risk. I am further advised that overall, about 1% of claims for all tax credits, including One Parent Family Credit, are verified in this way. Some claims may subsequently be selected for a verification check. Where it seems from the checks carried out that the claim is not valid, the credit will be withdrawn. Results of claims checked are recorded at case level, not centrally and are not credit specific. Consequently, it is not possible to provide the information requested.

I am also advised by the Revenue Commissioners that in taking this approach to PAYE credit claims, they are applying the principles of presumption of honesty and self-assessment to PAYE workers that have worked successfully for business taxpayers since 1988. Where

credits (including one parent family credit) are claimed by self-employed taxpayers, this is done on the standard return of income. These returns are all subject to audit and compliance checks in the normal way.

### **Pension Provisions.**

59. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the actuarial value of the pension benefits of civil service grades (details supplied), retiring on 1 July 2008, aged 60 with 40 years service completed; if he will provide a separate value for men and women and assume all are pre 1995 appointments including the basis for the calculations, including mortality, discount rate and future salary increases. [26402/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** The information requested is set out below. The values provided are for a married person retiring on 1 July 2008 at age 60 with pensionable service of 40 years. The pension benefits are those applying to a pre-1995 recruit to an established post in the civil service i.e. a person not subject to integration. The benefits taken into account are therefore a retirement lump sum of 1.5 times pay, a main scheme pension of 50% of pay and a spouse's pension of 25% of pay.

In order to value these benefits a number of technical assumptions must be made and the actuarial value of the benefits depends greatly on the assumptions used. The main assumptions used were:

- A mortality table considered appropriate for valuing pension benefits for public servants; under this table the life expectancy at age 60 is 27 years for a male and 30 years for a female;
- Annual discount rate of 6%;
- Long term rate of inflation of 2% p.a. with pay increasing in line with inflation.

In the cases of all the grades mentioned and on the basis of the assumptions quoted above the actuarial value of the pension benefits works out at about 10 times current annual salaries.

It might be noted the calculations are on the basis of maximum pension benefits in each case. On average, the value of pension benefits for a civil servant retiring from the relevant grades will be substantially less as many civil servants will retire with less than the maximum of 40 year's service, many others will retire after the minimum retirement age of 60 and some will not be married.

Females are expected, on average, to live for longer than males so that the value of a main scheme pension is estimated to be greater for a female than for a male. However, this is balanced by the value of a spouses benefit being greater for a male member since a female spouse is likely to be younger and have a greater life expectancy than a male spouse. Therefore the figures apply equally to both males and to females.

### **Tax Code.**

60. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax forgone by the granting of a deduction for interest against rents assessable under Case V, Schedule D in the years 2001 to 2008 inclusive. [26403/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that based on personal income tax returns filed by non-PAYE taxpayers for the years 2003 to

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2006 inclusive, the latest year for which this information is available, the estimated amount of tax foregone by allowing a deduction for interest on borrowings to be offset against rents assessable under Case V, Schedule D is as set out as follows.

Year	Estimated Tax Forgone
	€m
2003	222
2004	284
2005	393
2006 (provisional)	572

The estimates are based on assuming that tax relief was allowed at the top income tax rate of 42% and the figures provided could therefore be regarded as the maximum Exchequer cost in respect of those taxpayers.

Corresponding suitable data is not available for the years 2001 and 2002. Data for the tax year 2007 is not yet available as the income tax returns for that year are not due for filing until October 2008. Company returns of rental income are net of interest on borrowings and the figures for interest are not separately distinguished in those returns.

It should be noted that any corresponding data returned by PAYE taxpayers in the income tax return form 12 is not captured in the Revenue computer system. However, any PAYE taxpayer with non-PAYE income greater than €3,174 is required to complete an income tax return form 11. This return is the source of the figures provided in this reply.

#### **Departmental Staff.**

61. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the number of staff in his Department, who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26405/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** 42 members of staff in my Department received support under the Department's post-entry education scheme to pursue post-graduate educational courses in the period 2004 to 2008 inclusive.

#### **Tax Forecasts.**

62. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the figures provided by the Revenue Commissioners in the preparation of the 2008 tax forecasts; and the reason his Department used their own higher figures. [26409/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** As happens every year, the Revenue Commissioners supplied my Department with a tax forecast for the following three years in the run-up to the Budget. Revenue prepared this forecast in October and November of last year based on the technical position set out by my Department.

All Budget forecasts, including tax and economic, are prepared by my Department. In doing so, my Department takes the Revenue Commissioners' forecasts into consideration and is in regular consultation with Revenue about the evolving trends. In addition to taking Revenue's view, changes in the prevailing economic outlook are also taken on board before the finalisation of the Department's tax forecasts, which are then published in the Budget.



**Tax Code.**

63. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance if, in respect of relief granted to sports bodies under section 847A, Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, he will provide information (details supplied) for the years 2003 to 2006 and estimates of the cost for 2007 and 2008. [26410/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** The Deputy is aware that the operation of the scheme for tax relief on donations to certain sports bodies is governed by the provisions of section 847A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. These bodies must be an “approved body of persons” established for and existing for the sole purpose of promoting athletic or amateur games or sports. They must also have been granted tax exemption under section 235 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that a list of sports bodies who have been granted tax exemption under this section is available on the Revenue website at [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

The precise arrangements for allowing tax relief on donations depends on whether the donor is a PAYE taxpayer, a person who is subject to self-assessment or a company. For a PAYE donor, the relief is given on a “grossed up” basis to the eligible sports body, rather than by way of a separate claim to tax relief by the donor. In this instance the claim for refund of the tax deducted by the donor is made to Revenue by the approved sports body. In the case of a self-assessed donor, the donation is paid gross and that individual claims the tax relief in their tax return. In the case of a company, the donation is paid gross and the company claims a deduction for the donation as if it were a trading expense.

The figures of estimated cost to the Exchequer of tax relief on donations by self-employed taxpayers to approved sports bodies within the meaning of Section 847A of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997 for income tax years 2003, 2004 and 2005, the latest year for which the necessary detailed information is available, are set out in the following table:

	2003	2004	2005
Self-employed	€0.3m	€0.2m	€0.2m

I am advised by Revenue that they are not in a position to provide Income Tax data for 2006 to 2008 in respect of self-employed donors, as the tax returns for those years are either being processed currently or not yet due.

Tax relief on donations by companies to approved sports bodies was claimed by 31 companies with accounting periods ending in 2006 at an estimated cost to the Exchequer of approximately €60,000. As figures of donations made by companies were not captured in corporate tax returns for accounting periods ending in years prior to 2006 there is, therefore, no basis on which an estimate of the associated costs to the Exchequer can be compiled for these years. Figures in relation to corresponding donations by PAYE taxpayers are not available because administration of the scheme is localised.

As regards the names of all bodies approved and details of the project for which relief was granted: the cost of the relief granted: an overall analysis of the cost per sport: the highest cost of the relief granted to one project in each year: the number of sports bodies receiving relief in each year, I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the records maintained by them do not easily provide a basis for compiling the detailed information sought by the Deputy and cannot be obtained without conducting a protracted examination of their records.

*Question No. 64 withdrawn.*

65. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance if, in respect of relief granted to approved bodies under section 848A of the Taxes Consolidated Act, 1997, he will provide information (details supplied) for the years 2003 to 2006 and estimates of the cost for 2007 and 2008. [26412/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** The Deputy is aware that the operation of the scheme for tax relief on donations to eligible charities and other approved bodies is governed by the provisions of section 848A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. Bodies, including schools, colleges, universities, bodies approved for education in the arts as well as a number of other specified organizations are defined as approved bodies for the purposes of the donations scheme by virtue of the specific groups of entities listed in Schedule 26A of the 1997 Act. In addition charities that hold charitable tax exemption for a period of at least two years may apply for approval under the donations scheme. I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that a list of charities approved for the purposes of the donations scheme is available on the Revenue website at [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie). The full details of the terms and conditions of the scheme are available in Leaflet CHY 2 which can be also accessed on the Revenue website.

The precise arrangements for allowing tax relief on donations depends on whether the donor is a PAYE taxpayer, a person who is subject to self-assessment or a company. For a PAYE donor, the relief is given on a “grossed up” basis to the eligible charity or approved body, as the case may be, rather than by way of a separate claim to tax relief by the donor. In this instance the claim for refund is made to Revenue by the approved body or eligible charity. In the case of a self-assessed donor, that individual claims the relief and there is no grossing up arrangement. In the case of a company, it will claim a deduction for the donation as if it were a trading expense.

I am informed by Revenue that the records maintained by them do not easily provide a basis for compiling the detailed information sought by the Deputy. In particular their records do not readily differentiate between tax refund/relief allowed in respect of donations to national schools, fee paying or non-fee paying second level schools, third level institutions, Universities or third world charities. In addition the arrangement for granting the relief is dependent on the donors tax status i.e. PAYE only donor where the charity or approved body claims the relief, self assessed donor where the individual claims the relief and a company donor where the donation is claimed as if it were a trading expense.

The following table sets out figures of the estimated cost to the Exchequer of tax relief on donations to approved bodies and eligible charities within the meaning of Section 848A of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997 in so far as they are available for the years 2003 to 2007.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
PAYE	21.4	14.8	15.6	28.5	25.3
Self-Employed	7.2	11.1	18.3	N/A	N/A

I am advised by Revenue that they are not in a position to provide data for 2006 to 2008 in respect of self-employed donors, as the tax returns for those years are either being processed currently or not yet due. In respect of PAYE donors for 2008 the claims by the approved bodies are not yet due.

There were no recorded claims for tax relief on donations to approved bodies by companies with accounting periods ending in 2006. As data on donations made by companies were not captured in corporate tax returns for accounting periods ending in years prior to 2006 there is, therefore, no basis on which an estimate of the associated costs to the Exchequer can be compiled for those years.

66. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the number of claims under sections 847A and 848A of the Taxes Consolidated Act audited in the years 2003 to 2007 inclusive with a summary of the findings. [26413/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** Section 847A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 governs the scheme for tax relief on donations to certain sports bodies and section 848A governs the operation of the scheme for tax relief on donations to eligible charities and other approved bodies.

I am advised by Revenue that the precise arrangements for allowing tax relief on donations under both sections depends on whether the donor is a PAYE taxpayer, an individual who is subject to self-assessment or a company. In the case of donors who are PAYE taxpayers, the relief is given on a “grossed up” basis to the eligible body (rather than by way of a separate claim to tax relief by the donor). In this instance the claim for refund is made to Revenue by the eligible body. In the case of a self-assessed donor, that individual claims the relief in his/her income tax return and there is no grossing up arrangement. In the case of a company, it will claim a deduction for the donation as if it were a trading expense.

In processing claims by eligible bodies, Revenue carries out routine checks commensurate with the risk involved. These checks include a sampling of the claims and declarations made by the donors to verify the accuracy of the information contained therein.

The veracity of claims by both donors and eligible bodies may also be checked as part of the audit process undertaken by Revenue. However, as many Revenue audits cover more than one tax and more than one issue it is not possible to provide statistics in relation to the number of cases where Revenue auditors specifically looked at Section 847A/848A claims in particular cases. Where a case is selected for audit the auditor will usually take the opportunity to look at many aspects of compliance, including Sections 847A and 848A claims if they are applicable to the case, but no separate statistics are kept as regards the nature of the aspects examined.

Notwithstanding the absence of statistics in relation to the audit of claims under sections 847A and 848A, I am advised by Revenue that they have no indications of any significant problems with the operation of these tax reliefs.

#### **Revenue Commissioners' Staff.**

67. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide an aged basis analysis of serving Revenue Commissioner staff for the grades (details supplied) by sex. [26414/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** The information requested by the Deputy has been set out by the Revenue Commissioners in the table. I am advised by the Commissioners that according to their figures approximately 60% of their overall staff are female. As can be seen from the data below 38% of the grades of HEO and above are female.

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Gender	Range	Principal	AP	HEO	Grand Total
Female	18-24			1	1
	25-30		2	19	21
	31-40	5	13	75	93
	41-50	8	48	211	267
	51-60	15	65	213	293
	61-65	2	4	10	16
Female Total		30	132	529	691
Male	25-30		2	11	13
	31-40	2	11	53	66
	41-50	30	97	283	410
	51-60	84	246	248	578
	61-65	11	12	31	54
Male Total		127	368	626	1,121
Grand Total		157	500	1,155	1,812

### Ownership of Lands.

68. **Deputy John Cregan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will adjudicate on the ownership of lands (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26427/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh):** A number of interested parties have made applications for property allegedly transferred by or agreed to be sold by a Company now dissolved. The parties have been advised by the Chief State Solicitor's Office that they need to clarify their respective titles and reach a consensus between them before consideration can be given to a waiver application under Section 31 of the State Property Act 1954.

The Minister does not adjudicate on the applicants claims to entitlement to ownership of lands in these circumstances.

### Tax Code.

69. **Deputy Frank Feighan** asked the Minister for Finance the reason a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon has not received their notice of tax assessments for 2003 despite the fact that all relevant information has been lodged with the Revenue Commissioners, Galway for some time and has been re-submitted again by registered post due to original documents being mislaid. [26446/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that they have no record of receipt of the tax return in question prior to its receipt by registered post. A P21 PAYE balancing statement for the tax year 2003 issued to the person concerned on 26 June 2008 and an associated overpayment of tax was made on 30 June 2008.

### Decentralisation Programme.

70. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the

original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26471/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** The following is the information requested by the Deputy in tabular form for my Department and the agencies under the aegis of my Department. The decentralisation programme operates on a voluntary basis only and no staff were designated to move to any location unless they volunteered. However a number of staff whose posts were designated for decentralisation have been assigned new duties.

Department of Finance

Location	Number of posts designated to move	Number of staff who have moved	Percentage	Number of staff assigned awaiting a move
Tullamore	130	125	96%	0
Naas	30	0	0%	26

Office of the Revenue Commissioners

Location	Number of posts designated to move	Number of staff who have moved	Percentage	Number of staff assigned awaiting a move
			%	
Newcastle West	50	49	98	2
Kilrush	50	57	114	0
Listowel	50	52	104	0
Athy	250	63	25.2	8
Navan	Up to 100	96	96	2
Kildare	380	0	0	0

Office of Public Works

Location	Number of posts designated to move	Number of staff who have moved	Percentage	Number of staff assigned awaiting a move
			%	
Trim	333	29	9	210
Claremorris	142	29	20	4
Kanturk	88	0	0	2

Public Appointments Service

Location	Number of posts designated to move	Number of staff who have moved	Percentage	Number of staff assigned awaiting a move
Youghal	100	0	0%	12

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Valuation Office

Location	Number of posts designated to move	Number of staff who have moved	Percentage	Number of staff assigned awaiting a move
Youghal	100	0	0%	15

### Efficiency Reviews.

71. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26490/08]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan):** In line with my predecessor's Budget 2008 announcement, the Department of Finance has engaged in the efficiency review exercise on the same basis as all other Government Departments, with a view to identifying possible savings on administrative spending. The exercise has included the bodies within the aegis of my Department. The issues arising in this context are currently being considered in the context of preparation of the 2009 Estimates.

### Child Care Services.

72. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of trafficked children receiving full health care services including psychological care; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26350/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews):** The Deputy's question relates to the management and delivery of health and social services, which are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

### Health Services.

73. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position in relation to respite for a person (details supplied) in County Wicklow; if the decision in this case will be reversed and a week allocated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26358/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** The Deputy's question relates to the management and delivery of health and personal services, which are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

74. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an appeal in respect of an application for domiciliary care allowance for a person (details supplied) in County Louth; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26365/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** The Deputy's question relates to the management and delivery of health and personal services,



which are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

75. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will be transferred to Merlin Park Hospital. [26380/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** Operational responsibility for the management and delivery of health and personal social services is a matter for the Health Service Executive and funding for all health services has been provided as part of its overall Vote. Therefore, the Executive is the appropriate body to consider the particular case raised by the Deputy. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

76. **Deputy Deirdre Clune** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of children (details supplied) who are on a waiting list for assessment; the number waiting for treatment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26423/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** The Deputy's question relates to the management and delivery of health and personal services, which are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

#### **Community Care.**

77. **Deputy James Reilly** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath and plans to move them to a more suitable setting in a community facility as their family are concerned for their welfare and feel they need to be transferred as soon as possible to facilities in the community which are more appropriate for their continuing care; the progress of relocating patients with an intellectual disability or autism from psychiatric hospitals and other inappropriate placements in older buildings for example; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26426/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** The Deputy's question relates to the management and delivery of health and personal services, which are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

#### **Nursing Home Subventions.**

78. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Health and Children when the commitment she gave to introduce the fair deal programme will be implemented; the action that will be taken in relation to the funding that was provided for this scheme to commence in the interim; if it is being diverted to alternative uses; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26433/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Máire Hackett):** The Bill providing for the Fair Deal scheme is being finalised by the Office of the Attorney General at present. The legislation is complex and requires careful drafting in order to ensure that the interests of older people requiring residential care are fully protected.

My colleague, the Minister for Health and Children, intends to publish the Bill as soon as possible following finalisation by the Attorney General and Government approval, and to bring the legislation through the Houses of the Oireachtas thereafter. As the timeframe for bringing the legislation through both Houses is contingent upon finalisation of the Bill, a more definitive answer is not possible at this stage.

The Minister has considered carefully the question of allowing some of the funding allocated for Fair Deal to be used for nursing home subvention and her officials are now discussing this matter with the Department of Finance. As soon as a decision is reached, it will be announced. However, it should be borne in mind that the Government already allocated additional funding of €20 million for Nursing Home Subvention in 2006 and Budget 2007 provided a further €85 million — this is an increase of €105 million in nursing home subvention in two years.

### **Services for People with Disabilities.**

79. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Health and Children if her attention has been drawn to the failure of the Health Service Executive to provide a day care service for students with special needs who have finished their schooling on reaching 18 years of age at a special school in County Cork; if she will ensure that these most vulnerable persons will not be the victims of inadequate funding from the HSE; her views on the circumstances of a student (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26438/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** The 2008 Service Plan, developed by the HSE and approved by the Minister for Health and Children, included €50m for the development of additional disability services. The standard expenditure sanction issued to the HSE for 2008 stipulated that the prior approval of the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Finance would be required in the event of any proposal to spend this money for any other purpose.

Clearly, it is essential that the HSE lives within its overall budget for the year. It needs to manage its activity levels and cost drivers appropriately to achieve this and I do not believe it is desirable to resort to using development funding to offset expenditure pressures arising in respect of ongoing health services.

The HSE is currently reviewing its overall financial position for the year and roll — out of planned developments in disability services is being considered in that context. I have been in communication with the HSE with a view to an early determination on the matter.

The HSE has informed my Department that it plans to release €20m of the €50m additional funding for Disability Services.

The Deputy's specific question relates to the management and delivery of health and personal services, which are the responsibility of the Health Services Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

### **Health Repayment Scheme.**

80. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will make a statement regarding a person (details supplied) in County Limerick. [26444/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** The Health Service Executive has responsibility for administering the Repayment Scheme and the information sought by the Deputy relates to matters within the area of responsibility of the Executive. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued to the Deputy.

#### **National Treatment Purchase Fund.**

81. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of people on the waiting list for National Treatment Purchase Fund procedures in County Limerick. [26445/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** Statutory responsibility for the collection, collation and validation of data on waiting times and numbers of persons waiting for hospital treatment rests with the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF). My Department has, therefore, asked the Chief Executive of the NTPF to reply directly to the Deputy in relation to the information requested.

#### **Health Services.**

82. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason for the delay in approving a lease (details supplied) in County Westmeath; when this lease will be approved; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26453/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** The provision of the appropriate infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of primary care services is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter raised by the Deputy investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy as a matter of urgency.

#### **Services for People with Disabilities.**

83. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will clarify if the €50 million assigned to improve disability service will be spent for the that purpose; the agencies that will receive the allocations and the respective improvements that it will fund; if her attention has been drawn to the fact that agencies are having to inform clients that expected services will not be available as in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 3; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26455/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** The 2008 Service Plan, developed by the HSE and approved by the Minister for Health and Children, included €50m for the development of additional disability services. The standard expenditure sanction issued to the HSE for 2008 stipulated that the prior approval of the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Finance would only be required in the event of any proposal to spend this money for any other purpose.

Clearly, it is essential that the HSE lives within its overall budget for the year. It needs to manage its activity levels and cost drivers appropriately to achieve this and I do not believe it is desirable to resort to using development funding to offset expenditure pressures arising in respect of ongoing health services.

The HSE is currently reviewing its overall financial position for the year and roll — out of planned developments in disability services is being considered in that context. I have been in communication with the HSE with a view to an early determination on the matter. The HSE

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has informed my Department that it plans to release €20m of the €50m additional funding for Disability Services.

The Deputy's specific question relates to the management and delivery of health and personal services, which are the responsibility of the Health Services Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

#### **Hospital Waiting Lists.**

84. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will be called to Galway for an MRI scan. [26460/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** Operational responsibility for the management and delivery of health and personal social services is a matter for the Health Service Executive and funding for all health services has been provided as part of its overall Vote. Therefore, the Executive is the appropriate body to consider the particular case raised by the Deputy. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

#### **Pharmacy Regulations.**

85. **Deputy Pádraic McCormack** asked the Minister for Health and Children the situation regarding the legislation governing pharmacy practice for non-EU graduates; when it is proposed to have this matter finalised; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26461/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** The Pharmacy Act 2007 is being commenced in three stages. The first stage of the process involved the establishment of a Council of the new Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the second stage will put in place a new registration regime for pharmacists and pharmacies, and the third stage will deal with complaints, inquiries and fitness to practice provisions. As part of the second stage, which I hope to finalise later this year, a new process for the recognition and registration of non-EU/EEA qualified pharmacists will be put in place.

#### **Decentralisation Programme.**

86. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of persons who have been moved by her Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if she will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26473/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** As the Deputy will be aware my Department is not one of the Departments scheduled for decentralisation under the Government's Decentralisation Programme. To date fifty-four civil servants have transferred to decentralising Departments from my Department. Further details in respect of the transfer of these officers are available from the decentralising Departments.

#### **Health Repayment Scheme.**

87. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason the family

of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo have not been approved for payment under the health repayment scheme. [26478/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** The Health Service Executive has responsibility for administering the Repayment Scheme and the information sought by the Deputy relates to matters within the area of responsibility of the Executive. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued to the Deputy.

### **Efficiency Reviews.**

88. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Health and Children the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by her Department and agencies operating under her Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26492/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** In the context of the Efficiency Review announced by the then Tánaiste and Minister for Finance, Mr. Brian Cowen, T.D. in his 2008 Budget Speech, my Department has been examining various areas where potential savings and efficiencies can be achieved.

In relation to Bodies under the aegis of my Department the position is that agencies (other than the HSE and HIQA) are predominantly small in terms of organisational size and expenditure, and a number are self-funding.

A comprehensive independent review of health organisations (Audit of Structures and Functions in the Health System) was published in 2003. Considerable rationalisation has already taken place under the 2004 and 2007 Health Acts, and other changes are already planned, as follows:

- The National Cancer Screening Service Board and the National Cancer Registry are to be subsumed into the HSE as part of the Cancer Control Programme;
- The National Council for the Ageing and older People is to be mainstreamed into the newly-established Office for Older People;
- the Medical Practitioners' Act 2007, provides for the dissolution of the Post Graduate Medical & Dental Board and the streamlining of the Board's functions to the HSE, Medical/Dental Councils, as appropriate;
- the functions of the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery are to be subsumed by An Bord Altranais and the HSE once the proposed new Nursing and Midwifery Bill is passed; and
- the National Social Work Qualification Board is due to be streamlined into the National Council for Health and Social Care Professions in the next year or so.

The potential for further streamlining and/or rationalisation is being considered in the context of the Efficiency Review referred to above, and will also arise in the context of our response to the OECD Review of the Irish Public Service ("Toward an Integrated Public Service"), which was recently published.

Efficiencies are already being implemented by agencies within the health sector in the areas of procurement, business processes, and outsourcing. Additional benefits might also accrue



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from sharing of functions, and my Department is considering how the necessary co-ordination might be applied to allow such possibilities to be exploited.

Within my Department we have identified the following as having the potential to deliver further savings and/or efficiencies:

- an increased use of on-line, rather than hard-copy (paper) publishing;
- in collaboration with the Office of Public Works, we are participating in the Staff Energy Awareness Campaign (Optimising Power @ Work) which has a target to reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions by a minimum of 15% per annum;
- we have reduced the hours during which Hawkins House is open over weekends, thus reducing staff costs;
- we are examining how we might reduce the levels of absenteeism among our staff, and will proactively manage this area;
- we will review our postal and telecommunications spend to obtain the best possible deal for our mobile and other phone and telecoms services;

My Department is also examining potential savings through increased use of collective or shared procurement arrangements from shared finance, payroll, ICT and some HR arrangements, but it is likely that these would require central direction and co-ordination if they are to be applied across Departments.

#### **Services for People with Disabilities.**

89. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Health and Children when funding will be released by her Department and the Health Service Executive to enable service providers to offer adult day places and training places for people with disabilities who are more than 18 years of age and are no longer eligible for enrolment in special schools; the amount of such funding that was released in 2007; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26496/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** The 2008 Service Plan, developed by the HSE and approved by the Minister for Health and Children, included €50m for the development of additional disability services. The standard expenditure sanction issued to the HSE for 2008 stipulated that the prior approval of the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Finance would only be required in the event of any proposal to spend this money for any other purpose. Clearly, it is essential that the HSE lives within its overall budget for the year. It needs to manage its activity levels and cost drivers appropriately to achieve this and I do not believe it is desirable to resort to using development funding to offset expenditure pressures arising in respect of ongoing health services.

The HSE is currently reviewing its overall financial position for the year and roll — out of planned developments in disability services is being considered in that context. I have been in communication with the HSE with a view to an early determination on the matter. The HSE has informed my Department that it plans to release €20m of the €50m additional funding for Disability Services. The Deputy's specific question relates to the management and delivery of health and personal services, which are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.



**Health Service Staff.**

90. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason the Health Service Executive west has failed to honour a legally binding Employment Appeals Tribunal agreement and pay the settlement in the case of a person (details supplied). [26499/08]

91. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she has satisfied herself that public money is not being wasted by the Health Service Executive in their actions against a person (details supplied) and the mounting legal costs in this case; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26500/08]

92. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the person or persons with the Health Service Executive who are instructing a solicitor (details supplied) on behalf of the HSE; and the costs of same. [26501/08]

93. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the costs of an action being taken by the Health Service Executive against a person (details supplied) giving details of the costs of the two investigations into this matter. [26502/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 90 to 93, inclusive, together.

The Health Service Executive is the appropriate body to consider the particular questions raised by the Deputy. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to examine the issues raised by the Deputy, and to furnish me with a report containing the relevant information as soon as possible. I will be in further communication with the Deputy as soon as this information is provided to me.

94. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason her Department failed to endorse employment guidelines for psychologists in the health service as set out by a professional body, the Psychological Society of Ireland in 1987; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26503/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** Under Section 18 of the Health Act, 1970, qualifications for the employment of clinical psychologist and psychologist community care grades were declared by the Minister for Health and Children, in consultation with the relevant professional organisation for psychologists in Ireland.

My Department has met, and been in correspondence with, the Psychological Society of Ireland on many occasions in the past to discuss issues of relevance, including the professional qualifications required for psychology posts in the health service. Updated qualifications for clinical psychologist and psychologist community care grades were subsequently declared by my predecessor in 2002, in line with the professional standards considered appropriate by my Department and the relevant professional organisation.

95. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason the Health Service Executive withdrew a busy child mental health service in ADHD and refused to process a new permanent senior post in child psychiatry in County Mayo in March 2004 (details supplied), which would have provided an ongoing ADHD service; the repercussions for the families of children with ADHD of these actions; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26504/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** Operational responsibility for the management and delivery of health and personal social services was assigned to the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004 and funding for all health services has been provided as part of its overall vote. The Executive, therefore, is the appropriate body to consider the particular case raised by the Deputy. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

#### **Health Services.**

96. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will explain the action of the Health Service Executive in withdrawing a service in view of the lack of services in child and adolescent mental health (details supplied). [26505/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** Operational responsibility for the management and delivery of health and personal social services was assigned to the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004 and funding for all health services has been provided as part of its overall vote. The Executive, therefore, is the appropriate body to consider the particular case raised by the Deputy. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

#### **Hospital Services.**

97. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Health and Children the response structures in place in hospitals when a MRSA case is detected; if each hospital has its own plan; if there is national policy of best practice, the way same is monitored; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26511/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** I would like to assure the Deputy that tackling Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAIs), including MRSA, continues to be a priority for the Government and for the Health Service Executive (HSE). The Strategy for the control of Antimicrobial Resistance in Ireland (SARI) was launched in 2001. This strategy, which is based upon best international practice, represents a road map for tackling antibiotic resistance as well as HCAIs. Guidelines on The Control and Prevention of MRSA in Hospitals and in the Community were produced by a SARI Infection Control Subcommittee in 2005. In drawing up these guidelines, the subcommittee reviewed the 1995 Irish Guidelines and utilised guidelines produced in other countries including the UK, USA, New Zealand and the Netherlands. Responsibility for the implementation of these guidelines rests with individuals, hospital executives and, ultimately, the HSE.

The HSE launched a National Infection Control Action Plan in March 2007. An Infection Control Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan. Over the next five years, the HSE aims to reduce HCAIs by 20%, MRSA infections by 30% and antibiotic consumption by 20%. Achievement of these targets will benefit all patients who are at risk. The Steering Group is supported by eight Local Implementation Teams which will ensure that all local facilities are focused on achieving the national targets. A new National Surveillance System has recently been established by the HSE to collect data and provide information on a quarterly basis on four key areas, to monitor HCAIs in our health system:

1. Staphylococcus bacteraemia (blood stream infections);
2. Antibiotic consumption;

3. Alcohol gel use;

4. MRSA Surveillance in Intensive Care Units, from 2008 onwards.

This data (excluding MRSA in ICUs) has been compiled and published for 2006 and 2007. The report represents a significant step forward in terms of providing essential data that will serve as a benchmark for assessing progress in the future. I firmly believe that you cannot manage what you do not measure. We have now with this system begun a very useful measurement process.

The results so far show some improvement in 2007 over 2006. The overall *S. Aureus* bloodstream infection rate was lower in 2007 (0.36) compared to 2006 (0.37). The overall proportion of MRSA was also lower in 2007 (38.5%) compared to 2006 (42.4%). The overall acute in-patient antibiotic consumption rate is marginally up in 2007 over the 2006 rate by 2.4%. The overall alcohol gel use is up by a significant 50%. This data has many limitations that does not allow for direct comparison between hospitals. Also, areas like the antibiotic prescribing are calculated on a bed-days usage basis and are affected by the different procedures and data collection and processing systems applied in hospitals. However, the results are soundly based and will provide a good benchmark to enable us to measure the progress of each hospital. From now on, this data will be available on a quarterly basis. Data available from the EARSS Report Quarter 1 of 2008 indicates that the proportion of MRSA was at the same level as overall for 2007.

Since 2006, over 30 new staff in posts of Senior Pharmacists, Senior Infection Control Nurses and Surveillance Scientists have been appointed specifically to enhance infection control. I have instructed the HSE that designated private beds should be used for isolation purposes where required for patients who contract HCAs. New environmental building guidelines to inform infection control policy in all new builds and refurbishments are expected to be published by the HSE later this month.

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) undertook a comprehensive review of hygiene in our acute hospitals in 2007 and published its report last November. The report represents a thorough assessment of how hygiene services are provided and managed in 51 HSE-funded acute care hospitals. This allows individual hospitals identify strengths and areas for improvement. HIQA is following up on this review to ensure that deficits identified during that process are rectified and the Authority will be undertaking a further national review this Autumn. In addition, on 3rd June HIQA published draft Infection Prevention and Control Standards for public consultation. When finalised, these, along with the National Hygiene Standards, will provide a comprehensive framework to control infection in all healthcare settings.

While accepting that not all HCAs are preventable, I am satisfied that significant steps are being taken to reduce the rates of HCAs generally and to treat them promptly when they occur.

98. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of children who have received orthodontic treatment from the Health Service Executive each year for the past three years in each county; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26512/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** The Deputy's question relates to the funding, management and delivery of health and personal social services, which are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004. Accordingly, my

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Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have this matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

99. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Health and Children the projects being assessed or examined for inclusion on a site (details supplied) in County Laois being developed by the Health Service Executive; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26513/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney):** Operational responsibility for the management and delivery of health and personal social services was assigned to the Health Service Executive under the Health Act 2004 and funding for all health services has been provided as part of its overall vote. The Executive, therefore, is the appropriate body to consider the particular matter raised by the Deputy. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

#### **Health Service Staff.**

100. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of staff in her Department, who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008, inclusive. [26988/08]

**Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney):** A total of 38 staff of my Department received or are receiving support for post-graduate educational courses between 2004 to 2008 inclusive.

#### **Decentralisation Programme.**

101. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Transport the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26476/08]

**Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey):** Work was completed in respect of the decentralisation of 50 Departmental and Road Safety Authority (RSA) staff in July 2007. The decentralisation of 10 posts from the Department's Road Haulage functions and 40 RSA posts to Loughrea was among the priority moves in the programme. This represents 10% of the original target of 497 posts.

In relation to Drogheda, The original proposal to move 37 posts to that location was recently reviewed in the context of an efficiency review by my Department. I considered that decentralising a combination of safety investigation functions, the Railway Safety Commission (which was to be relocated originally to Ballinasloe), and other areas to bring the numbers up to the total requirement of 37 for Drogheda offers greater potential for operational efficiency as well as value for money.

The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) has recruited 36 staff for Shannon and are now located there, representing a further 7% of the original overall target. The decentralisation of 110 posts in the National Roads Authority (NRA) to Ballinasloe and 200 posts from the CIE group to Mitchelstown is also being progressed.

The breakdown in relation to the locations involved is as follows:

Location	Department/Agency	Target	Staff who have been moved	Staff Assigned but not moved	Staff designated to be moved who are now remaining in Dublin
Loughrea	RSA	40	40	0	0
Loughrea	Department, Road Haulage	10	10	0	0
Ballinasloe	National Roads Authority	110	0	0	0
Shannon	Irish Aviation Authority	400	36	0	0
Mitchelstown	CIE Group	200	0	0	0
Drogheda (See text above)	Combination of Safety-related functions (Air, Rail and Maritime)	37	0	0	0

### Efficiency Reviews.

102. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Transport the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26495/08]

**Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey):** The following proposals were included in my Department's report to the Department of Finance regarding the efficiency review of administrative expenditure:

1. Replacement of the current system for telecommunications with local authority motor tax offices (Eircom frame relay system) by use of spare capacity on the Government Virtual Private Network
2. Move to online entry of change of ownership information by approved motor dealers
3. Consolidation of Departmental headquarters accommodation from six buildings to three
4. Introduction of low value purchase cards to reduce invoice processing overheads
5. Review of mobile phone policy and practices
6. Review of road transport operator licensing fees in line with the consumer price index
7. Consolidation of IT hardware and measures to reduce paper use
8. Introduction of online application system for ship's radio licences, ship's radio operator certificates and electronic programmed indicating radio beacons
9. Review of merchant shipping fees in line with consumer price index
10. Full implementation of electronic requisitioning, invoice approval and revised budgetary systems
11. Miscellaneous minor cost-cutting measures
12. Targeted reductions in funding allocated for administrative costs in the Commission for Aviation Regulation, Dublin Transportation Office, National Roads Authority and Railway Procurement Agency.

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Full implementation of all these measures, with the exception of item 8 which is now being considered as part of a wider project, is anticipated by 2010 with an estimated aggregate annual saving of approximately €2 million. Due to up-front implementation costs and the lead-in time on these proposals, no significant savings are expected to accrue in 2008. The aggregate savings estimated for 2009 are €1,326,000.

### **Departmental Staff.**

103. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Transport the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26991/08]

**Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey):** I am providing the information requested by Deputy Burton on an academic year basis as follows:

- Academic year beginning in 2004 — 8 staff;
- Academic year beginning in 2005 — 10 staff;
- Academic year beginning in 2006 — 16 staff;
- Academic year beginning in 2007 — 8 staff;
- Academic year beginning in 2008 — not yet finalised.

### **Decentralisation Programme.**

104. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26472/08]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin):** Under the Government's decentralisation programme, the Development Cooperation Directorate of the Department of Foreign Affairs, which is Irish Aid's Headquarters, is decentralising to Limerick. Following sanction by the Department of Finance of additional posts for DCD, the total number of posts decentralising to Limerick has increased from the original figure of 124 agreed by Government to 138.

Good progress has been made and personnel have either been assigned to, or identified for, 112 posts or approximately 81% of the 138 posts scheduled to transfer to Limerick. The remaining 26 posts largely comprise the Development Specialist grades. The recent agreement involving the trade union IMPACT and the Departments of Finance and Foreign Affairs, provide a basis upon which the Development Specialist grades will transfer to the new Irish Aid headquarters in Limerick.

An advance party has already decentralised to interim office premises in Limerick, with 60 officers currently in place. It is expected that the remaining staff of Irish Aid will transfer to Limerick between now and autumn 2008, on completion and fit-out of the new permanent offices.

The detailed information requested by the Deputy in regard to the 112 posts currently assigned to, or identified for, Irish Aid in Limerick is conveyed in tabular format:



## Decentralisation of Irish Aid to Limerick as at end May 2008

	Number
Number of staff already transferred to Irish Aid Limerick	60
Number of staff assigned to Irish Aid, Dublin but not yet moved to Limerick	22
Number of staff originally designated to move who opted to stay in Dublin and have been assigned new duties	0
Number of staff elsewhere in this Department yet to transfer to Irish Aid	11
Number of staff, from other Departments in provincial locations, yet to be assigned to Irish Aid	19

**Efficiency Reviews.**

105. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008, as initiated on budget day 2008, by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26491/08]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin):** In Budget 2008, the then Tánaiste and Minister for Finance announced that the Government agreed to an efficiency review of administrative spending across all Departments. As part of this process, Departments were required to examine their administrative spending and to provide specific proposals for savings to the Department of Finance. My Department has submitted relevant proposals to the Department of Finance for review.

I expect that the question of the publication of the outcome of the review exercise, and its implications for public expenditure in 2008 and 2009, will be considered by the Government in due course.

**Departmental Staff.**

106. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of personnel working in his Department at the respective grades; the number of vacancies at present in his Department and the grades of each; his plans to fill such vacancies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26497/08]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin):** The following table sets out the number of staff broken down by grade/position working in my Department and the number of vacancies currently being carried. The figure of 1,242 excludes approximately 300 staff who are recruited locally to work in our Missions abroad, as well as 90 Temporary Clerical Officers engaged by the Passport Office on fixed term contracts to help meet the increased demand for passports in the lead up to, and during, the busy summer period. The figure also excludes 14 Ministerial Private Office staff (Special Advisers, Personal Assistants, Personal Secretaries and Civilian Drivers) appointed by the Minister and the two Ministers of State.

Grade/Position	Number serving	Vacancies
Assistant Secretary upwards	51	2
Principal Officer/Counsellor	84	0
Assistant Principal Officer/First Secretary	168	0
Third Secretary/Administrative Officer/Higher Executive Officer	175	3

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Grade/Position	Number serving	Vacancies
Executive Officer/Staff Officer	144	2
Clerical Officer	485	5
Development Specialist	40	8
Services Officer	28	0
Cleaner	17	0
Nightwatchperson	3	0
Officers from other Departments assigned to work in our Missions abroad	44	0
Total	1,242	20

The situation regarding staffing levels in the Department is kept under regular review. A monthly report is submitted to the Department of Finance detailing the number of staff employed by the Department and the number of vacancies on hand. As the Deputy will appreciate, the figure for the number of vacancies being carried by the Department is constantly evolving. The current figure for the number of vacancies is of the order of 20.

It is the practice of my Department to operate as close as possible to its full complement of staff and to keep the number of vacancies to a minimum. A competition is underway at present to set up a panel from which vacancies in the Development Specialist grades will be filled. In addition, the Public Appointments Service is currently organising a competition for the Third Secretary entry grade.

107. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of staff in his Department, who have received or are receiving support to participate in post-graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008, inclusive. [26987/08]

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin):** The following table shows the numbers of staff from my Department who received support, or are receiving support, for post-graduate educational courses for the period in question. These figures are in respect of Masters and PhD programmes.

Academic Year	No.
2004-2005	16
2005-2006	19
2006-2007	17
2007-2008	13

#### Employment Support Services.

108. **Deputy Kathleen Lynch** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of employees with a disability being supported by the wage subsidy scheme; if she is satisfied with the uptake of the scheme; the measures in place to alert employers to the scheme and to encourage greater participation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26370/08]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan):** The Wage Subsidy Scheme is operated by FÁS on behalf of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The Scheme is available to all employers (except public service employers

and/or any employers or schemes where wages are funded by FÁS) in the State who provide a minimum of 21 hours of employment per week to disabled workers. The objective of the scheme is to increase the number of persons with a disability in employment, and as far as practicable provide a level playing field for them in seeking out, or remaining in employment. There are currently 575 participants on the Wage Subsidy Scheme as of June 30 2008.

An independent consultancy review has been commissioned by my Department to examine the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the operation of the Wage Subsidy Scheme over the initial pilot phase. The objective of the review is to assess the operation and the impact of the scheme, and to identify areas which can be built upon to ensure that the scheme achieves maximum effect in meeting the objectives of:

- facilitating people with disabilities to enter full-time paid employment in the open labour market
- encouraging employers, in both sheltered and mainstream settings, to employ people with disabilities
- giving people with disabilities the opportunity to experience open labour market employment.

This is with a view to rolling out the initiative into a full programme aimed at providing ongoing incentives for both employers and people with disabilities in the open labour market.

The review has recently been completed and is now being considered by my Department in consultation with FÁS. The findings of this review will inform the Department and FÁS on how the effectiveness of the scheme may be enhanced in the future as an incentive to both employers and disabled employees.

109. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she will provide a breakdown for 2005 to 2008, on a county basis, of the number of recipients of one parent family allowance from the Department of Social and Family Affairs on employment schemes and the type of scheme; if she will provide, in respect of community employment schemes, an analysis of the time spent on schemes by participants registered in each year between 2005 and 2008; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26401/08]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan):** FÁS as an agency of my Department operates two employment schemes namely Community Employment (CE) and Job Initiative (JI). Community Employment (CE) is an active labour market programme designed to provide eligible long term unemployed people and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a fixed term basis. The programme helps unemployed people to progress to the open labour market by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return to work routine and assists them in enhancing/developing both their technical and personal skills.

The Job Initiative (JI) programme provides full time employment for people who are 35 years of age or over, unemployed for 5 years or more, and in receipt of Social Welfare payments over that period. The main purpose of the programme is to assist long-term unemployed people to prepare for work opportunities by providing participants with work experience, training and development opportunities.

In relation to the information sought by the Deputy the following tables provide a breakdown of the number of recipients of one parent family allowance from the Department of Social and Family Affairs on Community Employment Schemes and Job Initiative Programmes on a

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county basis for the years 2005 to 2008. Table 3 provides an analysis of the time spent on Community Employment Schemes by participants registered in each year between 2005 and 2008.

Lone Parents on CE, Year end 2005, 2006, 2007 to June 2008 by County

County	2005	2006	2007	June 2008
Dublin 1	199	197	179	167
Dublin 2	139	135	126	140
Dublin 3	52	38	65	61
Dublin 4	4	8	15	14
Dublin 5	132	121	108	100
Dublin 6	17	16	21	18
Dublin 7	124	105	80	78
Dublin 8	264	210	259	228
Dublin 9	41	25	39	47
Dublin 10	76	72	59	57
Dublin 11	307	286	251	209
Dublin 12	98	83	95	104
Dublin 13	23	15	19	18
Dublin 14	28	1	1	1
Dublin 15	122	127	106	114
Dublin 16	9	6	7	8
Dublin 17	171	168	136	134
Dublin 18	55	22	40	39
Dublin 20	25	16	31	19
Dublin 22	135	141	106	92
Dublin 24	243	229	220	220
Dublin West	4	9		
Dunlaoghaire/Rathdown	61	69	66	66
Dublin North County/Fingal	84	72	71	80
Carlow	73	67	73	72
Cavan	32	32	31	31
Clare	116	108	123	123
Cork City	331	299	265	255
Cork County	183	172	161	161
Donegal	172	175	193	196
Galway City	72	56	49	51
Galway County	104	92	112	129
Kerry	177	159	186	200
Kildare	146	134	135	137
Kilkenny	70	81	75	74
Laois	62	57	51	55
Leitrim	21	24	24	19
Limerick City	229	194	173	165
Limerick County	74	76	72	65
Longford	65	66	69	72
Louth	232	200	208	218
Mayo	115	128	112	116

County	2005	2006	2007	June 2008
Meath	96	93	88	84
Monaghan	59	58	78	74
Offaly	63	73	67	60
Roscommon	36	37	40	30
Sligo	95	92	82	74
Tipperary (North Riding)	58	53	61	60
Tipperary (South Riding)	121	125	121	119
Waterford City	118	113	109	78
Waterford County	39	28	32	30
Westmeath	122	99	103	103
Wexford	173	159	158	169
Wicklow	159	133	143	149
Total	5,826	5,354	5,294	5,183

### Job Losses.

110. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the actions or proposals by her Department, in conjunction with all relevant agencies, that have been put in place to address the growing number of job losses in the midlands; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26418/08]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan):** FÁS provides an integrated support service for anyone made redundant. This involves information sessions, skills analysis, training/retraining courses and job placement.

Specifically, FÁS is implementing a range of short and medium term actions for those affected by the increase in unemployment and the construction slowdown such as:

- putting in place training to upskill construction workers in relation to emerging needs
- business training and mentoring for workers from larger enterprises entering self-employment
- developing measures to ensure continuity in the apprenticeship system
- promoting access for mobile workers to construction jobs elsewhere in the EU, including the UK.

FÁS is also working through its own Employment Service and with the Local Employment Service provided by Area Based Partnerships to provide increased interviewing and caseload management capacity to respond to the increased numbers on the Live Register. In the delivery of these services, FÁS liaises with other relevant agencies such as Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, the City/County Enterprise Boards and the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The development agencies have a range of supports to help companies to undertake innovation projects in the Midlands region, which are seen as key to future economic success.

Developments launched recently throughout the Midlands, which will generate jobs, include:

- Plans for significant new town centre developments in Mullingar and Tullamore.

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- Athlone Institute of Technology recently commenced the construction of a new €36m Engineering building and Athlone IT are examining the possibility of a new Research & Incubation Campus adjacent to the college.
- Rosderra Meats is to rebuild its newly acquired factory and anticipate 120 new jobs within 18 months in Edenderry.

### Decentralisation Programme.

111. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of persons who have been moved by her Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if she will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of staff originally designated for a move but who opted to stay in Dublin who have been assigned new duties. [26469/08]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan):** The information the Deputy requested is contained in the following table:

Dept/Agency	Location	Target as per Government Decision	Decentralised	% of original target	Assigned not moved	Opted to stay in Dublin
Enterprise, Trade & Employment	Carlow	A minimum of 250	101	40.4%	49	n/a
National Consumer Agency	Cork	80	0	0	5	0
NSAI	Arklow	123	0	0%	10	113
FÁS	Birr, Co Offaly	400	23	5.75%	61	316
Enterprise Ireland (EI)	Shannon	300	0	0	n/a	n/a
Health and Safety Authority (HAS)	Thomastown (The HSA currently has an interim office in Kilkenny city housing 25 staff)	110	25	23%	25	60

In the case of the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), a decision was made prior to its establishment that it would be located in Naas, Co Kildare. Having been established in December 2005 it moved to new offices at Naas, in January 2006. All IAASA staff have been based in its offices in Naas since its establishment, and as such the Authority is fully decentralised.

In parallel with the decentralisation process, as recently outlined by the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment in the Dáil, Enterprise Ireland has been strengthening its regional focus in recent years and now has a major new presence in the Shannon Region in addition to its eight other regional offices. EI now has a major presence in the Shannon region. EI has established its new National Regional Development Headquarters in Shannon and has established the County Enterprise Support Unit in Shannon.

Currently there are 40 staff working in our Shannon office and it is expected that approximately 65 EI staff will be in place in Shannon over the coming months. A senior manager has been appointed as Head of Regions and Entrepreneurship to oversee the establishment of the EI presence in the Mid-West Region. EI managers with responsibility for the County Enterprise Co-ordination Unit and EI Regional Development strategy as well as the Regional Director with responsibility for the Mid West Regional are now in place in our Shannon office. As part of EI's regional strategy, these six posts were assigned to the new office in Shannon



from Dublin. EI has leased high-spec office space in Westpark, Shannon, to accommodate this new Regional HQ.

### **Efficiency Reviews.**

112. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008, as initiated on budget day 2008, by her Department and agencies operating under her Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26488/08]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan):** In his Budget speech on 5 December 2007, the Minister for Finance announced that the Government had agreed to an Efficiency Review of administrative spending across the public service, with a view to reducing the cost of existing levels of service for 2009. It was further announced that proposals submitted by Departments would be reviewed within the Department of Finance, who would report to the Government on the issue.

As the outcome of the Efficiency Review is still being considered by the Department of Finance and by the Government, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the matter at this stage.

### **Departmental Staff.**

113. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of staff in her Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post-graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008, inclusive. [26985/08]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan):** The position is that within my Department thirty-three staff have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational programmes in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. This number includes Higher Diploma, Masters and Doctorate Programmes.

### **Decentralisation Programme.**

114. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form, for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of staff originally designated for a move but who opted to stay in Dublin who have been assigned new duties. [26464/08]

**Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen):** Following the announcement of the Government's decentralisation programme in the 2004 Budget, the Department, which has a staff of 130 excluding the National Archives, was designated an "early mover" by the Decentralisation Implementation Group (DIG). To date, 77 members of staff have relocated to temporary accommodation in Fossa, Killarney, in three tranches, 45 in September 2006, 25 in July 2007 and 7 in May and June 2008. This represents 59% of the original target.

A further 8 staff have been assigned to posts in the Department in Dublin which will transfer in due course to the Department's new headquarters in Killarney. Of the staff in the Department who originally indicated their willingness to relocate, four have opted to stay in Dublin. Such staff will transfer to other Departments remaining in Dublin.

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No staff from the State Agencies under the aegis of my Department, namely the Irish Sports Council, the Arts Council and Fáilte Ireland, have yet decentralised to any of the three designated locations, Killarney, Kilkenny or Mallow. Although these agencies have not been designated as “early movers” they have decentralisation implementation plans in place that are under constant review. The Office of Public Works (OPW) is currently assessing a number of options in respect of suitable locations and properties for these agencies in their designated locations.

The following table outlines the current position in respect of my Department and its Agencies.

Actions Taken	DAST	Fáilte Ireland	Irish Sports Council	Arts Council
Total number of staff moved to date	77	0	0	0
Staff assigned and not yet moved	8	3	17	15
Number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin	4	0	0	0

### Efficiency Reviews.

115. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008, as initiated on budget day 2008, by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26483/08]

**Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen):** In line with the efficiency review of administrative expenditure announced by the Minister for Finance in his Budget speech last December, my Department has sent a report to the Department of Finance with specific proposals to achieve administrative savings. I understand that the Department of Finance will consider this report and bring proposals to Government in due course in the context of budgetary consideration for 2008 and 2009.

### Departmental Staff.

116. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post-graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008, inclusive. [26980/08]

**Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen):** In the period 2004-2008 the Department financed, or part-financed, the participation of 24 members of staff, including staff of the National Archives which forms part of the Department, in post graduate educational courses. This figure includes three members of staff currently in receipt of financial support for post graduate education.

### Social Welfare Benefits.

117. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will provide a breakdown of the recipients of rent allowance nationally and in Dublin 15 by nationality and status, that is, lone parents, married couples, married couples with no children, single people with no children and others for 2005 to 2008; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26400/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** The following table shows the number of recipients of rent supplement nationally and in the Dublin 15 area by nationality. A breakdown of the number of recipients on rent supplement by household composition is not available.

Recipients of rent supplement in Dublin 15 and nationally, by nationality

Nationality	Dublin 15				Nationally			
	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008
Afghanistan	14	12	14	12	53	64	77	81
Albania	24	25	27	26	122	129	110	116
Algeria	18	17	14	15	368	341	320	318
Angola	29	30	25	25	211	205	178	183
Argentina	—	—	—	—	2	3	5	4
Armenia	2	2	3	2	23	25	28	23
Australia	—	—	—	—	12	10	17	18
Austria	—	—	—	—	18	19	19	25
Azerbaijan	1	2	1	1	12	11	9	11
Bahamas	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Bahrain	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Bangladesh	1	—	—	1	16	24	21	22
Belarus	4	3	4	4	47	43	38	40
Belgium	1	1	3	1	36	36	37	43
Benin	1	1	1	—	10	11	7	7
Bhutan	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	—
Bosnia	68	62	58	55	133	121	107	96
Brazil	1	1	2	1	24	22	35	44
Bulgaria	3	2	1	1	74	57	56	58
Burkina Faso Upper Volta	—	—	—	—	4	4	4	3
Burma	2	2	1	1	15	16	19	22
Burundi	2	2	1	1	16	15	17	15
Cameroon	20	20	19	19	220	213	195	184
Canada	—	—	—	—	26	25	36	34
Chad	—	—	—	—	2	4	2	4
Channel Islands	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Chechnya	7	9	10	11	23	27	26	27
Chile	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
China	5	5	9	10	50	57	58	67
Colombia	—	—	1	—	2	1	2	3
Comors	—	1	1	2	3	5	6	5
Congo	70	80	79	79	462	478	470	470
Croatia	2	2	2	2	128	110	91	91
Cuba	—	—	—	—	16	17	15	15
Cyprus	—	1	1	1	1	1	2	3
Czech Republic	3	3	4	4	135	198	265	314
Denmark	—	1	—	—	7	12	9	9
Dominican Republic	1	1	—	—	1	1	—	—
Ecuador	—	—	—	—	2	2	2	2
Egypt	2	2	1	1	43	39	43	41
El Salvador	—	—	—	—	4	4	6	9
England	3	5	6	9	308	459	666	816
Eritrea	—	—	1	—	12	15	—	49

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Nationality	Dublin 15				Nationally			
	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008
Estonia	11	11	11	12	74	94	111	132
Ethiopia	5	5	5	5	27	38	41	47
Fiji	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Finland	—	—	—	—	11	10	15	14
France	4	6	8	7	140	160	161	172
Gabon	—	—	—	—	1	1	2	—
Gambia	1	—	—	—	7	9	16	15
Georgia	6	6	4	4	122	139	127	122
Germany	1	3	4	4	206	208	231	241
Ghana	15	23	19	17	266	244	199	195
Greece	—	—	2	3	13	10	17	20
Grenada	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Guatemala	—	—	—	—	5	4	1	1
Guinea	3	5	4	4	28	30	36	35
Guinea-Bissau	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Guyana	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Honduras	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
Hong Kong	—	—	—	—	2	3	3	2
Hungary	—	1	2	1	15	21	39	58
Iceland	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
India	1	—	1	1	10	10	15	14
Indonesia	—	—	—	1	2	2	1	2
Iran	9	11	13	15	105	142	158	168
Iraq	9	10	19	19	168	193	251	272
Ireland	631	678	742	785	35,046	36,253	36,892	39,396
Israel	1	3	3	4	15	16	16	16
Italy	8	5	4	2	110	101	102	123
Ivory Coast	12	16	15	14	59	57	61	57
Jamaica	1	5	4	3	16	22	18	16
Japan	—	—	—	—	2	3	5	6
Jordan	—	—	—	—	8	10	6	9
Kazakhstan	9	14	11	11	53	52	41	45
Kenya	7	8	3	3	101	100	82	72
Kosovo	19	16	20	22	122	126	116	119
Kuwait	1	1	1	1	9	23	31	34
Kyrgyzstan	2	2	2	3	10	10	8	10
Latvia	11	20	27	32	157	247	390	525
Lebanon	3	3	—	—	20	17	16	16
Lesotho	—	—	—	—	1	1	2	3
Liberia	1	1	1	—	15	15	13	13
Libya	8	9	8	9	135	121	118	118
Lithuania	28	46	61	78	262	407	600	815
Luxembourg	—	—	—	—	3	7	5	6
Macao	1	1	1	1	7	6	5	5
Macedonia	1	2	2	2	4	4	4	4
Malawi	1	2	2	2	5	7	5	6
Malaysia	—	1	1	1	7	12	11	12
Maldives	9	7	8	1	40	29	26	14
Malta	—	—	—	—	10	15	14	16

Nationality	Dublin 15				Nationally			
	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008
Mauritania	—	—	—	—	3	4	3	3
Mauritus	—	—	—	—	2	5	4	3
Mexico	—	—	—	—	3	3	1	—
Moldova	58	49	38	44	303	253	208	221
Mongolia	1	1	1	1	5	3	3	7
Morocco	1	—	—	1	27	28	28	33
Mozambique	—	—	—	—	1	2	2	3
Myanmar	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Nepal	—	—	—	—	2	2	1	1
Netherlands	3	2	2	3	81	88	108	113
Netherlands Antilles	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
New Zealand	—	—	—	—	5	7	7	7
Niger	5	3	2	2	20	16	11	12
Nigeria	871	771	612	570	4,766	4,028	3,222	3,024
Northern Ireland	1	1	—	—	126	131	143	169
Norway	1	1	1	1	6	4	2	1
Pakistan	17	19	17	15	125	138	144	160
Palestine	3	3	3	4	37	46	33	36
Peru	—	—	—	—	1	2	4	2
Philippines	1	1	1	—	24	30	35	34
Poland	31	38	58	81	234	443	1,009	1,950
Portugal	3	2	5	4	61	87	91	108
Republic Of Korea	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Romania	192	175	154	172	1,278	1,150	1,088	1,130
Russia	38	31	23	24	364	302	278	275
Rwanda	7	8	7	4	51	49	47	41
Saudi Arabia	—	1	1	1	—	1	2	2
Scotland	1	1	—	—	102	113	122	146
Senegal	—	—	—	—	1	2	2	2
Serbia	—	—	1	1	11	8	10	8
Seychelles & Dep	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Sierra Leone	15	13	10	9	99	95	85	81
Singapore	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Slovakia	3	2	1	3	27	117	245	332
Slovenia	—	—	—	—	1	3	2	3
Somalia	32	35	33	37	353	397	417	450
South Africa	18	17	17	15	192	198	200	217
Spain	5	5	5	5	158	138	136	139
Sri Lanka	—	—	—	—	10	8	6	11
St Lucia	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Sudan	6	12	12	16	131	224	254	294
Suirinam	—	—	—	—	1	2	2	2
Swaziland	1	—	1	1	2	1	4	4
Sweden	2	1	2	2	25	24	25	26
Switzerland	—	—	—	—	2	4	6	4
Syria	—	1	—	1	18	18	20	22
Taiwan	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	—
Tajikistan	1	—	—	—	5	4	4	4
Tanzania	—	1	1	1	8	10	10	9
Thailand	1	1	—	—	7	10	7	11

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

Nationality	Dublin 15				Nationally			
	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008	End 2005	End 2006	End 2007	27/06/2008
Togo	4	6	6	5	57	65	66	65
Tonga	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Trinidad & Tobago	—	—	—	—	2	3	2	1
Tunisia	1	1	—	—	10	7	11	13
Turkey	1	1	1	1	23	18	21	21
Uganda	2	1	2	3	33	36	37	35
Ukraine	53	45	40	38	321	281	256	255
United Arab Emirates	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
United Kingdom	47	38	36	34	2,865	2,853	2,920	3,061
United States Minor Outlying I	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
USA	2	1	1	2	112	125	123	137
Uzbekistan	4	3	3	3	33	30	28	29
Venezuela	1	—	—	—	3	1	1	1
Vietnam	4	2	2	3	33	29	31	28
Wales	—	—	—	—	13	20	23	27
Yemen	—	—	—	—	3	2	38	1
Yugoslavia	7	8	7	7	37	38	26	25
Zaire	15	12	12	10	66	55	51	48
Zambia	3	2	1	1	40	36	36	37
Zimbabwe	12	11	7	6	121	126	127	130
Unknown	1	1	1	1	4	6	6	7
Coded As "Other"	265	222	170	140	7,645	6,110	4,869	4,298
Total	2,843	2,762	2,594	2,623	60,176	59,861	59,726	63,569

118. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath who sought an increase in their disability allowance has, on foot of the request, been deemed ineligible for an allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [26371/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** Disability Allowance is a weekly Allowance paid to people with a specified disability who are aged over 16 and under 66. The disability must be expected to last for at least one year and the allowance is subject to both medical assessment and a means test.

The person concerned made an application for disability allowance on 30 May 2007. He was deemed medically suitable for disability allowance. The person concerned was visited by the Social Welfare Inspector who assessed weekly means from an occupational pension paid to him of €512.98 per week. As this exceeded the statutory limit of €197.80 per week, he was refused disability allowance on 4 June 2008. The person concerned was formally notified of this decision by letter and of his right of appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

Following your recent representations, his disability allowance claim was reviewed by the Department. He was assessed with means of €510.00 per week which still exceeded the statutory limit of €197.80 per week. Refusal to grant disability allowance was upheld. The person concerned still has a right to appeal this decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office if he is dissatisfied with this decision.



**Departmental Expenditure.**

119. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will provide a monthly schedule for 2008 of the planned expenditure under each subheading as set out in the revised Estimates for Public Services Vote 38, and the actual expenditure for each heading for February 2008, March 2008, April 2008 and May 2008; and if she will provide the expected monthly income to the social insurance fund for each month in 2008 and the actual income received for February, March, April and May 2008. [26407/08]

120. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will, in future, publish on a monthly basis, on her Department's website, the monthly outcome of income and expenditure under Vote 38 and, in particular, publish a complete monthly analysis of income and expenditure of the social insurance fund. [26408/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** The information requested is given in the following tabular statements. Table A sets out the 2008 monthly schedule of planned expenditure for Vote 38 and Table B sets out the corresponding expenditure and income schedule for the Social Insurance Fund. Given the demand led nature of the Department's schemes and the difficulties associated with scheduling expenditure on weekly schemes into a monthly framework, these profiles are indicative only.

Tables C and D show actual expenditure incurred and income received in the first four months of the year for Vote 38 and the Social Insurance Fund, respectively. Full expenditure data for the month of May is not yet available. I do not propose publishing this information on the Department's website.

TABLE A: DSFA VOTE 2008: ESTIMATED MONTHLY EXPENDITURE AND INCOME\*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>													
A.1	16,069	17,820	16,685	16,355	23,304	16,783	16,039	17,968	17,416	23,738	17,578	17,189	216,944
A.2	320	379	450	433	447	500	418	379	466	470	494	819	5,575
A.3	769	679	774	757	766	788	748	706	991	816	956	10,196	18,946
A.4	372	1,547	2,105	1,135	1,243	1,965	1,109	1,195	1,943	1,267	1,431	3,165	18,477
A.5	816	1,378	2,831	2,345	4,937	2,453	1,895	1,266	3,177	2,100	3,358	5,828	32,384
A.6	569	634	619	497	490	746	972	607	906	1,030	733	1,504	9,307
A.7	0	68	94	53	53	94	53	53	53	94	1,228	1,628	3,471
A.8	2,779	10,279	2,822	2,801	10,322	2,716	2,818	10,826	2,751	2,682	11,206	7,254	69,256
A.9	653	548	2,150	603	580	2,264	605	565	2,122	655	570	2,315	13,630
A.10	29	29	29	29	29	29	28	29	28	27	28	26	340
A.11	21	16	85	635	658	1,370	892	1,301	792	1,922	1,272	2,266	11,230
	22,397	33,377	28,644	25,643	42,829	29,708	25,577	34,895	30,645	34,801	38,854	52,190	399,560
<b>SOCIAL ASSISTANCE</b>													
B	70,599	95,252	71,539	74,614	90,023	73,260	75,096	88,166	74,633	87,918	74,454	88,456	964,010
C	1,183	1,565	1,193	1,230	1,483	1,208	1,239	1,461	1,220	1,450	1,219	1,429	15,880
D	187,900	191,900	191,200	199,700	218,000	211,200	193,800	207,000	204,500	211,600	222,700	229,700	2,469,200
E	85,086	78,987	75,761	84,135	85,572	77,153	94,425	84,174	87,152	88,079	76,953	102,323	1,019,800
F	7,225	6,301	5,884	5,922	7,162	5,838	6,864	6,293	5,939	7,168	5,829	14,855	85,280
G	15,074	14,003	16,150	13,696	16,661	7,310	7,484	7,909	13,842	16,369	14,806	18,258	161,562
H	11,560	9,851	9,792	10,272	11,951	10,027	12,711	10,402	10,611	12,319	10,146	14,018	133,660
I	94,752	79,496	79,381	79,616	99,015	81,558	99,995	84,173	83,399	101,510	83,065	116,190	1,082,150
J	1,884	2,429	2,035	2,015	2,406	1,954	1,995	2,331	1,978	2,317	1,981	2,325	25,650
K	603	587	539	528	637	517	606	532	507	603	496	655	6,810
L	16,003	13,709	13,775	13,943	16,896	14,018	17,409	14,270	14,805	17,928	15,211	20,233	188,200

TABLE A: DSFA VOTE 2008: ESTIMATED MONTHLY EXPENDITURE AND INCOME\* — continued

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s
M	32,115	30,537	28,682	29,149	35,816	29,885	35,475	32,546	31,626	38,539	32,608	55,322	412,300
N	60,548	57,260	57,462	57,993	60,953	67,834	80,401	66,352	62,189	61,133	55,498	84,908	772,531
O	87,188	82,702	73,392	91,038	79,297	77,084	94,278	78,921	78,992	95,049	78,501	109,348	1,025,790
P	668	1,083	813	687	448	66,696	8,978	4,023	3,081	2,085	2,018	1,220	91,800
Q	34,938	27,484	27,627	22,037	15,493	15,338	15,503	15,172	17,780	33,298	29,668	33,628	287,966
R	7,985	40	110	54	50	240	8,116	40	75	290	350	600	17,950
S	971	1,248	1,089	1,051	1,844	7,939	4,422	2,863	2,668	4,769	5,498	5,019	39,380
T.1	200	200	528	360	350	410	400	250	347	400	500	623	4,568
T.2	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	0	40	0	0	43	123
U	6,000	2,000	1,750	3,500	1,750	2,000	3,500	2,000	2,000	3,500	2,000	954	30,954
V.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
W	13,793	3,974	1,325	1,549	385	447	280	3,896	2,188	3,291	3,414	2,711	37,253
	758,672	733,985	688,671	718,732	789,021	781,664	788,554	747,669	730,218	824,416	755,769	956,008	9,273,377
X	16,420	16,346	16,521	16,331	16,405	16,473	16,233	16,274	16,569	16,232	16,279	17,447	197,530
	742,252	717,639	672,150	702,401	772,616	765,191	772,321	731,395	713,649	808,184	739,490	938,561	9,075,847
	333	333	1,518	1,383	3,030	1,056	1,152	886	1,602	1,020	1,584	1,573	15,470
	741,919	717,306	670,632	701,018	769,586	764,135	771,169	730,509	712,047	807,164	737,906	936,988	9,060,377

\* The monthly figures are indicative only — in demand-led schemes actual expenditure will vary from this profile.

TABLE B: 2008 SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND: ESTIMATED MONTHLY EXPENDITURE & INCOME

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s
<b>INCOME:</b>													
Income from Contributions	650,000	800,000	670,000	690,000	660,000	620,000	680,000	640,000	630,000	690,000	879,000	640,000	8,249,000
Income from Investments	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,933	12,937	155,200
Rent	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	19
Receipts: Reciprocal Arrangements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	49
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>662,933</b>	<b>812,933</b>	<b>682,933</b>	<b>702,943</b>	<b>672,933</b>	<b>632,933</b>	<b>692,933</b>	<b>652,933</b>	<b>642,933</b>	<b>702,942</b>	<b>891,933</b>	<b>652,986</b>	<b>8,404,268</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>													
Illness Benefit	68,955	68,321	69,632	67,987	75,483	63,009	75,231	67,744	71,574	74,515	65,082	65,747	833,280
Invalidity Pension	59,532	54,218	51,608	51,292	62,738	50,653	61,335	51,781	50,882	61,737	50,542	69,682	676,000
Occupational Injuries Benefit	9,971	8,773	8,630	8,688	10,097	8,457	9,944	8,608	8,560	9,945	8,347	10,870	110,890
Maternity Benefit	20,655	19,555	23,586	18,472	21,950	17,235	17,689	19,442	24,104	19,334	18,775	53,303	274,100
Health & Safety Benefit	41	48	57	50	61	50	56	58	73	61	61	-56	560
Adoptive Benefit	99	114	134	115	120	98	110	123	137	128	117	145	1,440
Treatment Benefit	5,506	6,443	6,958	6,185	5,980	7,195	6,917	6,895	21,440	6,848	6,464	8,069	94,900
State Pension (Con)	222,879	296,395	224,936	232,092	283,342	229,299	232,766	280,491	231,920	279,690	231,716	273,374	3,018,900
State Pension (Trans)	7,995	7,312	6,096	6,165	7,204	6,392	8,158	6,594	6,202	7,299	6,207	7,926	83,550
Jobseekers Benefit	59,337	52,836	49,096	49,284	53,493	45,209	57,920	55,068	46,474	51,799	42,565	51,439	614,520

TABLE B: 2008 SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND: ESTIMATED MONTHLY EXPENDITURE &amp; INCOME — continued

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s	€'000s
Widow's, Widower's and Guardians (Con)	95,163	121,535	100,751	99,600	120,674	98,053	100,005	119,533	99,887	118,963	100,031	117,895	1,292,070
Widowed Parent Grant	296	562	349	627	333	506	811	1,059	448	488	507	614	6,600
Deserted Wives Benefit	9,063	8,621	8,031	7,926	9,600	7,691	9,174	7,925	7,636	9,172	7,527	10,214	102,580
Carer's Benefit	2,935	2,341	2,328	2,317	2,880	2,319	2,877	2,297	2,285	2,808	2,238	3,855	31,480
Bereavement Grant	958	1,477	1,227	1,264	1,759	1,934	1,429	1,557	1,016	1,438	1,977	964	17,000
Free Schemes (Insurance)	28,692	24,895	24,204	20,272	16,799	13,260	15,668	16,039	18,570	26,370	23,618	25,628	254,015
Redundancy & Insolvency	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,309	14,301	171,700
Administration	16,843	16,763	34,406	16,763	16,763	34,406	16,763	16,763	34,406	17,476	16,763	34,452	272,567
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	623,229	704,518	626,318	603,408	703,585	600,075	631,162	676,286	639,923	702,380	596,846	748,422	7,856,152
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	39,704	108,415	56,615	99,535	-30,652	32,858	61,771	-23,353	3,010	562	295,087	-95,436	548,116
Add: Amount of Fund surplus as at 31 December 2007	3,630,800												3,630,800
CUMULATIVE FUND SURPLUS	3,670,504	3,778,919	3,835,534	3,935,069	3,904,417	3,937,275	3,999,046	3,975,693	3,978,703	3,979,265	4,274,352	4,178,916	4,178,916

\* The monthly figures are indicative only — in demand-led schemes actual monthly expenditure will vary from the above profiles.

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

TABLE C: VOTE 38 EXPENDITURE JANUARY-APRIL 2008

Subhead	Expenditure to April
	€
A1 Salaries, Wages & Allowances	66,288,782
A2 Travel & Subsistence	1,170,475
A3 Incidental Expenses	2,289,846
A4 Postal & Telecommunications	4,714,760
A5 Office Machinery/Office Supplies	10,817,988
A6 Office Premises Expenses	2,263,309
A7 Consultancy Services	62,876
A8 Payment for Agency Services	18,893,067
A9 eGovernment — REACH	3,760,469
A10 Value for Money & Policy Reviews	48,822
A11 e-Government Related Projects	102,012
<b>ADMINISTRATION SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>110,412,406</b>
B State Pension (Non-Con)	310,621,965
C Blind Pension	5,279,471
D Child Benefit	781,514,602
E Jobseeker's Allowance	328,997,129
F Farm Assist Scheme	27,064,113
G Employment Support Services	60,009,437
H Pre-Retirement Allowance	39,929,165
I One-Parent Family Payment	332,448,102
J Widow(er)s & Guardians Payment	8,144,309
K Social Assistance & Other Allowances	2,214,560
L Family Income Supplement	53,200,772
M Carers Allowance	128,438,595
N Supplementary Welfare Allowances	247,768,025
O Disability Allowance	331,945,889
P Respite Care Grant	2,482,716
Q Free Schemes (Assistance)	127,633,086
R Money Advice & Budgeting Service	8,012,925
S Grant to Family Support Agency	4,358,505
T1 Grant to the Combat Poverty Agency	980,638
T2 EU Programme (PROGRESS) 2007-2013	240
U Grant to Comhairle	12,500,000
V Dormant Accounts — Economic & Social Disadvantage	0
W Miscellaneous Services	21,493,721
Losses	0
<b>GROSS TOTAL</b>	<b>2,945,450,371</b>
<b>DEDUCT</b>	
X Appropriations-in-Aid	-67,390,453
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>2,878,059,918</b>



TABLE D: SOCIAL INSURANCE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE JANUARY-APRIL 2008

Scheme	Income / Expenditure to April
	€
<b>INCOME</b>	
Income from Contributions	2,792,091,837
Income from Investments	78,162,938
Rent	9,523
Reciprocal Arrangements	0
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>2,870,264,298</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Illness Benefit	278,011,442
Invalidity Pension	217,490,209
Occupational Injuries Benefits	35,428,017
Maternity Benefit	98,999,869
Health & Safety Benefit	184,558
Adoptive Benefit	476,842
Treatment Benefits	23,875,236
State (Con) Pension	989,741,512
State Pension (Transition)	28,207,139
Jobseeker's Benefit	246,186,680
Widow(er)s & Guardians (Con) Payment	421,315,770
Widowed Parent Grant	1,885,139
Deserted Wife's Benefit	34,041,184
Carer's Benefit	16,247,805
Bereavement Grant	6,309,453
Free Schemes (Insurance)	101,616,723
Redundancy & Insolvency Payments	58,863,332
Administration Expenses	83,745,634
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>2,642,626,544</b>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	227,637,753
Fund Surplus at end 2007 (Provisional)	3,630,800,000
Cumulative Fund Surplus	3,858,437,753

### Social Welfare Appeals.

121. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when an appeal for carer's allowance will be finalised for a person (details supplied) in County Mayo. [26462/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that the appeal from the person concerned has been referred to an Appeals Officer who proposes to hold an oral hearing. The person concerned will be informed when arrangements have been made.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

### Departmental Staff.

122. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of persons who have been moved by her Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if she will provide in tabular form, for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of staff originally designated for a move but who opted to stay in Dublin who have been assigned new duties. [26475/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** Under the Government's current decentralisation programme for the civil and public service, some 1,200 posts comprising the Department's headquarter sections and the Social Welfare Appeals Office are relocating to 6 locations — Sligo, Carrick-on-Shannon, Donegal Town, Buncrana, Carrickmacross and Drogheda. In addition, the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) and Citizens Information Board (CIB) are scheduled to relocate to Monaghan and Drogheda, respectively, under the programme.

To date, 207 posts have relocated from the Department's Dublin Offices to Carrick-on-Shannon and Sligo — 135 posts to Carrick-on-Shannon which represents 60% of the original target and 72 posts to Sligo which represents 72% of the original target. In addition, the Department has decentralised offices in Longford, Sligo, Letterkenny, Waterford, Dundalk and Roscommon and some 210 employees have transferred to these offices and other offices of the Department to fill vacancies created by the current decentralisation programme. Furthermore, a total of 238 employees of the Department have transferred to other Government Departments for the purposes of their decentralisation programmes.

The following table outlines the data requested:

Location	No. transferred to new location	No. who have accepted offers of transfer	No. who have been redeployed to other posts in Dublin
Buncrana	0	18	0
Carrickmacross	0	38	0
Carrick-on-Shannon	135	138	101
Donegal Town	0	52	0
Drogheda — HQ	0	154	0
Drogheda — ICT	0	34	0
Sligo	72	72	54

Location	No. transferred to new location	No. who have relocation clauses in contracts	No. who have been re-deployed to other posts in Dublin
Drogheda — CIB	0	26	0
Monaghan — CPA	0	6	0

### Social Welfare Benefits.

123. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason job-seeker's benefit has been reduced for a person (details supplied) in County Mayo. [26477/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** One of the qualifying conditions for entitlement to jobseeker's benefit is that the claimant must have sustained a substantial loss of employment and earnings. This occurs where a person has lost at least one day's work per week in comparison with their normal level of employment, together with a reduction in earnings. When making a decision as to whether a person has sustained a substantial loss of employment the Deciding Officer examines their work pattern over a representative period.

The person concerned was employed on an infrequent and irregular basis when she previously claimed jobseeker's benefit. She was awarded benefit for any day of unemployment in the course of that claim. Her entitlement to jobseeker's benefit exhausted on 18 March 2008. However, she made a further claim for the benefit on 31 March 2008 and she had sufficient contributions paid to re-qualify for jobseeker's benefit. A Deciding Officer, having examined her work pattern in the previous year, determined that her normal level of employment is 3 days per week. She is, therefore, entitled to a jobseeker's benefit payment, for days of unemployment, in weeks where she works for less than 3 days.

Under Social Welfare legislation, decisions in relation to claims must be made by Deciding Officers and Appeals Officers. These officers are statutorily appointed and I have no role in regard to making such decisions.

#### Efficiency Reviews.

124. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008, as initiated on budget day 2008, by her Department and agencies operating under her Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26494/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** A wide ranging review of the operations of the Department and the bodies under its aegis was undertaken by a group of officials of the Department. The group brought forward a number of proposals, some of which have been finalised and are in the course of being implemented while others require further consideration and development. This ongoing process will inform the development of the 2009 Estimates for my Department.

#### Departmental Staff.

125. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of staff in her Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26990/08]

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin):** The number of staff in my Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive is 51 people. The breakdown of this figure is as follows:

Academic year	No. of staff
2003/2004	8
2004/2005	19
2005/2006	9
2006/2007	5
2007/2008	10

### Decentralisation Programme.

126. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26466/08]

**Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív):** In relation to my own Department, it is envisaged that its new headquarters building will be in place in Charlestown, Co Mayo, in late 2010. In the meantime, posts have been relocated to an interim location in Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, as detailed below. The relocation of posts to Na Forbacha, Co Galway, is complete. Pobal has relocated 25 of the 40 posts assigned to Clifden, Co. Galway. In relation to Foras na Gaeilge, the approval of the first tranche of posts for location to Gaoth Dobhair is being pursued in a North/South framework. The details sought by the Deputy are set out in the following table:

Location	Number moved	% of original target	Assigned but not yet moved	Assigned but opting not to move
		%		
Tubbercurry (interim location pending construction of HQ building in Charlestown)	101	72	9	2
Na Forbacha	11	100	0	0
Clifden	25	62.5	0	0
Gaoth Dobhair	0	0	0	0

### Efficiency Reviews.

127. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26485/08]

**Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív):** As the Deputy is aware, on foot of an announcement in the 2008 Budget of an efficiency review of administrative spending across the public service, each Department was required to examine such spending, both within its own ambit and of bodies under its aegis, and to provide proposals for administrative savings to the Department of Finance. My Department provided proposals in this regard in March last, which are being considered by the Department of Finance. The Deputy will appreciate that as the proposals remain part of the deliberative process, and are being considered in the context of the preparation of the 2009 Estimates, it would not be appropriate for me to make any such proposals public.

### Departmental Staff.

128. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26982/08]

**Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív):** Support has been made available to staff in my Department to participate in a range of educational courses provided by 3rd level institutions during the period 2004-08. Details of the number of staff involved on an annual basis are set out in the table.

Year	Total
2004	20
2005	20
2006	12
2007	7
2008	5

### Milk Quota.

129. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if additional milk will be allocated to a person (details supplied) in County Carlow under the national reserve; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26356/08]

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith):** Allocations of milk quota from the National Reserve are granted on the basis of recommendations from the Milk Quota Appeals Tribunal. The Tribunal examines and makes recommendations on applications for additional quota from individual producers.

The named person submitted an application in the Hardship category for the 2007/2008 milk quota year. The Tribunal considered this application on 8th January last, and recommended an allocation of 5,000 litres. Notification has been issued to the named person and his Co-Operative. Friday 27th June last was the closing date for the receipt in my Department of applications in respect of the Hardship Scheme for the 2008/2009 milk quota year. If the named person has submitted an application to the current scheme he will receive an acknowledgement when his application is processed.

### Grant Payments.

130. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the position in relation to a person (details supplied) in County Wicklow who is anxious to be granted their forestry premium; if this will be granted as a matter of urgency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26359/08]

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith):** The application in question is currently under evaluation and will be subject to a field inspection. I have asked my officials to expedite consideration of the case.

*Question No. 131 withdrawn.*

### Land Reclassification.

132. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the reason shares on commonage have not been attributed to a person (details supplied) in County Mayo by the Land Commission in view of the fact that they should be rightfully theirs; if somebody from his Department or the Land Commission will call to this person to resolve this issue; the reason somebody has not called to them in view of the fact that promises were made to this effect. [26421/08]

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith):** An official from my Department has been in communication with the person named and with a firm of Solicitors acting on his behalf, setting out details of the commonage shares on hands and their origin. My Department's position is that the person named has a claim to only one of the shares and not three shares as claimed by him. It is the view of my officials that it would be best if a meeting with the person named now took place in the presence of his solicitor. The person named should have his solicitor contact my officials in this regard.

#### **Decentralisation Programme.**

133. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26463/08]

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith):** The information requested is set out in tabular form.

Office	Location	Posts	Number moved	% of original target	Number assigned, not yet moved
				%	
Department HQ	Portlaoise	600	274	46	96
Fisheries	Clonakilty	90	81	90	—
Cork local offices	Fermoy	Up to 100	0	0	25
Cork Labs (3) & Limerick Labs (2)	Macroom	Up to 100	0	0	25
Bord Bia	Enniscorthy	76	0	0	15*
Bord Iascaigh Mhara	Clonakilty	95	0	0	22*

\*At end February 2008.

Up to the end of June 2008, 31 staff opting to stay in Dublin have been assigned to posts with other Departments and Offices that are remaining in Dublin.

#### **Efficiency Reviews.**

134. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26482/08]

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith):** My Department is engaged in on-going efforts to improve efficiency and has reduced staff numbers significantly in recent years. As part of the most recent Efficiency Review, my Department again reviewed all aspects of expenditure with a view to identifying possible savings on administrative spending. The exercise has included the bodies within the aegis of my Department. I will be considering specific proposals, including the possibility of further staff savings, in the context of the on-going review of expenditure in 2008 and the preparation of the 2009 Estimate for my Department.



### Departmental Staff.

135. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26979/08]

**Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith):** During the years 2004 to 2008, 133 staff in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food either received or are currently receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses.

136. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will publish copies of all Masters and PhD. theses on his Department's website as they were paid from the public purse; and, if in the interim, he will provide this Deputy with copies of the completed research paid for by the State. [26406/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** As the Deputy will be aware, a large number of students take Masters by research and PhD programmes in our higher education institutions (HEIs). The precise breakdown between those that are publicly funded and those that are not is not readily available. However, as regards the theses arising from such programmes, these are traditionally retained in hard copy in academic libraries in HEIs and are readily accessible by staff and students. Other members of the public can access these works by making the appropriate arrangements with the institution.

Recently, the research funding agencies have begun the implementation of an 'open access' policy for publicly funded research. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has developed a policy on Open Access which will be implemented for all future research funding calls. Where a research publication arises in whole or in part from HEA-funded research, researchers will now also be required to file their published research papers in an open access repository as soon as is practical, but within six calendar months at the latest.

In Ireland other agencies that have also adopted an Open Access Policy include the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET), Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and The Health Research Board (HRB).

In a project funded under Cycle 1 of the Strategic Initiative Fund, a number of Irish universities have developed open access repositories of their own and are now engaged in the development of a national open access repository system by connecting the repositories of each participating institution for fuller public accessibility and to increase exposure of Irish University published research. Aside from its benefit to the academic and research community, the move towards open access will make theses and other research outcomes generally available to the interested public.

As the deputy will further appreciate, the extent of the material sought is very broad and extends beyond the remit of my Department. If the Deputy could be more specific, the relevant funding agency or agencies would, I am sure, be in a position to facilitate her request.

### Pupil-Teacher Ratio.

137. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 157 of 5 June 2008, the reason data collected for the academic year 2007-08 regarding students registered on the primary school census and the post-primary database returns, including newcomer children, is not available within the same academic year; if then it has relevance to monitoring outcomes in the academic year to which the data refers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26107/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The Annual Census of Primary Schools is a paper-based census. Schools are requested to make their returns by 31st October each year. In the 2007/2008 school year 3,282 ordinary and special primary schools made returns. All returns must be logged as received, checked and in some cases corrected with the input of the school Principal. These returns must then be keyed into a database, and various cross checks and validations must be performed to ensure the integrity of the data. Given the number of schools and returns involved, this process takes many months. In addition some schools can be quite late in making their returns, which can lead to a delay in processing. The information collected is used for payment of some grants, and for statistical purposes including calculating average class sizes.

Work on the development of a Learner Database at Primary Level is continuing. The timing of the implementation of the Database depends on available resources and the management of competing priorities. However, in line with the Programme of Government and the Data Strategy of my Department, and taking advantage of the existing Education Services Interactive (esinet) portal already used by schools to access the On-Line Claims System, I am fully committed to the development of such a Database as a means of better quality information on pupils as well as reducing the administrative burden on schools and significantly reducing the processing time required for the Annual Census.

The Post-Primary Pupils Database (PPPDB) holds basic information on each pupil attending a post primary school. In October of each year, all post primary schools make a return to my Department detailing their enrolments for the year. This is known as the “October Return” and it is used to populate my Department’s Post Primary Pupils Database. In the school year 2007/08, 731 schools made returns. The “October Return” gives a snapshot of school enrolments by Programme level (Junior Cert, Leaving Cert, Class Year) as at 30th September each year. Detailed information on the subject choice of each student is also collected.

A good overview of the type of information collected can be gained by looking at the Second-Level Education section of my Department’s Annual Statistical Report. Much of the data in that section of the annual report is taken directly from the Post-Primary Pupils Database.

The in-house processing of the October Returns and the provision of a ‘Helpdesk’ facility for schools is carried out by the Post Primary Pupils Data Section of my Department. The data returned by each school needs to be checked and collated. Processing of the October Returns commences in October of each year and is normally completed around May of the following year. For 2007/2008 there were approximately 336,000 pupils on returns from 731 schools. While provisional figures on overall total enrolments for the school year are available at this stage it takes a number of weeks to prepare the data for publication.

Data for individual schools become available throughout the process as their returns are received, checked and collated. Data from these schools may be used by my Department for a number of tasks, which impact directly on schools and their pupils, including: payment of per capita grants to voluntary secondary schools; determination of the provisional teacher allocations for all sectors i.e. Secondary, Vocational, Community and Comprehensive.

### **Special Educational Needs.**

138. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position in relation to home tuition hours for a person (details supplied) in County Wicklow; if in view of the fact that the special needs assistant is familiar with the person, the SNA will be allocated the hours; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26357/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The Deputy will be aware the July Education Programme is available to all special schools and mainstream primary schools with special classes catering for children with autism who choose to extend their education services through the month of July. My Department also provides for a July Programme for pupils with a severe/profound general learning disability. My Department encourages all eligible schools to participate in this initiative in the interest of the children in question. There has been a steady increase in the number of schools offering the programme since it was introduced in 2001 when relevant schools were circulated with details.

Where school based provision is not feasible, home based provision may be grant aided. As home tuition takes place outside of the normal school framework, there is need to ensure that tuition providers are appropriately qualified to give education to the children concerned. My Department’s qualification preference is for a fully qualified teacher. Where parents cannot recruit a fully qualified teacher, then some alternative qualifications are acceptable including certain Montessori qualifications. Details in this regard are published on my Department’s web site.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

139. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science the situation with regards to funding for a school (details supplied) in County Sligo. [26362/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The project to which the Deputy refers is currently at advanced stage of architectural planning. The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department’s multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

140. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science the situation with regards to the provision for a new school (details supplied) in County Sligo. [26363/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The project to which the Deputy refers is currently at an advanced stage of architectural planning. The Professional and Technical Staff of my Department are currently examining a submission received from the Design Team.

The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department’s multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

141. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to a letter from this Deputy in relation to provision of funding for an extra prefabricated building for a school (details supplied) in County Cork; the progress that has been made in regard to this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26366/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** A reply to the letter to which the Deputy refers to has been forwarded to the Deputy’s office this week outlining the position

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in relation to funding for the school to which the Deputy refers to. It is not possible on this occasion to fund the request for the extra accommodation, as sanction has not been given for the extra teacher for the school to which the Deputy refers to, for the coming school year. It is of course open to the school to apply for funding in 2009, should sanction for the extra teacher be given, and a letter to this effect has issued to the school authorities.

### **School Staffing.**

142. **Deputy Bobby Aylward** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will review the decision of his Department to refuse an additional teacher for a national school (details supplied) in County Carlow where they had 47 children on the roll in September 2007 for the coming school term; if he will take into consideration that in fact another child had applied for enrolment to the school on 1 September 2007 but due to the fact that the child’s parents were delayed in returning from England they were unable to attend within the month of September. [26422/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The mainstream staffing of a primary school is determined by reference to the enrolment of the school on 30th September of the previous school year. The actual number of mainstream posts sanctioned is determined by reference to a staffing schedule which is issued to all primary schools each year. Posts allocated on the basis of this staffing schedule are specifically for mainstream classes and should be deployed accordingly. School authorities are requested to ensure that the number of pupils in any class is kept as low as possible, taking all relevant contextual factors into account (e.g. classroom accommodation, fluctuating enrolment). In particular, school authorities should ensure that there is an equitable distribution of pupils in mainstream classes and that the differential between the largest and smallest classes is kept to a minimum.

Data submitted to my Department by the Board of Management of the school referred to by the Deputy indicates that the enrolment in the school on 30th September 2006 was 49 pupils. In accordance with the staffing schedule (Circular 0020/2007), which is available on my Department’s website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie), the mainstream staffing in the school for the 2007/08 school year is a Principal and 2 mainstream class teachers.

According to data submitted to my Department by the Board of Management the enrolment in the school on 30th September 2007 was 47 pupils. In accordance with the staffing schedule (Circular 0010/2008), which is also available on my Department’s website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) and a hard copy of which has been issued to all primary schools, the mainstream staffing in the school for the 2008/09 school year will be a Principal and 1 mainstream class teacher.

Within the terms of the staffing arrangements for primary schools there is provision for additional posts, referred to as developing school posts, to be assigned to schools on the basis of projected enrolments for the next school year. Under these arrangements, a developing school post may be sanctioned provisionally where the projected enrolment at 30th September of the school year in question equals or exceeds a specified figure. If the specified figure is not achieved on 30th September, sanction for the post is withdrawn.

It is open to the Board of Management to submit an appeal under certain criteria to an independent Appeal Board which was established to adjudicate on appeals on mainstream staffing allocations in primary schools. Details of the criteria and application dates for appeal are contained in the staffing schedule. The criteria are also available in Circular 0024/2007

(Appeal Board for Mainstream Staffing in Primary Schools) which is available on my Department's website.

The staffing of the school for the 2008/2009 school year was considered by the Appeal Board on 20 May, 2008. The Board, having considered the appeal with regard to the criteria outlined in Circular 0024/2007, was satisfied that a departure from the staffing schedule is not warranted in this case. The Board of Management of the school was notified in writing of the decision of the Appeal Board on 23 May 2008. The Appeal Board operates independently of the Department and its decision is final.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

143. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to a meeting regarding a school (details supplied) in County Roscommon, the steps which have been taken to date to address the outstanding issues as outlined in meeting minutes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26435/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** My Department is in the process of assessing the long term needs of the school. This involves, among other things, an examination of the demographics of the area together with any proposed housing developments. When a decision is taken in this matter, it will be communicated directly to the Board of Management. Any resulting building project will be considered for advancement in the context of the multi-annual school building and modernisation programme, the resources available and the priority attaching to the project under the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects.

### **Special Educational Needs.**

144. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Education and Science the changes he proposes to deal with applications by parents seeking ABA educational facilities for their autistic children; if he proposes to change the manner in which his Department has dealt with these cases to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26440/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** The Deputy will be aware of the Government's commitment to ensuring that all children with special educational needs, including those with autism, can have access to an education appropriate to their needs preferably in school settings through the primary and post primary school network. This facilitates access to individualised education programmes, fully qualified professional teachers, special needs assistants and the appropriate school curriculum.

Children in these classes benefit from having fully-qualified teachers who have access to training in a range of autism-specific interventions, including ABA, TEACCH and PECS. These students have the option, where appropriate, of full/partial integration and interaction with other pupils. Funding is also provided for assistive technology and specialist equipment as required and special school transport arrangements may also be put in place. The establishment of a network of autism-specific special classes in schools across the country to cater children with autism has been a key educational priority in recent years. In excess of 315 classes have now been approved around the country.

An ABA pilot scheme was established in the absence of this network of special classes in our schools. The Deputy will be aware that the Programme for Government commits to the long-term funding for the centres that are currently in the ABA pilot scheme subject to agree-



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ment with my Department on standards that will enable them to be supported as primary schools for children with autism. As discussions in this regard are ongoing between officials in my Department and groups representing the centres participating in the scheme the Deputy will appreciate that I can not comment further on this issue.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

145. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will report on the status of a school building project (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26447/08]

147. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will report on the status of a school building project (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26449/08]

148. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will report on the status of a school building project (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26450/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 145, 147 and 148 together.

The schools to which the Deputy refers have applied to my Department for large scale capital funding for the provision of ancillary accommodation. The development of building projects for these schools is at an early stage. The progression of all large scale building projects from the initial design stage through to the construction phase, including these projects, will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department’s multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the Department’s capital budget, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of these projects at this time.

146. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the will report on the status of a school building project (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26448/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The school to which the Deputy refers applied to my Department for large scale capital funding for an extension project. The project had progressed to the advanced stages of architectural planning. However, due to a significant decline in enrolments, the accommodation brief has to be re-visited and revised.

The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department’s multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the Department’s capital budget from higher Band rated projects, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

*Question Nos. 147 and 148 answered with Question No. 145.*

149. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Education and Science when he will give the final approval for a building project at a school (details supplied) in County Mayo to proceed. [26457/08]



**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The project to which the Deputy refers is currently at an early stage of architectural planning. The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department’s multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

**Decentralisation Programme.**

150. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26468/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The details requested by the Deputy in relation to my Department are shown in the attached table. None of the agencies under the aegis of my Department that are included in the programme of decentralisation have relocated posts to date.

<i>Athlone</i>	
Target number to decentralise — 2003:	100
Number to decentralise based on staffing of relevant sections — 2008:	93

All grades	No of posts	Number assigned and moved	Number assigned — not moved	Number to be assigned
	93.00	71.50	3.00	18.50

<i>Notes</i>	
Number assigned — not moved:	these officers will relocate to Athlone in July 2008
Number to be assigned:	this information is included as transfer arrangements are underway for these officers who will transfer directly to Athlone to Athlone in the coming weeks.
Number of staff who were assigned to posts in Dublin decentralising to Athlone at 31 December 2005 who opted to remain in Dublin and who have since been re-assigned to other duties in Dublin (with Department of Education & Science and with other departments):	37.40 wholetime equivalents.

<i>Mullingar</i>	
Target no to decentralise — 2003:	300
Number to decentralise based on staffing of relevant sections — 2008:	302

All grades	No. of posts	number assigned and moved	number assigned — not moved
	302.00	7.00	116.00

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Number of staff who were assigned to posts in Dublin decentralising to Mullingar at 31 December 2005 who opted to remain in Dublin and who have since been re-assigned to other duties in Dublin (with Department of Education & Science and with other departments) in order to facilitate the assignment of officers wishing to decentralise to Mullingar to Mullingar bound posts:	37.60 wholetime equivalents.
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### **Early School Leavers.**

151. **Deputy John Deasy** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the most recent figures from the Central Statistics Office show that the south-east region has the highest rate of early school leavers and the second lowest rate of participation in full-time education; the measures he proposes to remedy this situation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26479/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey):** My Department has adopted a broad-based approach to tackling early school-leaving.

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 established the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) as the national body with responsibility for school attendance. The Act provides a comprehensive framework, promoting regular school attendance and tackling the problems of absenteeism and early school leaving. The general functions of the Board are to ensure that each child attends a recognized school or otherwise receives a certain minimum education. The Board operates through 5 regional teams, with bases in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. A service is provided from 26 locations nationwide.

Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) are appointed and deployed throughout the country to discharge the Board’s functions locally. EWOs employ a welfare oriented approach in the interests of the children and young people who do not attend school regularly, working collaboratively with schools and other agencies in meeting the needs of the children and the young people concerned. It is encouraging to note research findings that attendance at school in the areas where EWOs are working intensively improved by 4% in 2004/05 compared with the previous year.

Enhancing attendance, progression, retention and attainment are central to DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the action plan for educational inclusion, which is being implemented at present. This is the first time that an integrated educational inclusion strategy has been developed for 3-18 year olds in the State. DEIS represents a shift in emphasis away from individual initiatives, each addressing particular problems, to a multifaceted and more integrated approach. Additional supports are being targeted at children in the most disadvantaged schools to encourage them to stay in school.

The key principle of early intervention, to identify and help children at risk of leaving school early, is a major component of the Plan. In fact, in addition to the NEWB, there are currently in excess of 620 staff within the education sector in education disadvantage programmes of which over 130 are additional posts allocated under DEIS and a new integrated School Support Programme (SSP). The SSP incorporating the School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) is a preventative measure designed to combat issues of poor attendance and early school leaving.

Working with parents to promote school attendance and retention is an important part of the work of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL). In addition to this, the

School Completion Programme is developing strong links between primary and post-primary schools in disadvantaged areas. These are two preventative measures designed to combat issues of poor attendance and early school leaving. Children at risk of early school leaving are targeted under the School Completion Programme for a variety of extra supports aimed at encouraging them to stay in school. The supports cover both educational and non-educational interventions and are provided during and outside of school time. The Home School Community Liaison Scheme works to involve parents in their children's education which is a crucial component in convincing young people of the value of education.

Under DEIS, a continuing emphasis will be placed on the development of effective transfer programmes for pupils making the transition to second-level, by building on the existing work of HSCL scheme and the School Completion Programme in this area. Initiatives such as Familiarisation Days and week-long transfer programmes for new entrants to second level have been shown to have very positive results in helping children to make a smooth transition to their new school. Other measures facilitated through the DEIS action plan include extending access to Schools' Business Partnerships, school meals, guidance counselling and student councils. Increased integration is also being promoted between the work of second level schools and centres catering for young early school leavers, particularly Youthreach Centres and Senior Traveller Training centres. This Government has shown a sustained commitment to providing greater opportunities in the further education sector by supporting second chance educational opportunities for young people who leave school.

The range of curricula available to students has also been extended to include the Junior Certificate Schools Programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. These options provide an alternative for many children who might otherwise opt out of formal education at an early stage.

In relation to the Deputy's particular question, the south east region falls into the Leinster South Regional Area of the NEWB. 13 EWOs and 2 Senior Educational Welfare Officers (SEWOs) and 1 Regional Manager are deployed in the Leinster South region. Under Towards 2016 provision was made for an additional 100 posts, in total for the NEWB and the National Educational Psychological Service, by the end of 2009, to help further address absenteeism, early school leaving, behavioural problems and special needs. In 2007, 15 of these posts were sanctioned for the NEWB and I am pleased to inform the Deputy that one of the 15 new posts was sanctioned for the Waterford (part city)/South Wexford area.

Section 29 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 provides for the establishment and maintenance by the NEWB of a register of young persons aged 16 and 17 who leave school to take up employment. The purpose of the register is to ensure that the young people concerned continue to participate in education until they reach 18 years of age. The NEWB will in the near future conclude the establishment of the register. At present early school leavers who contact the NEWB directly are recorded by the Board.

Work is ongoing to develop appropriate protocols for all agencies and services to work together and to ensure that optimum use is made of the resources deployed. I would like to assure the Deputy that through increased investment and improved services this government is determined to optimise access, participation and educational outcomes at every level of the system. It will continue to do all that is possible to ensure that every child gets all the opportunities and support they need to enable them to achieve their potential and participate fully in education.

152. **Deputy John Deasy** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the most recent figures from the Central Statistics Office show

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that the south-east region has the one of the lowest percentages of persons with a third level qualification; the measures he proposes to remedy this situation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26480/08]

153. **Deputy John Deasy** asked the Minister for Education and Science his views on whether the educational disadvantage being suffered by the south-east region, as revealed by the latest figures produced by the Central Statistics Office, demonstrates the need for a university for the region; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26481/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 152 and 153 together.

The proportion of persons with a third level qualification in any given region does not necessarily correlate with the proportion of the population from that region that continue their studies to third level. There are a number of factors influencing the location in which a person with a third level qualification may choose to live, including for example the concentration of jobs available in high population centres.

Third level participation rates by region are not currently available. However participation rates by county are available from national studies of new entrants to higher education, which are commissioned by the HEA at six-yearly intervals. The most recent survey of this type was conducted in 2004 and it shows significant increases in participation rates over 1998 for all the counties in the south east region. For example, Waterford’s participation rate increased from 41.2% in 1998 to 48.7% in 2004.

My Department has received applications from three Institutes of Technology, including Waterford IT, for designation as universities. I am considering the appropriate next steps in relation to all the applications for designation on hands, having regard to the need to build on our strengths and to provide an environment where all our higher education institutions can develop in a way that best serves the country as a whole and the regions where they are based.

#### **Efficiency Reviews.**

154. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26487/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As the Deputy is aware, following the Minister for Finance’s announcement in Budget 2008, my Department and bodies under the remit of my Department undertook an Efficiency Review. This is now being considered in the context of the preparation of the 2009 Estimates.

#### **Schools Building Projects.**

155. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Minister for Education and Science when a school (details supplied) in County Wicklow will get approval to start work on their new school. [26498/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The school to which the Deputy refers has applied to my Department for capital funding for an extension project. The project is at an advanced stage of architectural planning. The progression of all major building projects,

including this project, through to construction phase will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department's multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department and with the level of activity in the School Building Programme, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the further progression of the project at this time.

### **Youthreach Programme.**

156. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his Department will roll-out the special education needs initiative to all Youthreach centres in County Kerry, which are recognised centres of education; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26506/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey):** Youthreach is designed to offer two years integrated education, training and work experience for young people aged 15 — 20 who have left school early without achieving qualifications. The programme, which is managed by VECs at local level, is available in 100 centres nationally and caters for almost 3,700 learners.

In 2007 my Department introduced the Special Education Needs Initiative (SENI) to address special educational needs and provide the necessary supports for learners in Youthreach centres. The SENI was introduced to 25 groups of 25 learners across 20 Youthreach centres.

The SENI involves a general allocation model similar to that introduced in the primary sector in September 2005. It is team based and caters mainly for students with high incidence needs. The SENI provides for the allocation of increased staffing hours (from 4,200 to 5,700 hours per group per year) to deal with the special needs and disabilities of all the students.

Additional training was provided to staff in the centres to enable the introduction, on a centre team basis, of a range of professional practices to support students with special educational needs/disabilities. This training followed on from the national introductory training programme introduced into all centres in 2006. In addition, the 20 centres have access to a password protected internet site containing guidelines, tailored training programmes and other materials.

During 2007, an evaluation was carried out of the SENI to determine its suitability and effectiveness for the learners. The findings of this evaluation were generally positive and found the new initiative to be meeting the needs of learners. The evaluation recommended full integration of the SENI into each centre. My Department is currently examining the possibility of rolling out the SENI to other Youthreach centres, subject to the availability of funding.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

157. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will approve an extension to a school (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26507/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** An application to extend the existing temporary accommodation has been received from the school referred to by the Deputy. This proposal is under review in my Department.

An application for a new school building on a greenfield site had been made by the school and an initial assessment of the long term requirements were that an 8 classroom school would be required.

The progression of all large scale building projects from initial design stage through to tender and construction, including this project, will be considered on an on-going basis in the context



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of my Department’s Multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

### **School Staffing.**

158. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the position of administrative principal will be retained in a school (details supplied) in County Laois; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26514/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The staffing of a special school is determined by reference to the recommendations outlined in the Report of the Special Education Review Committee, 1993, also known as the SERC Report. In accordance with SERC, the staffing level in the school in question should be a teaching principal and two class teachers. In recognition of the extent of planning work associated with setting up a new school, the Department permitted the principal to operate in an administrative capacity to ensure the successful establishment of the school. The school is now well established and the administrative status of the principal will discontinue for the 2008/2009 school year when the principal will return to teaching duties. The Department initially advised the school of this arrangement in a letter dated 16th August, 2007. However, in recognition of the complexity of the special educational needs of the pupils in the school, the National Council for Special Education has approved a temporary teacher in the school for the 2008/2009 school year.

The overall number of teaching staff in the school for the 2008/2009 school year will therefore remain the same as in 2007/2008.

159. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the position of administrative principal will be retained in a school (details supplied) in County Offaly; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26515/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The staffing of a special school is determined by reference to the recommendations outlined in the Report of the Special Education Review Committee, 1993, also known as the SERC Report. In accordance with SERC, the staffing level in the school in question should be a teaching principal and one class teacher. In recognition of the extent of planning work associated with setting up a new school, the Department permitted the principal to operate in an administrative capacity to ensure the successful establishment of the school. The school is now well established and the administrative status of the principal will discontinue for the 2008/2009 school year when the principal will return to teaching duties. The Department initially advised the school of this arrangement in a letter dated 15th August, 2007. However, in recognition of the complexity of the special educational needs of the pupils in the school, the National Council for Special Education has approved a temporary teacher in the school for the 2008/2009 school year.

The overall number of teaching staff in the school for the 2008/2009 school year will therefore remain the same as in 2007/2008. The Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) confirmed the position with the school authorities on 1st July, 2008.

### **Schools Refurbishment.**

160. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when the upgrading and refurbishment works at a school (details supplied) in County Kildare are expected to be completed in full; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26539/08]



**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I am pleased to inform the Deputy that construction of an extension to the school in question is underway. The question of the provision of additional accommodation over and above that currently being provided is under consideration in my Department and will be finalised shortly.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

161. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he has received further documentation or information regarding the proposed new national school facilities at Ardclough, County Kildare; his plans to progress same in the next 12 months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26540/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The project to which the Deputy refers is currently at early architectural planning. A stage 2(a) submission, Developed Sketch Design, has recently been received in my Department. Officials from my Department are currently examining the Stage submission. The progression of all large scale building projects from initial design stage through to tender and construction, including this project, will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department’s Multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

162. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when he received an application for large scale capital funding for the provision of proposed new primary school facilities at Straffan, County Kildare; if this matter will be progressed in the next six months in view of the increased population of the area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26541/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** An application for large scale capital funding at the school in question has been received. The commencement and progression of all large scale building projects from initial design stage through to construction phase, including this project, will be considered in the context of my Department’s Multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

163. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding a project at a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; his plans to progress same by the end of 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26542/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** An extension project for the school in question is at an advance stage of architectural planning. The commencement and progression of all large scale building projects from initial design stage through to construction phase, including this project, will be considered on an on-going basis in the context of my Department’s Multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. I am currently reviewing with my officials the Department’s spending plans for this year, I am in the middle of this process and it will not be complete for some time. I will not be making decision on any further capital expenditure until that process is completed. When this is done the school management will be informed of the position without delay.

### **School Accommodation.**

164. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to

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Parliamentary Question No. 257 of 21 May 2008, the position regarding a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26543/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** Officials from my Department have recently received the Stage 3 submission (i.e. Developed Sketch Scheme) from the school’s Design Team. The Stage 3 submission has been referred to the Technical Staff of my Department for their observations. It is expected that a review meeting will be organised between the Board of Management, its Design Team and the Department to assess the submission in due course.

As is the case with all large capital projects currently on hand within the Developing Areas Unit, its progression will be considered in the context of the multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

165. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding a project at a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; his plans to progress same by the end of 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26544/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** A tender report in respect of the school to which the Deputy refers has been received by the Department.

As is the case with all large capital projects currently on hand within the Unit, its progression will be considered in the context of the multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. I am not in a position to say at this stage when construction is likely to commence on the project in question.

### **School Accommodation.**

166. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 256 of 21 May 2008, the position regarding a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26545/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The project at the school referred to by the Deputy is currently at stage 3 of the architectural planning process. The Client for this project is the School’s Board of Management. The stage 3 submission is currently being reviewed by the Client’s design team in advance of being referred to my Department for approval.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

167. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will grant an application for major capital funding to a school (details supplied) in County Kildare within the next nine months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26546/08]

169. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will grant an application for major capital funding to a school (details supplied) in County Kildare before the end of 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26548/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 167 and 169 together.

I can confirm to the Deputy that my Department is in receipt of applications for large scale capital funding from the schools to which he refers. The projects have been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects. Progress on the proposed works will be considered on an ongoing basis in the context of my Department's multi-annual School Building and Modernisation programme. However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the project at this time.

### **School Accommodation.**

168. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will review the decision to refuse additional funding to a school (details supplied) in County Kildare on foot of his response to Parliamentary Question No. 250 of 21 May 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26547/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** In 2007 the school in question received approval to build additional classrooms under the devolved Permanent Accommodation Scheme (PAS).

The purpose of the PAS is to devolve funding to individual school authorities to undertake building works which will address the school's long term accommodation needs. Under the terms of the Scheme, school authorities are empowered to manage these works with guidance from and minimal interaction with the Department. Devolving funding to school management authorities allows them to have control of their projects, assists in moving projects more quickly to tender and construction and can also deliver better value for money.

The scheme is not intended to leave schools with significant fund-raising needs; rather the terms of the Scheme require the schools to tailor the scope of capital works commissioned to the available funding. The decision on whether to continue participating in the scheme or to drop out, if the scope of build is more than the funding envelope permits, is a matter for each school authority.

The Board of Management submitted an appeal for additional funding. Following assessment of the application from this school and in light of the large number of projects seeking funding from my Department from the budget allocated and in line with the original intention of the scheme, unfortunately, it was not possible to provide additional funding on this occasion.

They were advised to use the grant to achieve the maximum accommodation possible taking into consideration the extra cost which has arisen. In the current economic climate and with considerable demands on the capital budget of my Department, it is not possible to approve such significant increases in the amounts grant aided to schools. It is the responsibility of the school authorities to manage the resources allocated to them to ensure maximum value for money and to control costs.

*Question No. 169 answered with Question No. 167.*

170. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the extent to which it is expected his Department will respond to meet the classroom accommodation needs at primary and second level schools here and in respect of which pre-election commitments were made in 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26549/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe):** As part of the Programme for Government, a Developing Areas Unit was set up in my Department to focus on the school accommodation needs of rapidly developing areas. The main emphasis in 2008 is on providing

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sufficient school places in these developing areas, as well as delivering improvements in the quality and extent of existing primary and post-primary school accommodation throughout the country.

In this context, my Department has assessed the needs in these areas and additional accommodation is being delivered to meet those needs for the 2008/2009 school year. 26 new school buildings are being provided in these areas.

### **Special Educational Needs.**

171. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the degree to which it is intended or expected to provide or improve facilities for children with autism at mainstream schools here with particular reference to positive indications given prior to the general election in 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26550/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The Deputy will be aware of the Government’s ongoing commitment to ensuring that all children with special educational needs, including those with autism, can have access to an education appropriate to their needs preferably in school settings through the primary and post primary school network. This facilitates access to individualised education programmes, fully qualified professional teachers, special needs assistants and the appropriate school curriculum.

Many children with autism are fully integrated into mainstream classes. The National Council for Special Education provides additional resource teaching hours and special needs assistant support to schools in respect of fully integrated enrolled students with autism.

Some students with autism require further support in school. The establishment of a network of autism-specific special classes in schools across the country to cater for these children with autism has been a key educational priority in recent years. In excess of 315 classes, an increase of 106 since May 2007 have now been approved around the country at primary and post primary level, including many in special schools. The National Council for Special Education will continue to establish more classes as required.

Children in these classes benefit from having a reduced pupil-teacher ratio of 6:1; fully-qualified teachers who have access to training in a range of autism-specific interventions, including Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) and the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and there is a minimum of 2 special needs assistants in each class. Other special needs assistant posts may be allocated in line with the needs of the enrolled children. These students have the option, where appropriate, of full/partial integration and interaction with other pupils. Funding is also provided for assistive technology and specialist equipment as required and special school transport arrangements may also be put in place.

My Department has put in place a training programme for teachers in autism-specific interventions including TEACCH, PECS and ABA through the Special Education Support Service. A recent initiative has been the expansion of this service to enable it to recruit a behavioural specialist support team, led by a person with a PhD in ABA.

### **Schools Building Projects.**

172. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when he received an application for major capital funding or other funding from a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; when he expects to grant same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26551/08]

173. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position in relation to an application for major funding or other funding made by a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26552/08]

174. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a decision on an application for major capital funding or other funding will be made before the end of 2008 in the case of a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26553/08]

175. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when an application for major capital funding or other funding will be granted at a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; the expected timeframe for same in view of the increased population in the area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26554/08]

176. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the progress in the past eight months regarding an application for major capital or other funding at a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; when it is expected he will review this application again; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26555/08]

177. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will grant an application for major capital funding or other funding to a school (details supplied) in County Kildare in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26556/08]

178. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when he received an application for major capital funding or other funding from a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; when same is expected to be granted; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26557/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 172 to 178, inclusive, together.

I can confirm to the Deputy that my Department is in receipt of applications for large scale capital funding from the schools to which he refers. The projects have been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects. Progress on the proposed works will be considered on an ongoing basis in the context of my Department’s multi-annual School Building and Modernisation programme.

However, in light of current competing demands on the capital budget of the Department, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of these projects at this time.

#### **Special Educational Needs.**

179. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when it is expected that speech and language therapy and other special requirements will be met in full at all primary schools throughout County Kildare in the short to medium term; the degree to which he has received requests from the relevant school authorities in this regard; when it is intended to respond; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26558/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As the Deputy will be aware, the provision of therapy services is a matter for the Health Services Executive and funding is provided to the HSE for such purposes. The Deputy may wish to raise the matter with my colleague the Minister for Health and Children or directly with the Health Service Executive.



### **Schools Staffing.**

180. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the extent to which it is intended to reduce class sizes at primary school level at all schools here in accordance with an indication given to the public in 2007; when it is expected that such action will take effect; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26559/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The Programme for Government sets out the overarching policy position in relation to the provision of additional teachers and on reductions in class size over the life of the Government.

The Programme contains a commitment to increase the number of primary teachers by at least 4000 and on that basis to make further progress on reducing class sizes.

Budget 2008 provided my Department with €4.6 billion or €380 million extra for teacher pay and pensions. This was a very substantial level of additional investment in the terms of the economic environment on which the budget was based. That allocation provides for paying for over 2000 extra primary teachers more than the number in schools when the Government took office last Summer. It covers the additional teachers that went into schools last September for the previously announced reduction to a 27 to 1 based staffing schedule along with additional teachers this school year and in the coming school year to meet increasing enrolments, to provide for special needs and the language requirements of newcomer children.

This means that in terms of the overall commitment to provide at least 4000 additional teachers the Government in its first two years in office will be well ahead of target.

All Programme for Government commitments to improve public services including those relating to class size are contingent on the economic and budgetary environment and the need for prudent expenditure and fiscal management. Even since the presentation of Budget 2008 last December there have been significant alterations in the external and domestic environment. In that context any reasonable observer would regard the fact that the Government has already taken measures that will see the allocation of over 2000 additional teachers to primary schools as a considerable investment all things considered.

### **Schools Building Programme.**

181. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position in regard to the provision of the new primary school at Kill, County Kildare; the full extent to which accommodation, planning and scale needs have been agreed; when it is expected the project will get underway; the anticipated date by which the school is expected to become operational or ready for occupation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26560/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I am pleased to inform the Deputy that written approval of the Stage 2(a) submission (Developed Sketch Scheme) issued to the design team on the project in question on 23rd April 2008. The Stage 2(b) submission (Detailed Design) is due to be submitted to my Department on 18th August 2008.

The application for Planning Permission issued to the Local Authority on 25 June 2008. The progression of this and all large capital building projects in my Department will be considered in the context of the multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

### **Schools Accommodation.**

182. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the extent of primary and second level accommodation requirements currently evident or expected throughout County Kildare; the extent to which it is intended to meet these requirements in full or in



part in the short to medium term; the degree to which class size reductions are expected to take place in tandem with the provision of extra accommodation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26561/08]

183. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the degree to which his Department has examined primary and second level school accommodation requirements at Clane, County Kildare; the extent to which this includes class size reduction in accordance with indications given previously; his proposals to meet such commitments in full or in part in the short or medium term; the extent of the proposals to meet such requirements at this juncture; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26562/08]

185. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the extent to which he has evaluated the primary and second level school needs at Leixlip, County Kildare with particular reference to the need to provide extra facilities and reduce class sizes in accordance with commitments made in 2007; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26564/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 182, 183 and 185 together.

The Department’s main responsibility is to ensure that schools in any given area can, between them, cater for all pupils seeking school places. This approach ensures that the use of existing accommodation is maximised and that the development and support of one school over others does not occur.

As part of the Programme for Government, a Developing Areas Unit was set up recently in the Department to focus on the school accommodation needs of rapidly developing areas. The main emphasis in 2008 is on providing sufficient school places in these developing areas, as well as delivering improvements in the quality of existing primary and post-primary school accommodation throughout the country.

In addition Forward Planning Section of the Department is in the process of identifying the areas where significant additional accommodation will be required at primary and post-primary level for 2009 and onwards including the areas referred to by the Deputy.

Factors under consideration include population growth, demographic trends, current and projected enrolments, recent and planned housing developments and capacity of existing schools to meet demand for places. Having considered these factors decisions will be taken on the means by which emerging needs will be met within an area.

The Programme for Government sets out the overarching policy position in relation to the provision of additional teachers and on reductions in class size over the life of the Government.

The Programme contains a commitment to increase the number of primary teachers by at least 4000 and on that basis to make further progress on reducing class sizes.

Budget 2008 provided my Department with €4.6 billion or €380 million extra for teacher pay and pensions. This was a very substantial level of additional investment in the terms of the economic environment on which the budget was based. That allocation provides for paying for over 2000 extra primary teachers more than the number in schools when the Government took office last Summer. It covers the additional teachers that went into schools last September for the previously announced reduction to a 27 to 1 based staffing schedule along with additional teachers this school year and in the coming school year to meet increasing enrolments, to provide for special needs and the language requirements of newcomer children.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

This means that in terms of the overall commitment to provide at least 4000 additional teachers the Government in its first two years in office will be well ahead of target.

All Programme for Government commitments to improve public services including those relating to class size are contingent on the economic and budgetary environment and the need for prudent expenditure and fiscal management. Even since the presentation of Budget 2008 last December there have been significant alterations in the external and domestic environment. In that context any reasonable observer would regard the fact that the Government has already taken measures that will see the allocation of over 2000 additional teachers to primary schools as a considerable investment all things considered.

184. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the extent to which he has examined the primary and second level school needs in terms of accommodation and class size reduction at Kilcock, County Kildare; the extent to which it is expected to meet these requirements in full or in part in 2008; the extra accommodation intended; when this is expected to become available; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26563/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As part of the Programme for Government, a Developing Areas Unit was set up recently in my Department to focus on the school accommodation needs of rapidly developing areas, including Kilcock. The main emphasis in 2008 is on providing sufficient school places in these developing areas, as well as delivering improvements in the quality of existing primary and post-primary school accommodation throughout the country.

In this context, the status of all schools in these centres is being assessed as part of an overall delivery plan, which is currently being formulated within the Developing Areas Unit. As is the case with all large capital projects currently on hand within the Unit, their progression will be considered in the context of the multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

*Question No. 185 answered with Question No. 182.*

#### **School Accommodation.**

186. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the degree to which his attention has been drawn to the need to provide extra accommodation at primary and second level schools in Celbridge, County Kildare, with particular reference to the need to respond to the population increase in terms of extra or alternative school accommodation, and bearing in mind the need to reduce class sizes in accordance with indications given prior to the general election in 2007; the extent to which he expects to respond positively to these needs in each case in the short to medium term; when he expects to conclude on these issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26565/08]

187. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the extent to which an evaluation has been carried out toward identifying optimum primary and second level school needs including extra accommodation and reduction in class sizes at Maynooth, County Kildare; his proposals to meet requirements in the short to medium term with particular reference to the need to meet such needs as required; his intentions to deliver on such projects in the next 12 months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26566/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 186 and 187 together.

As part of the Programme for Government, a Developing Areas Unit was set up recently in my Department to focus on the school accommodation needs of rapidly developing areas, including Celbridge and Maynooth. The main emphasis in 2008 is on providing sufficient school places in these developing areas, as well as delivering improvements in the quality of existing primary and post-primary school accommodation throughout the country.

In this context, the status of all schools in Celbridge and Maynooth are being assessed as part of the overall delivery plans for each area which are currently being formulated within the Developing Areas Unit. Any decision to progress projects in these areas will be considered in the context of the multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

188. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science his proposals to address the issue of class size and classroom accommodation at primary and second level at Naas, County Kildare; the extent to which it is expected to approve the respective projects pending; if his attention has been drawn to the degree of urgency in respect of each project in view of the population increase in the area and the need to meet commitments made prior to the general election in 2007 wherein it was understood that specific targets would be met within a short period; if his attention has further been drawn to the time factor involved since some of these projects were first brought to his attention; if he will give instructions to advance the most urgently required projects; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26567/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** As part of the Programme for Government, a Developing Areas Unit was set up recently in my Department to focus on the school accommodation needs of rapidly developing areas, including Naas. The main emphasis in 2008 is on providing sufficient school places in these developing areas, as well as delivering improvements in the quality of existing primary and post-primary school accommodation throughout the country.

In this context, the status of all schools in these centres is being assessed as part of an overall delivery plan, which is currently being formulated within the Developing Areas Unit. As is the case with all large capital projects currently on hand within the Unit, their progression will be considered in the context of the multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

189. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the extent to which it is expected to provide permanent classroom accommodation at a school (details supplied) in County Kildare; the extent of the preparatory work including planning permission and scale of the project; when it is expected to make the necessary financial allocation to allow the project to proceed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26568/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** I wish to inform the Deputy that the construction phase of the project to deliver new classroom accommodation for the school in question is ongoing and that, in fact, the works commenced as far back as 31 March 2008.

Initially, 10 new classrooms will be delivered in August 2008, ready for the 2008/2009 school year. The second phase will see the construction of a further 16-classroom facility, which the school will occupy from September 2009 onwards.

#### **Departmental Staff.**

190. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26984/08]

**Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe):** The information requested by the Deputy is contained in the following tabular statement.

The following tabular statement gives details of the number of staff at the Department of Education & Science that have received or are in receipt of financial support for Post Graduate Educational courses from 2004 to 2008.

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
26	21	25	27	21

### **Army Barracks.**

191. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Defence if there is a barrack rationalisation group in existence; if so, the terms of reference this group is operating under; if, in the context thereof, he will confirm the only artillery barracks here which is the home of the 4th Field Artillery Regiment and based at Columb Barracks, Mullingar, County Westmeath has not being considered by the said rationalisation group; if he will further confirm that there is no threat to the long-term future of Collumb Barracks, Mullingar, as an important military establishment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26430/08]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea):** A Working Group, comprising civil and military representatives, was established in July 2004 to review the Department’s existing property portfolio, taking account of White Paper implementation, the reorganisation of the Reserve Defence Force and current military requirements, and to make recommendations accordingly.

All properties within my Department’s property portfolio were considered by this group. The Working Group identified a number of properties, mainly former training areas and RDF facilities, as being surplus to requirement. My Department is in the process of disposing of these properties. However, the Working Group made no recommendation concerning Columb Barracks, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

While there is no working group in existence, the Property portfolio managed by my Department is kept under constant review and any additional properties identified as surplus to military requirements will be disposed of and the funding invested to meet the equipment and infrastructure needs of the Defence Forces.

### **Overseas Missions.**

192. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Defence if he will provide the funds required to ensure that all those who have served overseas are presented with a medal to commemorate fifty years of Irish participation with the UN; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26451/08]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea):** In general terms, medals are currently awarded to members of the Defence Forces on the basis of various criteria such as their length of service, for service overseas and for acts of bravery associated with such service both at home and overseas.

Members who serve overseas, subject to certain criteria, are currently eligible for the award of the UN Peacekeepers Medal. This medal is only awarded once to any one individual, irrespective of the number of overseas missions that they complete during their career.

In addition to the Peacekeepers Medal, a member who serves overseas may also be eligible for the award of a mission-specific medal. Such medals are awarded by the mission organisers, for example, the United Nations, who also set the qualifying criteria for the award.

There is no immediate plan to add to the range of medals that are available in respect of overseas service. The question of creating a commemorative award to mark 50 years of Defence Forces participation in United Nations peacekeeping is being considered by the Medals Review Group that is currently reviewing medals policies for the Defence Forces. This Group is expected to report before the year end.

### **Decentralisation Programme.**

193. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Defence the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26467/08]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea):** The Deputy will be aware that the Government decision on decentralisation provides for the transfer of my Department’s Dublin-based civil service staff, together with a number of military personnel, to Newbridge, Co. Kildare and the transfer of Defence Force Headquarters (DFHQ) to the Curragh.

Approximately 83% of clerical/administrative staff are now in place in preparation for the move to Newbridge. This has largely been achieved through a combination of staff volunteering to decentralise to Newbridge and agreed, bilateral transfers of staff with other government departments and offices.

The total number of personnel to be decentralised to Newbridge will be 244 (including 43 military). Approximately 410 military personnel will be decentralising to the Curragh.

No staff have been moved to date, pending availability of accommodation at Newbridge and the Curragh. I am advised by the OPW that the building in Newbridge is now under construction and will be completed by December 2009. Tenders will shortly be sought for the construction of accommodation in the Curragh — the current estimate is that it will be ready for occupation by the end of 2010.

### **Efficiency Reviews.**

194. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Defence the proposals which have been put forward under the Efficiency Review 2008 initiated on Budget Day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26486/08]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea):** In line with the Budget 2008 announcement, my Department has engaged in the efficiency review exercise with a view to identifying possible savings on administrative spending.

The issues arising on foot of this exercise are currently being considered in the context of preparation of the 2009 estimates.

### **Hazardous Waste.**

195. **Deputy Deirdre Clune** asked the Minister for Defence his plans to carry out health screening for staff of his Department, members of the Navy and members of the Naval Reserve



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who worked on Haulbowline Island and their families to confirm that their health has not been damaged by they themselves or close family members working in close proximity to dangerous waste materials; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26509/08]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea):** The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for the remediation of the former ISPAT site. In view of the concerns being raised about the site, my Department has instructed a contractor to conduct soil and air analysis. This analysis is independent of any other analysis being carried out. There are a number of air monitors at the Naval base that were put in place as a precaution to alarm if contamination is detected. To date no alarms have been noted. This Department continues to accept the assurances of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government that there are no risks arising from the presence of the waste material. It is expected that our survey will confirm this.

### **Departmental Staff.**

196. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Defence the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in postgraduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008, inclusive. [26983/08]

**Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea):** A total of seven members of staff of the Department of Defence have received support to participate in postgraduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008. This figure includes one member of staff whose course is in progress.

### **Human Trafficking.**

197. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of children granted temporary stay on the grounds of their having been trafficked; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26349/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** Any child, who presents to an Immigration Officer and is unaccompanied or in the company of a person whom the Immigration Officer is not satisfied to be their guardian or have lawful custody of the said child is dealt with in accordance with section 8(5) of the Refugee Act 1996 as amended, which states:

Where it appears to an Immigration Officer or an authorised officer that a child under the age of 18 years who has either arrived at the frontiers of the State or has entered the State, is not in the custody of any person, the officer shall, as soon as practicable, so inform the Health Board in whose functional area the child is and thereupon the provisions of the Child Care Act, 1991 shall apply in relation to the child.

The Health Service Executive, acting *in loco parentis*, can make application to my Department for humanitarian leave for a child to remain in the State. Alternatively, the child, also through the Health Service Executive, may make application for asylum to the Refugee Applications Commissioner. Under the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008, which came into force on 7 June 2008, my Department has introduced administrative immigration arrangements for the protection of victims of human trafficking. To date, no minors have been dealt with by the Garda Síochána under these new procedures.



198. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of trafficked children in education and training programmes in particular those attending secondary school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26351/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I am advised by the Department of Education and Science that children under the age of 18 can attend primary and post-primary schools. Data is available on the nationality of students in post-primary schools. There are over 160 nationalities represented in post-primary schools in 2007-08. Such data is not available for primary schools. There is no data available that would identify children who are trafficked. The Department of Education and Science does not seek such data from schools. Schools do not seek to categorise students. The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 which came into force from 7 June 2008 creates an offence of recruiting, transporting, transferring to another person, harbouring or causing the entry into, travel within or departure from the State of an adult or child for the specific purpose of the trafficked person's sexual or labour exploitation or removal of his or her organs. The Act also makes it an offence to sell or offer for sale or to purchase or offer to purchase any person for any purpose. Penalties of up to life imprisonment apply in respect of these offences. In the context of this legislation work has commenced, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, on developing a data strategy to capture, amongst other things, details of services availed of by victims of human trafficking as defined in the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008. This Data Strategy is part of the co-ordinated, comprehensive and holistic response to human trafficking under way in my Department.

199. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of trafficked children receiving legal aid; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26352/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** Legal aid may be granted in criminal or civil cases. Criminal legal aid is granted to persons charged before the Courts. The Criminal Justice (Legal Aid) Act 1962 provides that free legal aid may be granted, in certain circumstances, for the defence of persons of insufficient means in criminal proceedings. The legislation does not distinguish between adults and children. Consequently, where a child is the defendant in a criminal case s/he is entitled to seek legal aid under the provisions of the above mentioned legislation. However, it is highly unlikely that a child would be charged with human trafficking. Furthermore, criminal legal aid does not arise in the case of victims. My Department has no involvement in the day-to-day running of the Scheme, the granting of legal aid or assignment of lawyers. These matters are handled entirely by the courts. The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 which came into force from 7 June 2008 creates an offence of recruiting, transporting, transferring to another person, harbouring or causing the entry into, travel within or departure from the State of a person for the specific purpose of the trafficked person's sexual or labour exploitation or removal of his or her organs. The Act also makes it an offence to sell or offer for sale or to purchase or offer to purchase any person for any purpose. Penalties of up to life imprisonment apply in respect of these offences. The question of legal and other forms of assistance, for both adult and children victims of human trafficking as defined by the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008, is being examined as part of the co-ordinated, comprehensive and holistic anti-human trafficking strategy being developed in my Department.

#### **Human Trafficking.**

200. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the

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amount paid in compensation to children who are the victims of trafficking in every year since 2000 to date in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26353/08]

201. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the average amount paid in compensation to a trafficked child in each year since 2000 to date in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26354/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 200 and 201 together.

The payment of compensation to children who are the victims of trafficking is a matter for the Courts. In accordance with Section 4(3) of the Courts Service Act 1998 the Courts Service is independent in the performance of its functions.

### **Human Rights Issues.**

202. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the budget allocated to prevent human trafficking with specific reference to child trafficking; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26355/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** Legislative, administrative and operational, enforcement and monitoring measures have been put in place to provide a comprehensive, holistic and effective response to the heinous crime of trafficking in human beings.

On the legislative front, the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 is fully operational since 7 June, 2008. The Act creates offences of trafficking in children and adults for the purpose of sexual or labour exploitation or the removal of their organs. It also makes it an offence to sell or offer for sale or to purchase or offer to purchase any person for any purpose. Penalties of up to life imprisonment apply in respect of these offences.

Enactment of this legislation brings Ireland into compliance with the criminal law/law enforcement elements of the EU Framework Decision on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children.

Section 124 of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill provides for a period of recovery and reflection of 45 days in the State for alleged victims of trafficking and also, in circumstances where the person trafficked wishes to assist the Gardaí in any investigation or prosecution in relation to the alleged trafficking, a further six months period of residence, renewable, to enable him or her to do so. An administrative framework, reflecting the provisions in the Bill, was introduced on 7 June 2008 to provide for the period of recovery, reflection and residency in the State during the period between the enactment of the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 and the full enactment of the provisions in the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill.

On the administrative front, an Interdepartmental High Level Group has also been established to recommend to me the most appropriate and effective responses to trafficking in human beings. Furthermore, an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit has been established in my Department under the Stewardship of an Executive Director. The role of the Unit is to ensure that the State's response to trafficking in human beings is coordinated, comprehensive and holistic. A National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Trafficking in Human Beings will be approved by the High Level Group for submission to me, with a view to publication by the

end of the year. Roundtable discussions chaired by the Executive Director of The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit are being held with Government and non-governmental organisations on a quarterly basis.

In addition, five interdisciplinary Working Groups have been established to progress matters and, in turn, report to the High Level Group. The Working Groups will deal with: Development of a National Referral Mechanism; Awareness Raising and Training; Child Trafficking; Labour Exploitation Issues; Sexual Exploitation Issues.

Ireland has taken a lead role in a human trafficking initiative known as the G6 Human Trafficking Initiative, which includes the UK, Poland, Italy, France, Spain and the Netherlands along with Interpol, Europol and Eurojust. The most recent meeting of the G6 took place on the 20th of June. Ireland has recommended a particular focus on trafficking of children in the course of the G6 initiative. As part of this initiative the Garda Síochána has commenced an operation designed to prevent the trafficking of minors in to, out of, and within the State, to ensure the welfare of suspected victims of such criminal activity is adequately provided for, and to commence prosecutions where criminal activity of the nature concerned has been detected. An awareness-raising campaign throughout the participating countries — led by Ireland — is also planned under this initiative.

Ireland is participating in an operation, Pentameter 2, launched by the UK. One of the main objectives of the operation is to raise awareness of the scale of the problem of trafficking of human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation, particularly among those who avail of sexual services. The operation assists awareness raising in showing Ireland and the UK as locations which are hostile to human trafficking. As part of Operation Pentameter a poster-campaign was launched in both Ireland and the UK to encourage victims of human trafficking to report their plight to State authorities. The Garda Síochána are taking a pro-active approach in Operation Pentameter to address the need for a coordinated approach to human trafficking with the Common Travel Area which operates between the UK and Ireland. This cooperation is taking place in a number of ways, including intelligence sharing, joint training exercises and operational cooperation where investigations have a cross-border, UK/Ireland, dimension.

Immigration border controls are maintained by the Garda National Immigration Bureau and a number of traffickers and victims of traffickers have been identified through the rigorous enforcement of immigration legislation. Joint operations, in association with the UK Immigration Service, continue to be part of immigration policy to prevent and detect possible abuses of the Common Travel Area (CTA), by means of illegal immigration and associated criminality.

There are currently over 275 personnel, Garda and civilian, allocated to the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB). Personnel attached to GNIB have received training in the investigation of human trafficking at the international level. The work undertaken by the Garda Síochána in relation to human trafficking is assisted by a network of members of the Garda Síochána who are employed as liaison officers in major cities in a number of EU Member States and in international organisations such as Europol and Interpol.

The Garda Síochána had developed its own human trafficking related training course with such training having been delivered to about one hundred and fifty participants in 2006/2007. Arising from Ireland's involvement in Operation Pentameter a number of officers from the Police Service of Northern Ireland have also participated in the training courses by the Garda Síochána Training College.

In terms of cooperation, within this jurisdiction GNIB continues to liaise with Government and non-governmental agencies, including Ruhama and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to ensure the exchange of information regarding suspected trafficking in

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human beings. In recognising the needs of victims of trafficking, Garda Liaison Officers have been appointed to various non-governmental organisations.

Funding for the human trafficking activities outlined is paid for as part of the general expenditure from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Garda Votes and does not require specific ear marked expenditure.

### Asylum Applications.

203. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of asylum seekers deported in the past 24 months; the number of people of each nationality who were deported; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26368/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I refer the Deputy to the following table which shows the number of failed asylum seekers who were deported between the dates of 1 July 2006 and 30 June 2008 and the nationality of those who were deported.

Nationality	Total Removed
Nigeria	88
China	55
Romania	22
Moldova	20
Croatia	10
Georgia	9
Kosovo	9
Russia	6
South Africa	5
Ukraine	4
Ghana	3
Morocco	3
Albania	2
Algeria	2
Belarus	2
Poland	2
Turkey	2
America	1
Armenia	1
Egypt	1
Gambia	1
India	1
Iraq	1
Ivory Coast	1
Kazakhstan	1
Malaysia	1
Mongolia	1
Sierra Leone	1
Total	255

**Garda Stations.**

204. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform further to Parliamentary Question No. 401 of 27 May 2008, the number of burglaries recorded at Garda stations in County Clare for the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and from 27 May 2008 to date in 2008; the number of detentions that resulted from these burglaries; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26381/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I am informed that, in response to the Deputy's Question No. 401 of 27 May 2008, the Central Statistics Office have been in direct contact with him and supplied the information requested. I have requested the CSO to provide the further statistics sought by the Deputy directly to him.

205. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of full-time Garda stations in County Clare; the number of part-time Garda stations in the county; the hours of operation of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26382/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I have been informed by the Garda Commissioner that the opening hours of each Garda Station in the Clare Garda Division are as set out in the table.

Station	24hr	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun	Call Diversion
Ennis	Yes				
Crusheen	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	12pm-2pm	Ennis
Lissycasey	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	12pm-2pm	Ennis
Newmarket On Fergus	No	10am-1pm, 2pm-6pm	10am-1pm, 6pm-9pm	10am-1pm, 6pm-9pm	Ennis
Quin	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	12pm-2pm	Ennis
Shannon	Yes				
Sixmilebridge	No	10am-1pm, 2pm-6pm	10am-1pm, 6pm-9pm	10am-1pm, 6pm-9pm	Ennis
Kilrush	Yes				
Carrigaholt	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Kilrush
Doonbeg	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Kilrush
Kilmihil	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Kilrush
Labasheeda	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Kilrush
Kildysart	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Kilrush
Kilkee	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Kilrush
Killaloe	Yes				
Broadford	No	2.30pm-4.30pm	2.30pm-4.30pm	Closed	Killaloe
Newport	No	10am-12.30pm	Closed	Closed	Killaloe
Scariff	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Killaloe
Mountshannon	No	7.30pm-8.30pm	7.30pm-8.30pm	Closed	Killaloe
Tulla	No	2.30pm-3.30pm	2.30pm-3.30pm	Closed	Killaloe
Rearcross	No	2.30-4.30pm	Closed	Closed	Killaloe
Ennistymon	Yes				
Ballyvaughan	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Ennistymon
Corofin	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Ennistymon
Inagh	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Ennistymon
Lahinch	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Ennistymon
Lisdoonvarna	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Ennistymon
Miltown Malbay	No	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	10am-1pm	Ennistymon

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The opening hours of non 24 hour stations are dependent on manpower availability. The extension of the current opening hours would necessitate the employment of Garda personnel on indoor administrative duties. Such personnel can be utilised more effectively in providing a visible Garda presence on outdoor policing duties.

It is the responsibility of the Garda Commissioner to allocate personnel throughout the Force taking all relevant factors into account. In that regard, the needs of the Garda Division referred to by the Deputy will be fully considered by the Commissioner within the overall context of the needs of Garda Divisions throughout the country.

206. **Deputy Charlie O'Connor** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will report on progress being made, within the remit of his Department, regarding the need for the redevelopment of Tallaght Garda Station, Dublin 24; the contacts he has made in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26385/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The Garda accommodation programme is based on agreed priorities established by An Garda Síochána and it is brought forward in close cooperation with the Office of Public Works (OPW), which has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of Garda accommodation. Officials from my Department, the Office of Public Works and the Garda Síochána have regular meetings to oversee the various projects. In addition, a high-level strategic Garda Accommodation Board with members drawn from my Department, the OPW and An Garda Síochána has been established to carry out a review of Garda accommodation with a view to preparing a short and longer term strategy for all accommodation. On a practical level, and with the introduction of various provisions of the Garda Síochána Act 2005, project management matters and maintenance issues are dealt with directly between the agencies involved which has led to improved efficiencies and reduced administrative overheads.

I have been advised by the Garda authorities that it is planned to build a new station on the existing Garda station site at Tallaght to incorporate additional station facilities to meet all operational requirements including the Divisional Headquarters for the Dublin Metropolitan Region South. I am further advised that the Office of Public Works is currently carrying out a feasibility study on the existing site which is expected to be finalised within the next number of weeks.

#### **Decentralisation Programme.**

207. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26474/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** Under my Department's decentralisation programme, nine hundred and forty one posts are scheduled to relocate from Dublin to seven different provincial locations. I am pleased to inform the Deputy that, to-date, five hundred and twenty-two staff have moved and have taken up duty. This represents 55% of the target numbers and my Department now has a presence in all of the seven decentralised locations.



The table sets out the details requested.

Organisation	No of posts to move	Nos. moved	Nos. assigned yet to move	Nos. re-assigned in Dublin
Office of the Data Protection Commissioner	23	23	0	12
Equality Tribunal	42	0	13	0
Sections of Garda HQ				
(1) Garda Central Vetting Unit	66	66	0	19
(2) Fixed Charge Processing Section	67	67	0	45
Irish Naturalisation Immigration Service	186	50	2	0
Private Security Authority	41	41	0	0
Irish Prison Service	141	119	3	84
Property Registration Authority	230	80	45	0
National Property Services Regulatory Authority	10	9	0	0
Garda Civilian Human Resources Directorate	38	35	3	3
Office of the Director of Probation Service	18	15	0	0
Coroners Service	6	2	1	0
Equality Authority	50	15	5	1
Garda Ombudsman Commission	23	0	5	0

### Efficiency Reviews.

208. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26493/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** Following the Budget 2008 announcement, my Department has engaged in the efficiency review exercise, with a view to identifying possible savings on administrative spending. This exercise has included the bodies under the aegis of my Department and the issues arising are currently being considered in the context of the preparation of the 2009 Estimates.

### Refugee Status.

209. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26517/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The person referred to by the Deputy first applied for Asylum on 25/9/2003. This claim was assessed by the Refugee Applications Commissioner who concluded that the person concerned did not meet the criteria for recognition as a refugee. The applicant appealed this recommendation but failed to attend her appeal hearing. The Minister issued his decision to the applicant by letter dated 09/03/2005.

Subsequently, the applicant applied to my Department under section 17(7) of the Refugee Act, 1996 to be readmitted to the asylum process. My Department's Ministerial Decisions Unit examined the details of same and concluded that the applicant should be readmitted to the asylum process. The person referred to by the Deputy reapplied for asylum on 27/11/2007. The

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claim was assessed by the Refugee Applications Commissioner who concluded that the person concerned did not meet the criteria for recognition as a refugee.

The Commissioner's recommendation was communicated to her by letter dated 14/05/08. This communication advised the person of her entitlement to appeal the Commissioner's recommendation to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. The applicant failed to do so within the statutory time limit.

In accordance with the normal procedures, the applicant's file has been forwarded to my Department's Ministerial Decisions Unit for final processing of the Asylum claim. A letter will issue to her from my Department advising her formally that her asylum claim has been rejected and affording her three options as follows:

1. Return home voluntarily
2. Consent to the making of a deportation order, or
3. Make written representations to me within 15 working days for temporary leave to remain in the State and/or make an application for subsidiary protection under the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 518 of 2006).

### **Asylum Applications.**

210. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in regard to residency status in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Louth; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26518/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I refer the Deputy to Parliamentary Question No. 230 of Thursday, 24 April 2008 and the written Reply to that Question.

The person concerned arrived in the State on 2 April 2004 and applied for asylum. His application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was informed, by letter dated 17 January 2006, that the Minister proposed to make a deportation order in respect of him. He was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why he should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. Representations have been submitted on behalf of the person concerned.

The person concerned also made an application for residency in the State on the basis of being the spouse of an EU National. However, following consideration of this application, under the provisions of the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) Regulations 2006, a decision was made to refuse the application. The person concerned was notified of this decision by letter dated 21 August 2006.

The case file of the person concerned now falls to be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended). All representations submitted by and on behalf of the person concerned will be fully considered, under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement, before the file is passed to me for decision.

The documentation submitted to my Department by the wife of the person concerned was returned to the legal representative of the person concerned, accompanied by a letter dated 7 January 2008.

### **Citizenship Applications.**

211. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected position in regard to residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Longford who has applied for naturalisation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26519/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** Officials in the Citizenship Section inform me that processing of the application from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question has commenced and the file will be forwarded to me for a decision in the coming months.

I will inform the person in question when I have reached a decision on the matter.

### **Asylum Applications.**

212. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected position in regard to residency status in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26520/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The first named person concerned arrived in the State on 30 July 2004 and applied for asylum. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of the case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the first named person concerned was informed, by letter dated 29 December 2005, that the Minister proposed to make a deportation order in respect of her. She was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why she should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. Representations have been submitted on behalf of the first named person concerned and will be fully considered, under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement, before the file is passed to me for decision.

The second named person concerned arrived in the State on 18 December 2000 and applied for asylum. His application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the second named person concerned was informed, by letter dated 26 November 2002, that the Minister proposed to make a deportation order in respect of him. He was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why he should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. Following the consideration of his case under Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement, as an exceptional measure and subject to certain stated conditions, the second named person concerned was granted temporary leave to remain in the State for a three year period, to 9 July 2010. The second named person concerned was notified of this decision by letter dated 9 July 2007.

### Citizenship Applications.

213. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in regard to the application for naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 7; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26521/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** An application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person concerned was received in the Citizenship section of my Department in July 2005 and I decided to refuse the application. The reason for my decision was disclosed to the applicant in a letter dated 1 July 2008.

It is open to the person in question to lodge a new application if and when he is in a position to satisfy the statutory requirements applicable at that time.

214. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26522/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** An application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Section of my Department in April 2007.

Officials in that Section are currently processing applications received in January 2006 and have approximately 9,500 applications on hand to be dealt with before that of the person in question. These are generally dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants.

However, I understand that the person concerned is a refugee. In accordance with the Government's obligations under the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, every effort is made to ensure that applications from persons with refugee status are dealt with as quickly as possible, having regard to the general volume of applications on hand.

215. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26523/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The person concerned arrived in the State on 7 March 2002 and applied for asylum. Her application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was informed, by letter dated 15 May 2003, that the Minister proposed to make a deportation order in respect of her. She was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why she should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. Representations were submitted on behalf of the person concerned at that time.

On 21 March 2005 the person concerned submitted an application under the revised arrangements for non-national parents of Irish born children born in the State before 1 January 2005, commonly referred to as the IBC/05 scheme. This application was refused as the child referred to in the application of the person concerned was born in February 2005. The decision to refuse this application was conveyed in writing to the person concerned by letter dated 7 September 2005.

On 19 April 2007 an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State was submitted on behalf of the person concerned. This application is under consideration at present and when a decision has been made, this will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

In the event that the Subsidiary Protection application is refused, the case file of the person concerned, including all representations submitted, will then be considered under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement. When this latter consideration has been completed, the case file of the person concerned is passed to me for decision.

216. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected residency status in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Louth; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26524/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The first named person concerned arrived in the State on 6 August 2002, accompanied by her three children, and applied for asylum. Her application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the first named person concerned was informed, by letter dated 19 June 2003, that the Minister proposed to make deportation orders in respect of her and her three children. She was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of deportation orders or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why she and her three children should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. Representations were submitted on behalf of the first named person concerned and her children at that time.

The first named person concerned subsequently initiated Judicial Review Proceedings, on behalf of her three children, and, in late 2007, these Proceedings were settled. The Terms of Settlement included a provision that would enable the three children of the first named person concerned to lodge individual asylum applications in their own right and they duly did, on 8 January 2008. The three children have had their cases investigated by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner who has concluded, in each individual case, that the three children did not meet the criteria for recognition as a refugee. The three children have initiated Judicial Review Proceedings against these determinations and these Proceedings are ongoing. In the circumstances, it would not be appropriate for me to comment further on the cases of the three children referred to in the Deputy's Question.

The case of the first named person concerned falls to be dealt with under the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended). All representations submitted by and on behalf of the first named person concerned will be fully considered, under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement, before the file is passed to me for decision.

217. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if an application for residency status will be reviewed in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 2; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26526/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The person concerned arrived in the State on 14 June 2007 and applied for asylum. His application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner.



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The determination of the Refugee Applications Commissioner was conveyed in writing to the person concerned by letter dated 23 January 2008. This communication advised the person concerned of his entitlement, within a stated timeframe, to appeal this determination to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal but the person concerned chose not to do so.

On 12 March 2008, the person concerned formally withdrew from the asylum process and indicated a wish to return voluntarily to his country of origin, following which contact was established with the Office of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) with a view to the necessary voluntary return arrangements being made. However, despite my Department and the IOM approving the voluntary return request of the person concerned, the IOM advised my Department, by a communication dated 23 June 2008, that it had lost contact with the person concerned and, as such, it could not proceed with his voluntary return arrangement. The person concerned should note that this option remains open to him should he decide to pursue same.

Based on the recommendation of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and the voluntary withdrawal of the person concerned from the asylum process, and in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) and the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was informed, by letter dated 28 March 2008, that the Minister was refusing him a declaration of refugee status and also proposed to make a deportation order in respect of him. In line with legal and procedural requirements, the person concerned was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why he should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. In addition, he was notified of his entitlement to apply for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 518 of 2006). On 7 April 2007, an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State was received from the person concerned as was an application for leave to remain temporarily in the State.

The Subsidiary Protection application will be considered first. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

In the event that the Subsidiary Protection application is refused, the case file of the person concerned, including all representations submitted, will then be considered under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement. When this latter consideration has been completed, the case file of the person concerned is passed to me for decision.

218. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will reconsider the refusal of residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26527/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The person concerned arrived in the State on 7 March 2007 and applied for asylum. Her application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was informed, by letter dated 19 June 2008, that the Minister proposed to make a deportation order in respect of her. She was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation



order or of making representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why she should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. In addition, she was notified of her entitlement to apply for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 518 of 2006). While, to date, no response has been received in my Department to this letter, it might be noted that the 15 working day period referred to has not yet elapsed.

The case file of the person concerned will be considered further upon receipt of a response to my Department's letter of 19 June 2008.

### **Asylum Support Services.**

219. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if a transfer to more appropriate accommodation will be made in the case of persons (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26528/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) is responsible for the accommodation of asylum seekers in accordance with the Government policy of direct provision and dispersal.

By way of background, the Deputy may wish to note that the mother and four of the children referred to in the details supplied made applications for asylum at the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) on 23 May, 2007 and were initially accommodated at Kilmacud Reception Centre. The husband referred to in the details supplied made a separate application for asylum on 30 May, 2007 and was accommodated at Baleskin Reception Centre before being transferred to join his wife and family at Kilmacud Reception Centre on 8 May, 2007. As RIA's reception centres are mainly used for reception purposes and in accordance with the Government policy of dispersal, the family were transferred to Clondalkin Towers accommodation centre on 15 June, 2008. The youngest child was born on 4 April, 2008 and registered with the ORAC on 3 June, 2008.

Due to the size of the family and the demand on direct provision accommodation across its portfolio, the RIA has had some difficulty sourcing suitable accommodation in this case. However, I can inform the Deputy that suitable accommodation, consisting of a three room suite with en suite facilities has now been identified and the family is currently moving to this accommodation.

### **Deportation Orders.**

220. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will review the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 3; if he will consider extended residency in this case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26529/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I refer the Deputy to Parliamentary Question No. 843 of Tuesday 17 June 2008 and the written Reply to that Question.

The person concerned arrived in the State on 16 May 2000 and applied for asylum. Her application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. Subsequently, in accordance with Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was informed, by letter dated 29 July 2002, that the Minister proposed to make a deportation order in respect of her. She was given the options, to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation order or of making represen-

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tations to the Minister setting out the reasons why she should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State.

Following consideration of her case under Section 3 (6) of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) on the prohibition of refoulement, a deportation order was signed in respect of the person concerned on 5 August 2003. The deportation order was served on the person concerned, by letter dated 18 September 2003. This communication advised the person concerned of the requirement that she present herself at the Offices of the Garda National Immigration Bureau on a designated date and time to make arrangements for her removal from the State. The person concerned failed to present at the Offices of the Garda National Immigration Bureau on the appointed date and was therefore classified as an ‘evader’.

On 7 September 2007 an application was received on behalf of the person concerned for the revocation of the deportation order, in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 (11) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended). This application is under consideration at present and when a decision on this application has been made, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

221. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will again review the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26531/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I would refer the Deputy to the Reply my predecessor gave to his Dáil Question No. 209 of Thursday 6th March 2008. The status of the person concerned remains as set out in that reply. The person concerned has continued to meet the presentation requirements of the Garda National Immigration Bureau and is due to present again shortly.

#### **Asylum Applications.**

222. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected residency status in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26532/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** It is not the practice to comment in detail on individual asylum applications. As the Deputy will be aware, applications for refugee status in the State are determined by an independent process comprising the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal which make recommendations to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on whether such status should be granted.

A final decision on each application is made following receipt of the recommendation of the Refugee Applications Commissioner or the decision of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, as appropriate.

With regard to the second named person, in accordance with section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999, the person was informed by letter dated 11 May 2006 of a proposal to make a deportation order and was given the options to be exercised within 15 working days, of leaving the State voluntarily, of consenting to the making of a deportation order or of making representations setting out the reasons why the person concerned should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State. Representations have been submitted on behalf of the person and will be

fully considered under section 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1999 and section 5 of the Refugee Act 1996 on the prohibition of refoulement before the file is passed to me for decision.

223. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26533/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** It is not the practice to comment in detail on individual asylum applications. As the Deputy will be aware, applications for refugee status in the State are determined by an independent process comprising the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal which make recommendations to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on whether such status should be granted.

A final decision on each application is made following receipt of the recommendation of the Refugee Applications Commissioner or the decision of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, as appropriate.

224. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in regard to family reunification or approved extended residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26535/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** It is not the practice to comment in detail on individual asylum applications. As the Deputy will be aware, applications for refugee status in the State are determined by an independent process comprising the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal which make recommendations to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on whether such status should be granted.

A final decision on each application is made following receipt of the recommendation of the Refugee Applications Commissioner or the decision of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, as appropriate.

225. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if extended residency will be approved in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26536/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** It is not the practice to comment in detail on individual asylum applications. As the Deputy will be aware, applications for refugee status in the State are determined by an independent process comprising the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal which make recommendations to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on whether such status should be granted. A final decision on each application is made following receipt of the recommendation of the Refugee Applications Commissioner or the decision of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, as appropriate.

#### **Refuge Status.**

226. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in regard to the application for family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26537/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The person in question made a Family Reunification application on behalf of his wife in May 2007 and on behalf of his daughter in July 2007.

The application was forwarded to the Refugee Applications Commissioner for investigation as required under Section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996. This investigation is completed and the Commissioner has forwarded a report to my Department.

This application will now be considered by my Department and a decision will issue in due course.

**Citizenship Applications.**

227. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in regard to the application for naturalisation in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Kildare; when these applications are expected to be finalised; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26538/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** I am pleased to inform the Deputy that I have recently approved these applications. The Citizenship Section of my department will shortly be writing to the persons concerned informing them of my decision. They will also be advised of the formalities to be completed before certificates of naturalisation can issue. Once such matters are completed, certificates of naturalisation will issue as soon as possible thereafter.

**Departmental Staff.**

228. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26989/08]

**Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern):** The number of staff in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform who have received or are receiving support to participate in post graduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 is as follows:

Year	Number
2004/05	10
2005/06	7
2006/07	12
2007/08	16
Total	45

**Departmental Expenditure.**

229. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the cost of promotion, advertising and publicity campaigns carried out by his Department since his appointment; if he will itemise and state the purpose for each; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26361/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):** Details of promotion, advertising and publicity campaigns carried out by my Department since

my appointment, to promote awareness and behaviour change or provide information, are set out in the following table.

Promotion / Advertising / Publicity Campaign	Expenditure to date (to nearest 100)
	€
Climate Change Awareness Campaign	2,737,600
Fire Safety Awareness	432,800
Notice Nature (Public Awareness Campaign on Biodiversity)	204,500
Register of Electors Awareness Campaign	167,900
Race Against Waste	84,700
Advertising of designation of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protected Areas	61,600
Species Protection Advertisements	26,300
National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Awareness Campaign	26,100
Advertising and Publicity Expenditure on Anti-Litter Initiatives	23,300
Advertising Call for Submissions on “Increasing Affordable Housing Supply” Report	5,100
Information on Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability	5,000
National Tidy Towns Competition	3,000

#### Local Authority Funding.

230. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if his Department will pay out moneys due to a group (details supplied) in County Limerick. [26364/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran):** A revised application by Limerick County Council for approval to purchase the dwelling in question under the Capital Assistance Scheme was received in my Department in June 2008. This is being examined at present and a decision will be made as soon as possible.

#### Appointments to State Boards.

231. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the name, relevant qualifications and process by which each person appointed to a State board operating under the aegis of his Department was appointed since 2003 to date in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26369/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):** A number of different statutory processes are involved in appointments to State boards. In some cases statutory selection procedures must be followed or nominations must be sought from independent nominating panels before appointments are made by the Government or by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In other cases only particular public office holders may be appointed to certain boards. In a number of situations, only some appointments to the body concerned are made by the Minister, or appointments are made with the consent the Minister for Finance or following consultation with the Minister for Finance or Minister for Education and Science, as appropriate.

In the context of the above, the following table sets out relevant information in respect of all persons appointed to the state boards under the aegis of my Department since 2003. All of the persons concerned are not currently serving board members. Under the heading in the

[Deputy John Gormley.]

table relating to relevant qualifications information is provided as to the person's representative role or profession, as appropriate, rather than the person's academic qualifications. The boards of An Bord Pleanála and the Environmental Protection Agency are executive in nature and the members are full-time salaried positions.



Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Affordable Homes Partnership	<p>Des Geraghty</p> <p>Mary Higgins</p> <p>Prof Mary Lambkin</p> <p>Mary Mooney</p> <p>Joe Horan</p> <p>Owen Keegan</p> <p>David O'Connor</p> <p>John Tierney</p> <p>Conn Murray</p> <p>Catherine Gorman</p> <p>John O'Connor</p> <p>Maureen Lynott</p> <p>John Fitzgerald</p> <p>Derek Brady</p>	<p>Former President and member of ICTU Executive Committee. Also a member of the housing forum. Lifelong involvement in housing issues, with particular role in <i>Sustaining Progress</i> Affordable Housing Initiative.</p> <p>Management/social policy consultant, former Director of the Homeless Agency in Dublin</p> <p>Prof. Of Marketing, UCD Business Schools</p> <p>Former Councillor</p> <p>Manager, South Dublin County Council</p> <p>Manager, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council</p> <p>Manager, Fingal County Council</p> <p>Manager, Dublin City Council &amp; former Manager, Fingal County Council</p> <p>Manager, Louth County Council</p> <p>Project Co-ordinator in City Housing Initiative</p> <p>Chief Executive, Affordable Homes Partnership</p> <p>Management Consultant, Chair of Ballymun Regeneration Ltd</p> <p>Former Manager, Dublin City Council</p> <p>Former Manager, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council</p>	<p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p>
An Bord Pleanála	<p>John O'Connor</p> <p>Conall Boland</p> <p>Tom O'Connor</p> <p>Jane Doyle</p> <p>Karl Kent</p> <p>Angela Tunney</p> <p>Mary McMahon</p> <p>Brian Swift</p> <p>Brian Hunt</p> <p>Margaret Byrne</p> <p>Mary Bryan</p>	<p>Nominee of Prescribed Selection Committee</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p> <p>Officer of the Board (temporary appointment)</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p> <p>Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage &amp; Local Government</p> <p>Representative of prescribed panel</p>	<p>Government appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p>

Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Building Regulations Advisory Body	Gerard Grogan	Representative of the former Tanaiste	Ministerial appointment
	Sean Balfe	Representative of the Irish Agreement Board	Ministerial appointment
	Rose Kenny	Representative of the City & County Managers' Association	Ministerial appointment
	Gerry Farrell	Representative of the Building Materials Federation — IBEC	Ministerial appointment
	Erik Koornneff	Representative of the National Disability Authority	Ministerial Appointment
	Prof. Owen Lewis	Professor of Architecture, UCD	Ministerial appointment
	Maria Melia	Representative of the Chief Fire Officers Association	Ministerial appointment
	Ann Mills	Representative of the City & County Engineers Association	Ministerial appointment
	Caitriona Carter	Representative of the Construction Industry Federation	Ministerial appointment
	Ciaran McNamara	Representative of the City & County Managers' Association	Ministerial appointment
	Johnny McGettigan	Representative of the Irish Building Control Institute	Ministerial appointment
	Yvonne Wylde	Representative of the National Standards Authority of Ireland	Ministerial appointment
	Minka Louise McInerney	Representative of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland	Ministerial appointment
	Krystyna Rawicz	Representative of the Society of Chartered Surveyors	Ministerial appointment
	Emer O'Siochrú	Representative of An Taisce	Ministerial appointment
	Denise Germaine	Representative of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists	Ministerial appointment
	Angela Kerins	Representative of the National Disability Authority	Ministerial appointment
	Dr. Eugene Farrell	Representative of Home Bond	Ministerial appointment
	Gary Treanor	Representative of the Irish Timber Frame Manufacturers' Association	Ministerial appointment
	Jim Keogh	Representative of the Electro-Technical Council of Ireland	Ministerial appointment
	Gerard Carroll	Representative of the Commissioner of An Garda Síochana	Ministerial appointment
	Michael Browne	Representative of the National Standards Authority of Ireland	Ministerial appointment
	Chris O'Grady	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Patrick Minogue	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Mark McAuley	Representative of the Building Materials Federation — IBEC	Ministerial appointment
	Brain McKeon	Representative of the Construction Industry Federation	Ministerial appointment
	Sarah Neary	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Jack Callanan	Representative of the National Disability Authority	Ministerial appointment
	Jacqui Donnelly	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Jimmy Keogan	Representative of the City & County Managers' Association	Ministerial appointment
	Noel Carroll	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment



Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Comhar	Christine Croton	Representative of Bird Watch Ireland	Ministerial appointment
	Tom O'Mahony	Representative of the Environmental Network of Government Departments	Ministerial appointment
	Tony Larkin	Representative of the County and City Managers' Association	Ministerial appointment
	Laura Burke	Representative of the Environmental Protection Agency	Ministerial appointment
	Therese Ridge	Representative of the General Council of County Councils	Ministerial appointment
	Ruaidhri Deasy	Representative of the Irish Farmers' Association	Ministerial appointment
	Emer Dunne	Representative of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association	Ministerial appointment
	Niamh Hunt	Representative of the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland	Ministerial appointment
	Paula Carey	Representative of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Ministerial appointment
	Elaine Nevin	Representative of ECO-UNESCO	Ministerial appointment
	Aoife Cassidy	Representative of Keep Ireland Open	Ministerial appointment
	Richard Douthwaite	Representative of the Irish Doctors' Environmental Association / Environmental Ecological NGO Core Funding Ltd	Ministerial appointment
	Pat Finnegan	Representative of the Environmental Ecological NGO Core Funding Ltd	Ministerial appointment
	Ornagh Darcy	Representative of the Irish Rural Dwellers Association	Ministerial appointment
	Billy Murphy	Representative of Planet	Ministerial appointment
	Catriona Maguire	Representative of Friends of the Earth	Ministerial appointment
	Carmel Sheridan	Representative of the Royal Dublin Society	Ministerial appointment
	Emer Colleran	Representative of the Royal Irish Academy	Ministerial appointment
	Matthew Seebach	Representative of the National Youth Council of Ireland	Ministerial appointment
	Frank Convery	Professor	Ministerial appointment
	Ethna Diver	Representative of the Council of Directors of the Institutes of Technology	Ministerial appointment
	Noel Keyes	Representative of the Heritage Council	Ministerial appointment
	Liam Berney	Representative of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Ministerial appointment
Anja Murray	Representative of the Environmental Ecological NGO Core Funding Ltd.	Ministerial appointment	
Judy Dunne	Representative of the Consumers Association of Ireland	Ministerial appointment	
Kevin Codd	Representative of the Conference of Religious in Ireland	Ministerial appointment	
Donal Buckley	Representative of the Irish Business and Employers Confederation	Ministerial appointment	
Richard Moles	Representative of the Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland	Ministerial appointment	

Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board	Sean Duignan	Former Journalist, Broadcaster & Government Press Secretary	Ministerial appointment
Dublin Docklands Development Authority	Donal O'Connor Donal Curtin Brendan Malone Mary Moylan Niamh O'Sullivan Niall Covey Catherine Mullarkey Sheila O'Donnell Mark Griffin	Senior Partner, PricewaterhouseCooper Accountant Accountant Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government Civil Engineer Accountant Consultant Architect Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment
Environmental Protection Agency	Dara Lynott Laura Burke Larry Stapleton Padraic Larkin	Not available Not available Not available Not available	Government appointment Government appointment Government appointment Government appointment
Fire Services Council	Anne Costello Attracta McKay Brendan Mahon Brendan McCoy Donal Connolly Enda Nolan Frances Murray Frank Dennison Gus Byrne Jim Byrne Jim Dunphy John L'Estrange Majella Dempsey	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government Assistant Chief Fire Officer Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government Retained Firefighter Retired County Manager Councillor Assistant Chief Fire Officer Retired Assistant Chief Fire Officer Councillor Businessman Chief Fire Officer Retired 3rd. Officer Regional Development Officer with the Junior Science Support Service	Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment Ministerial appointment





Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process	
Housing Finance Agency (HFA)	Edward Coffey	Retired Business Executive	Ministerial appointment	
	Dr Ian d'Alton	Chief Executive Officer, HFA	Ministerial appointment	
	Fr. Pat Coogan	Managing Director Respond!	Ministerial appointment	
	Mr. M.D. Hayes	Civil Engineer	Ministerial appointment	
	Jackie McGuire	County Manager	Ministerial appointment	
	Philip Nugent	Representative of the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government	Ministerial appointment	
	Clodagh Heneghan	Representative of South Dublin County Council	Ministerial appointment	
	Anthony Vesey	Councillor	Ministerial appointment	
	Aine Stapleton	Representative of the Department of Finance	Ministerial appointment	
	Julia Carmichael	Councillor	Ministerial appointment	
	Pat Doyle	Former Councillor	Ministerial appointment	
	Eddie Wade	Councillor	Ministerial appointment	
	James Hehir	Former Managing Director, HFA	Ministerial appointment	
	Maria Graham	Representative of the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government	Ministerial appointment	
Irish Water Safety Association	Frank Nolan Chairman	Water Safety volunteer	Ministerial appointment	
	Kathryn Byrne	MD of a PR consultancy	Ministerial appointment	
	Breda Collins	Representative of local water safety interests	Ministerial appointment	
	Michael Cuddihy	Representative of local water safety interests	Ministerial appointment	
	Jim Lawlor	Businessman with interest in marketing and promotion	Ministerial appointment	
	Brendan McGrath	Representative of local water safety interests	Ministerial appointment	
	Michael Murphy	Representative of local water safety interests	Ministerial appointment	

Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
	<p>Martin O'Sullivan                      Brian Farrell                      Martin Condon                      Martina Moloney                      Kevin Ring                      Laurence Kelly                      Anne Ryan                      John Considine</p>	<p>Representative of local water safety interests                      Harbour Master                      Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage &amp; Local Government                      Representative of the City &amp; County Managers' Association                      Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage &amp; Local Government                      Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage &amp; Local Government                      Water Safety volunteer                      Local authority official</p>	<p>Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment</p>
<p>Limerick Northside                      Regeneration Agency</p>	<p>John Fitzgerald                      Brendan Kenny                      Eddie Lewis                      Kathleen Stack                      Pat McSitríc                      Michelle Shannon                      Mary Moloney                      Tom Mackey                      Alec Fleming                      Ned Gleeson                      Willie Keane                      Pat Fitzgerald                      Anne Cremin                      Paddy Flannery                      Michael Tiernan</p>	<p>Chairperson                      Interim CEO                      Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage &amp; Local Government                      Representative of the Department of Community, Rural &amp; Gaeltacht Affairs                      Representative of the Department of Education &amp; Science                      Representative of the Department of Justice, Equality &amp; Law Reform representative                      Representative of the Department of Social &amp; Family Affairs                      Limerick City Manager                      Clare County Manager                      Limerick County Manager                      An Garda Síochána representative                      Health Service Executive representative                      Community representative                      Community representative                      Business community representative</p>	<p>Ministerial appointment                      Required under the Agency's                      Establishment Order                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Required under the Agency's                      Establishment Order                      Required under the Agency's                      Establishment Order                      Required under the Agency's                      Establishment Order                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment                      Ministerial appointment</p>

Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Limerick Southside Regeneration Agency	John Fitzgerald	Chairperson	Ministerial appointment
	Brendan Kenny	Interim CEO	Required under the Agency's Establishment Order
	Eddie Lewis	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Kathleen Stack	Representative of the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	Ministerial appointment
	Pat McSitríc	Representative of the Department of Education & Science	Ministerial appointment
	Michelle Shannon	Representative of the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform	Ministerial appointment
	Mary Moloney	Representative of the Department of Social & Family Affairs	Ministerial appointment
	Tom Mackey	Limerick City Manager	Required under the Agency's Establishment Order
	Alec Fleming	Clare County Manager	Required under the Agency's Establishment Order
	Ned Gleeson	Limerick County Manager	Required under the Agency's Establishment Order
	Willie Keane	An Garda Síochána representative	Ministerial appointment
	Pat Fitzgerald	Health Service Executive representative	Ministerial appointment
	Fr. Pat Hogan	Community representative	Ministerial appointment
Ann Kavanagh	Community representative	Ministerial appointment	
Liam McElligott	Business community representative	Ministerial appointment	

Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB)	S Carey	Assistant City Manager Dublin City Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	A McGuinness	County Manager Westmeath County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	D Connolly	County Manager Waterford County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	Eddie Sheehy	County Manager Wicklow County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	T Dowling	County Manager Meath County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	J Tiernan	County Manager Roscommon County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	D Nelson	County Manager Monaghan County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	Alex Fleming	County Manager Clare County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	Fred Bradley	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	John Fitzgerald	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Patricia Tyrrell	Representative of the Department of Finance	Ministerial appointment
	H Kearns	County Manager Sligo County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	J Crockett	County Manager Carlow County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	M Riordan	County Manager Kerry County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	N Sweeney	County Manager Offaly County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	J McGrath	City Manager Galway City Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	R O'Dwyer	County Manager Waterford County Manager	LGCSB Council appointment
	Catherine Curley	Representative of the Department of Finance	Ministerial appointment
	Owen Keegan	County Manager DLR County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	Peter Carey	County Manager Laois County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	John Kelleher	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Frank Gallagher	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	P Maguire	Assistant City Manager Dublin City Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	Tim Caffrey	County Manager Longford County Council	LGCSB Council appointment
	Laurence Kelly	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Paul McDonald	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment

Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Local Government Management Services Board (LGMSB)	Kevin Cullen	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Aidan Kinch	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Jim Lillis	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Joe Allen	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Peter Greene	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Martha Doyle	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	N Gleeson	Local Authority Manager/Assistant Manager	LGMSB Council appointment
	E Breen	Local Authority Manager/Assistant Manager	LGMSB Council appointment
	T Ó Niadh	Local Authority Manager/Assistant Manager	LGMSB Council appointment
	J Tierney	Local Authority Manager/Assistant Manager	LGMSB Council appointment





Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Private Residential Tenancies Board	Tom Dunne	Academic DIT	Ministerial appointment
	Anne Colley	Solicitor	Ministerial appointment
	Orla Coyne	Solicitor	Ministerial appointment
	Liam Gleeson	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Aideen Hayden	Solicitor — Threshold	Ministerial appointment
	Mary Heaslip	Auctioneer/Valuer	Ministerial appointment
	Ciaran Mc Namara	A/City Manager	Ministerial appointment
	Fintan Mc Namara	CEO/IPAV	Ministerial appointment
	Dr. Eoin O Sullivan	Academic TCD	Ministerial appointment
	Dervla Quinn	Solicitor	Ministerial appointment
	Dr Bairbre Redmond	Academic UCD	Ministerial appointment
	Thomas J Reilly	IPOA(Irish Property Owners Assoc.)	Ministerial appointment
	Tony Taaffe	Solicitor	Ministerial appointment
	Cian O Lionain	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Conn Murray	City Manager	Ministerial appointment
	James Bridgeman	CI Arbitrators	Ministerial appointment
	Sheila Mc Mahon	Representative of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Ministerial appointment
	Marjorie Murphy	Solicitor	Ministerial appointment
	Liam O Donnell	IPAV	Ministerial appointment
	Pat Riney	IAVI	Ministerial appointment
	Vincent P Martin	Barrister/Councillor	Ministerial appointment
	Dessie Larkin	Councillor	Ministerial appointment

Name of State Body	Name of Appointee	Relevant Qualifications	Appointment Process
Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland	<p>Dr. Francis J. Mulligan</p> <p>Prof. Eugene Kennedy</p> <p>Darina Muckian</p> <p>Prof. Kieran R. Byrne</p> <p>Frank Turvey</p> <p>Darina Muckian</p> <p>Adi Roche</p> <p>James Fitzmaurice</p> <p>Nuala Ahern</p> <p>Dr. Seán Darby</p> <p>Dr. Patrick Gilligan</p> <p>Dr. Patrick Connellan</p> <p>Fionnuala Barker</p> <p>Dr. Niall McEniff</p> <p>Dr. Kevin Kelleher</p> <p>Dr. Michael Hurley</p>	<p>Vice President, National University of Ireland, St. Patricks College, Maynooth.</p> <p>Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.</p> <p>Scientist, Member of Stop Thorp Alliance, Dundalk (STAD)</p> <p>Director, Waterford Institute of Technology, Cork Road, Waterford.</p> <p>Former Deputy Chief Executive of the RPII.</p> <p>Scientist, Member of Stop Thorp Alliance, Dundalk (STAD)</p> <p>Executive Director of the Chernobyl Childrens' Project.</p> <p>Managing Editor of Wicklow Times, Kildare Times &amp; Carlow Times.</p> <p>Environmental Policy Analyst and Writer on ecology and psychology</p> <p>Representative of the Royle College of Surgeons of Ireland</p> <p>Representative of the Association of Physical Sciences in Medicine</p> <p>Representative of the Irish Dental Council</p> <p>Representative of the Irish Nuclear Medicine Association</p> <p>Representative of the Royle College of Surgeons of Ireland</p> <p>Representative of the Health Service Executive</p> <p>Representative of the Irish Medical Council</p>	<p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p>
Rent Tribunal	<p>Moya Quinlan</p> <p>Mary Doyle</p> <p>Louise Moloney</p> <p>Kieran Buckley</p> <p>Morette Kinsella</p> <p>Bill Stanbridge</p> <p>Fred Devlin</p> <p>John Leddin</p> <p>Joe McPeake</p>	<p>Solicitor</p> <p>Valuer</p> <p>Solicitor</p> <p>Solicitor</p> <p>Solicitor</p> <p>Valuer</p> <p>Valuer</p> <p>Valuer</p> <p>Valuer</p>	<p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p> <p>Ministerial appointment</p>

### **Housing Aid for the Elderly.**

232. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when he will provide extra funding to the local authorities in respect of housing aid for the elderly grant scheme, the housing adaptation grant and the mobility aid housing grant scheme (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26376/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran):** The administration of the Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and People with a Disability is a matter for individual local authorities.

My Department made a combined capital allocation to all local authorities on 21 May for the operation of the schemes in private houses in 2008. The schemes are funded by 80% recoupment available from my Department, together with 20% contribution from the resources of the local authority. It is a matter for each local authority to decide on the level of funding to be provided for the schemes from within the combined allocation notified to them and to manage the operation of the schemes from within this allocation.

Requests by any local authorities for additional funding for the operation of the schemes are dealt with by my Department in the context of the reallocation of surplus resources from other authorities and, as such, allocations provided to local authorities are generally revised during the course of the year where expenditure is higher or lower than anticipated. Applications from authorities for additional funding will be considered by my Department in the light of any savings emerging later in the year in other local authority areas.

### **Local Authority Staff.**

233. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will direct all local authorities to provide for current and future pension liabilities in their annual accounts from 2009 onwards in accordance with the provisions of IAS19/FRS 17. [26404/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):** Local Authorities accounting requirements are set out in a Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in Ireland issued under the Local Government Act 2001. The provisions of FRS 17 do not specifically form part of this code of practice.

My Department is, however, considering the implications of FRS 17, and the case for specifically incorporating it into the code of practice, and will be consulting further with the Department of Finance on the matter.

### **Alternative Energy Projects.**

234. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government further to Parliamentary Question No. 399, of 24 June 2008, if he will reconsider his response as the intent of the question is not to seek grant aid for solar panels but rather permission to install solar panels in listed buildings where grant aid has been approved for other works; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26439/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):** Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) sets out over 50 classes of development which are exempted from planning permission, including certain micro-renewable technologies such as solar panels. Article 9 of the Regulations provides that where the carrying out of development that is otherwise exempt could have one or other of a number of listed effects, such as impacts on sites or objects of archaeological, geological or

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historical interest, it is not exempted development. The provision of grant assistance for the installation of solar panels has no impact on the planning status of such a development.

### **Decentralisation Programme.**

235. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26470/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):** Under the decentralisation programme, all Dublin based operations of my Department are being decentralised, with the exception of Met Éireann, ENFO, the Private Residential Tenancies Board and a co-ordination unit which it is proposed to retain in Dublin to assist with the Department's Dáil and other business. A total of 682 Dublin based posts will be transferred to four locations in the South East: Wexford (270 posts); Waterford (225 posts); New Ross (125 posts) and Kilkenny (62 posts).

In addition, 101 posts in the Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB) and 63 posts in the NBA (National Building Agency) are being decentralised to Drogheda and Wexford respectively. Progress to date can be summarised as follows:

DOEHLG Decentralisation Programme

Location	Posts	Already Decentralised	% of total
Wexford	270	46	17
Waterford	225	Nil	Nil
New Ross	125	Nil	Nil
Kilkenny	62	Nil	Nil
LGCSB	101	Nil	Nil
NBA	63	Nil	Nil

At 20 June, 2008, 346 staff were available to the Department, of which 213 are now in situ in the Department, for the 682 posts being decentralised.

The Department's new Headquarters in Wexford is under construction and is expected to be completed by end December, 2008. The accommodation will be ready for occupation from February, 2009 and the Department will then transfer the staff complement into these offices on a phased basis from Q1, 2009; 212 staff are available for the 270 posts being decentralised (79% of the numbers required) and 144 staff are now in situ in the Department. An advance office was established in Wexford in June, 2007 and 46 staff are assigned to it. My Department is facilitating the transfer of staff to other decentralising Departments and also releasing staff who have opted to remain in Dublin to Departments under the Dublin Arrangements.

### **Efficiency Reviews.**

236. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008 initiated on budget day 2008 by his Department and agencies operating under his Department;

and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26489/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):**

Arising from the Budget Day announcement by the Minister for Finance, an efficiency review of all administrative spending has been conducted by my Department including agencies under the aegis of the Department. The results of the review have been communicated to the Department of Finance. The issues arising in this context are included in the consideration of expenditure estimates in respect of 2008 and 2009.

**Departmental Staff.**

237. **Deputy Deirdre Clune** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government his plans to carry out health screening for staff of his Department and contract staff who worked on Haulbowline Island and their families to confirm that their health has not been damaged by they themselves or close family members working in close proximity to dangerous waste materials; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26510/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):**

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the duty of each employer to ensure that health surveillance is made available for every employee appropriate to the health and safety risks that may be incurred at the workplace. Significant hazards must be reported, in this context, to the Health and Safety Manager.

In relation to the former Irish Ispat site at Haulbowline, a comprehensive site investigation was conducted on the site in 2005 by consultants, White Young Green, who concluded that, while there is significant contamination of the site, it posed no immediate threats to human health or the environment in the area. Staff of the Department, or others acting on its behalf, wear the appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE) when out on site.

As part of my Department's continued support of health promotion in the workplace, a health-screening programme is made available to all staff and their spouses or partners on a biennial basis. A programme of this nature is currently underway for all staff in the Department.

238. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in postgraduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive. [26986/08]

**Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley):** The numbers of staff in my Department, who have received or are receiving support to participate in postgraduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008 inclusive are set out in the table. Postgraduate educational courses include Higher Diplomas, Masters and Doctorates.

Year	Number
Academic year 2004/2005	24
Academic year 2005/2006	30
Academic year 2006/2007	33
Academic year 2007/2008	29

### **Departmental Bodies.**

239. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the proposals in relation to the possible amalgamation of fisheries boards (details supplied); if the amalgamation proceeds, the location where the headquarters of the new board will be; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26372/08]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan):** As I have previously advised the House, in response to a call from the Fisheries Boards' Chairpersons late last year for a somewhat different approach to restructuring of the boards, I requested that they develop an agreed proposal for my consideration. This was presented to me in early May. Having considered the most appropriate way of progressing in terms of streamlining the sector, it is now my intention to seek Government approval, in the very near future, for proposals to restructure the sector. As the Deputy will appreciate, I cannot pre-empt the outcome of the Government's consideration of this matter.

### **Alternative Energy Projects.**

240. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he has examined the possibility of supporting the introduction of top-up electrical charging points in towns and cities across the State; his views on same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26386/08]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan):** Electrical vehicles, including hybrid-electric, plug in hybrid, or battery electric, offer an increasingly realistic solution in terms of reducing both Greenhouse Gas Emissions from transport, and dependence on imported fossil fuels. There has been very significant global investment in research and development in this field over decades and the technology is now maturing to a point where large scale commercial deployment is looking feasible in the medium term.

Sustainable Energy Ireland has recently published reports on Hybrid Electrical Vehicles and Battery Electric Vehicles. These reports focus on potential measures that might be used to stimulate uptake in Ireland and make a series of recommendations with regard to how this might be best accomplished. These provide a useful template for the way forward and will be considered as part of the work of My Department's Renewable Energy Development Group and in the Sustainable Transport and Travel Action Plan currently being finalised by my colleague, the Minister for Transport. I recently launched an event marking the decision by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council to install a pilot project for plug in parking/charging facilities.

### **Prospecting Licences.**

241. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources when he will make a decision on a project (details supplied) in County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [26378/08]

**Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Seán Power):** An application for a prospecting licence has been made to the Minister by the company in question. The application is being considered by the Minister and he will make a decision on it in due course.



### Decentralisation Programme.

242. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of persons who have been moved by his Department and its agencies to date; the percentage this represents of the original target; and if he will provide in tabular form for each of the locations, the staff who have been moved, the staff who have been assigned but not moved and the number of the staff originally designated for a move, who have opted to stay in Dublin, who have been assigned new duties. [26465/08]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan):** The Government's Decentralisation Programme involves the relocation of my Department's headquarters to Cavan and the relocation of three bodies under its aegis, namely Sustainable Energy Ireland to Dundalk, Ordnance Survey Ireland to Dungarvan and the Central Fisheries Board to Carrick-on-Shannon.

A breakdown of the information requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table:

Organisation	Location	Number of Posts	Staff moved to date	% Staff moved to date	Staff assigned, but not moved	Number of Staff (who opted to stay in Dublin) who have been assigned new duties
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	Cavan	300	50	17%	71	61
Central Fisheries Board	Carrick-on-Shannon	62	0	0%	35	0
Ordnance Survey Ireland	Dungarvan	199	0	0%	72	0
Sustainable Energy Ireland	Dundalk	38	2	5%	22	0

### Efficiency Reviews.

243. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the proposals which have been put forward under the efficiency review 2008, initiated on budget day 2008, by his Department and agencies operating under his Department; and the aggregate savings to be made by implementation of these savings in 2008 and in the full year for 2009. [26484/08]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan):** In Budget 2008, the Tánaiste and Minister for Finance announced the requirement for all Government Departments to examine all administrative spending under their aegis with a view to producing efficiency savings. The review in my Department covered all spending areas including the non-commercial State Bodies under the aegis of my Department, with no area being regarded as exempt from critical scrutiny with a view to realising efficiencies. The review was submitted to the Department of Finance in March and is currently under consideration in that Department.

**Departmental Staff.**

244. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of staff in his Department who have received or are receiving support to participate in postgraduate educational courses in the years 2004 to 2008, inclusive. [26981/08]

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan):** The information sought by the Deputy is set out in the following table:

Course Type	Staff Numbers
Academic Year 2004/2005	
Masters	15
PhD	1
Doctorate	1
Academic Year 2005/2006	
Masters	5
PhD	1
Doctorate	1
Academic Year 2006/2007	
Masters	3
PhD	1
Doctorate	1
Academic Year 2007/2008	
Masters	3
PhD	0
Doctorate	2

Where courses ran for more than one academic year, staff members would have benefited from the refund of fees facility in each of their year of study.