

DÁIL ÉIREANN

Dé Máirt, 6 Deireadh Fómhair 2009.
Tuesday, 6 October 2009.

Chuaigh an Ceann Comhairle i gceannas ar 2.30 p.m.

Paidir.
Prayer.

Ceisteanna — Questions.

Data Protection.

1. **Deputy Enda Kenny** asked the Taoiseach the procedures in place in his Department for the protection of personal data held by electronic means; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [25630/09]

2. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Taoiseach the procedures in place within his Department to ensure the security of personal data held by electronic means; if he has satisfied himself with the adequacy of such measures; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [27240/09]

3. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Taoiseach the data protection procedures in place in his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [27252/09]

The Taoiseach: I propose to take Questions Nos. 1 to 3, inclusive, together.

Although sensitive information belonging to members of the public is not generally collected by or stored in the Department's electronic systems, specific measures are in place in my Department to protect all data held electronically.

Access to personal information held on databases within my Department is controlled by application security and confined to relevant authorised personnel only. Access by users to these systems is granted on an "as needs only" basis. The Department's computer networks are secured against cyber attacks through the use of security products such as multiple firewalls, anti-virus software and e-mail security tools. Remote access equipment is only issued to staff who have a business need to access the Department's systems out of the office. All applications for access are sent to, and approved by, the personnel officer. Staff supplied with mobile equipment are issued with guidance to ensure devices are secured properly. The hard drives of all laptops are encrypted and do not store Departmental data physically on them. Strong authentication methods, in addition to user name and password, are in place to prevent unauthorised access to the Department's network from mobile devices.

My Department complies with the guidelines on protecting the confidentiality of personal data issued by the Department of Finance. It also evaluates and reviews advanced information security products and technologies as they come to market and implements them where appro-

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priate. In short, my Department applies best practice and uses industry standard information security protection devices and software to protect all data within its systems. It regularly reviews and updates these security procedures and products as a matter of course.

Deputy Enda Kenny: I listened carefully to the Taoiseach's reply and we need more than firewalls around here. In any event, in 2008 the personal data of 580,000 people was lost and the reporting of all of that was less than adequate. To date, in 2009, Bord Gáis has lost the personal information of 75,000 customers and the HSE had 15 laptops stolen, two of which were not encrypted. The Taoiseach is aware that in April 2007 the personal information of 380,000 social welfare recipients went missing. It took 16 months, until August 2008, before the Minister for Social and Family Affairs was made aware of the extent of the losses. Furthermore, the data was only password protected and did not have any encryption in place.

The Taoiseach will also be aware that 16 laptops have been stolen from the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office since 1999. Laptops were stolen from the Bank of Ireland, computer disks were lost in New York by the Blood Transfusion Service Board, 15 HSE laptops were stolen in Roscommon and, as I said, Bord Gáis lost information on 75,000 customers.

As I understand it, there is no specific legal obligation on a body that loses personal information to notify the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. That irritation was perfectly evident recently when that office only heard about the missing HSE laptops on the radio. There have been many high profile thefts, whether such data was being targeted deliberately or stolen by accident. Can the Taoiseach confirm that all the electronic data being held in his Department is encrypted and therefore of no use to people who have access to computers or hand-held technology? Can he say why the Data Protection Commissioner was not informed of the theft of the HSE laptops?

If Fine Gael were to introduce its Data Protection (Disclosure) (Amendment) Bill 2008, would the Taoiseach support it? That would create a legal obligation on organisations to disclose within a certain period any breaches of data security. Such an obligation would create very strong incentives for all organisations to ensure their data protection procedures were adequate in order to avoid any negative publicity that might ensue from having to disclose a breach of customers' sensitive and personal data. If we introduce that Bill will the Taoiseach support it, and will he say why the Data Protection Commissioner was not informed about the missing HSE laptops? Is he happy that all computer information, where personal data is stored with his Department, is at a minimum encrypted?

The Taoiseach: This question applies to procedures within my Department, so I am not in a position to comment as regards other matters. Such questions are best put to the line Ministers concerned as regards specific queries the Deputy may have.

In terms of my Department, in the body of my reply I indicated that the hard drives of all laptops are encrypted and the departmental data is not physically stored on them. There are strong authentication methods in place to prevent unauthorised access to the network from mobile devices. I am satisfied on the basis of the information provided to me by the personnel office and the people in the Department responsible for this area, that best practice is being applied and that standard information security protection devices and software are being used to protect all data within the systems.

In that respect it is fair to say that a small amount of computer equipment was reported to be lost or stolen. Nine devices were reported lost or stolen since 2002, three of which were subsequently recovered. There was no personal data on any of the devices concerned and

the procedures for dealing with equipment reported lost or stolen were enacted in regard to these situations.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Arising from that, the Data Protection Commissioner's findings are only made public if the body being investigated actually requests it or agrees to it. For example, the Irish Blood Transfusion Board appears to have agreed to it but the Bank of Ireland does not appear to have agreed to it. Does the Taoiseach agree that in cases where an investigation is carried out by the Data Protection Commissioner concerning significant loss of personal or sensitive information, the findings should be made public, which is not always the case at present? Obviously, the findings of the Data Protection Commissioner would be helpful to all organisations and set a standard that everybody would want to adhere to. Does the Taoiseach agree there should not be this situation where the findings of the Data Protection Commissioner are made public only in circumstances where the organisation agrees or requests it? Should it not be the case that they are made public in all circumstances to help everybody else set a standard and so that items of personal and sensitive information on computer disk are not lost?

The Taoiseach: The availability of information as a general principle is obviously something of which one would be in favour. However, other considerations are sometimes in play, such as the confidentiality of personal information, and the information may not be regarded by the individuals concerned or affected as a matter that should come into the public domain in any event. There are, therefore, various considerations which must be applied in regard to data protection. For my part, any proposals that come from any part of the House on these issues will be considered constructively in line with the established principles of what is best practice in this area.

Deputy Joan Burton: In recent years, more than 110 laptops and similar devices have been stolen from different Departments. Various e-Government projects have been spearheaded by the Department of the Taoiseach. One of the obvious consequences of e-Government is that the State inevitably accumulates vast amounts of information about the personal details of people's lives, whether that be health information, information relating to farms and farmers, or otherwise. If one is having a smart economy drive and an e-Government drive, it is inevitable that the Government ends up holding vast amounts of data about different aspects of people's lives.

I want to restate the question. First, devices which store data may be stolen or lost, perhaps because officials have them in their cars or take them home with them, or because the offices where the devices are held are broken into. The general public want to know what provision is in place for a type of rapid warning system which all Government agencies and Departments would sign up to in order to alert people to the fact that what to them may be sensitive information has been lost or compromised in some way. Second, given that the Department of the Taoiseach has over the past ten years led the information, smart economy and e-government project, would the Taoiseach not agree it is a matter for his Department to set standards and responses in regard to the observations from the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner concerning the security of devices, particularly concerning the issue of informing people whose data and personal information may have been compromised in one way or another?

The Taoiseach: With regard to what happens if a device is missing or stolen, in that event, the user account associated with that device is immediately disabled and, in the case of Black-Berries, they are centrally disabled from the server and the memory of the machine is also wiped in this procedure; the network provider is notified so that the SIM card is disabled,

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which renders the device inaccessible to unauthorised users; the Department's asset register is updated; in the case of theft, the user is asked to report the matter to the Garda; and, where personal or sensitive data are compromised, the Data Protection Commissioner will be also informed.

On whether I am satisfied that personal data belonging to members of the public held in the Department's databases are safe from unauthorised access or from hackers, I am satisfied that my Department applies best practice on data protection. The procedures, products and devices they have are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they are capable of providing the best security appropriate to the Department's needs at all times. On whether there were any instances where personal data held by the Department or any of its agencies were compromised in any way, I am informed that no personal data held electronically by my Department have been compromised in any way.

Regarding the need to comply with data protection legislation in the protection of personal data, I am informed that the Department fully complies with the provisions of the 1988 and 2003 Acts, and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 in managing electronic and paper based records.

On the overall situation in terms of data held electronically in all Departments, when I was Minister for Finance, the Department of Finance, as the Department of the public service, wrote to all Departments, offices, and agencies in November 2007 seeking information on the systems and procedures in place to protect the confidentiality of personal data. After collating and examining those responses the Department of Finance then produced a report for Government which contained the findings and a number of recommendations. It was circulated to relevant stakeholders for comment and observation and was presented to Government for consideration in April 2008. The Government noted the report and also that the Department of Finance was convening a working group to produce guidelines based on the recommendations of that report. That cross-departmental working group had its first meeting in May 2008. The CMOD section of the Department of Finance chairs meetings of the group and provides a secretariat.

The group has produced guidelines and a template code of practice for Departments, offices and agencies on the protection of personal data held electronically, on paper and on data storage devices. Those guidelines also cover the protection of data while being transferred electronically between Departments and via e-mail. Those documents, based on best practice in this area were passed to the Data Protection Commissioner and other members of the working group for observations. Following their responses both documents were circulated to all Departments, offices and agencies. There has been an effort to provide uniform standards through that process in the past 12 to 18 months.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: On the questions before us, does the Department of the Taoiseach have a co-ordinating role on data protection procedures across all Departments? Does that function arise and is it the Taoiseach's Department that would carry out same?

On a more general point about data protection but in an area for which the Taoiseach is directly responsible, namely, social partnership, has progress been made on the commitment in the Towards 2016 agreement that legislation would be enacted so that employment agencies shall in their dealings with jobseekers abide by all employee protection and data protection legislation in force in the State? Will the Taoiseach give an indication, as it is directly under the aegis of his Department, on what progress there has been in moving towards such an assurance, a guarantee?

The Taoiseach: I indicated in a previous reply to a supplementary questions from Deputy Burton that the Department of Finance is the Department of the public service and when I was Minister for Finance I undertook a process of co-ordination to ensure best practice in this area across all Departments, agencies and offices. In my detailed reply to a previous supplementary I indicated that that process was extensive, comprehensive and is now complete. That answers that question.

The other question about what progress has been made to date on employment agencies and commitments in Towards 2016 would be best tabled for a specific answer to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: As social partnership is an area under the direct responsibility of the Taoiseach's Department I would have thought he would have an oversight on not only the proposal but the agreement within Towards 2016. Can he not give us something more than just a referral to another Department? Has any progress been made, to the Taoiseach's knowledge, in bringing about the commitment in Towards 2016 in this regard?

The Taoiseach: With respect, the question put down relates to the procedures in place in my Department for the protection of personal data held by electronic means. The supplementary question is far wider in scope than could have been contemplated.

Cabinet Committees.

4. **Deputy Enda Kenny** asked the Taoiseach the last occasion on which the Cabinet committee on economic renewal met; and when the next meeting is due. [25633/09]

5. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Taoiseach the date of the last meeting of the Cabinet committee on economic renewal; and when the next meeting is scheduled. [27241/09]

6. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Taoiseach the membership of the Cabinet committee on economic renewal. [27253/09]

7. **Deputy Enda Kenny** asked the Taoiseach when the cross-departmental team on infrastructure and public private partnership will next meet; the number of meetings of the team planned for the remainder of 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [30616/09]

8. **Deputy Enda Kenny** asked the Taoiseach when the Cabinet committee on climate change will next meet. [30644/09]

9. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Taoiseach when the next progress report of the cross-departmental team on housing, infrastructure and public private partnership will be published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [31183/09]

10. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Taoiseach the number of times the Cabinet committee on social inclusion has met since June 2007 to date. [31186/09]

11. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Taoiseach the number of times the Cabinet committee on health has met since June 2007 to date. [31187/09]

12. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Taoiseach when the Cabinet committee on economic renewal last met; when the committee is expected to next meet. [32519/09]

13. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Taoiseach if the work of the Cabinet committee on housing, infrastructure and public private partnerships and its supporting cross-departmental team has been subsumed into the Cabinet committee on economic renewal. [33523/09]

14. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Taoiseach the membership of the climate change advisory panel that will report to the Cabinet committee on climate change. [33819/09]

15. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Taoiseach if he will consider facilitating a meeting between the members of the Joint Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security and the Cabinet sub-committee on climate change in the run up to the climate change talks in Copenhagen in December 2009. [34087/09]

16. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Taoiseach the last time the Cabinet committee on climate change met; the timeframe for the next meeting; and the schedule for meetings for the remainder in 2009. [34090/09]

169. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Taoiseach the membership of the climate change advisory panel that will report to the Cabinet committee on climate change; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33205/09]

The Taoiseach: I propose to take Questions Nos. 4 to 16, inclusive, and 169 together.

The Cabinet committee on economic renewal last met on 27 July 2009. The date of its next meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, 7 October. Membership of the Cabinet committee on economic renewal, which I chair, includes the Tánaiste, Minister for Finance, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Minister for Health and Children, with other Ministers attending as appropriate. As I indicated to the House in February, the Cabinet committee on housing, infrastructure and public private partnerships, PPPs, and its supporting cross-departmental team, have now been subsumed within these arrangements.

The Cabinet committee on social inclusion, children and integration has met four times since June 2007. The Cabinet committee on health has met on 15 occasions since June 2007. The next meeting of the Cabinet committee on climate change and energy security is scheduled to take place tomorrow, 7 October 2009, with further meetings as required during the remainder of 2009.

To further develop policies in the area of climate change an informal expert advisory panel on climate change and energy security has been established with international and national experts to advise the Cabinet committee on the potential for, and cost of, greenhouse gas reductions in the non-ETS sector. A list of members of the informal expert advisory panel established by the Cabinet committee is being circulated with this reply. I support the idea of close co-operation with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security in the run-up to the Copenhagen summit in December and I have written to the Chairman of the committee suggesting that the best means of achieving this be considered by the relevant officials.

In conclusion, I emphasise that Cabinet committees are an integral part of the Cabinet process. Questions as to the business conducted at Cabinet or Cabinet committee meetings have never been allowed in the House on the grounds that they are internal to Government. The reasons for this approach are founded on sound policy principles and the need to avoid infringing the constitutional protection of Cabinet confidentiality.

Membership of the Informal Expert Advisory Committee on Climate Change:

- Professor Stefan Proost, Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE), Department of Economics, K.U. Leuven;
- Professor Alan Matthews, Professor of European Agricultural Policy in the Department of Economics, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Trinity College Dublin;
- Professor Frank Convery, Professor of Environmental Studies, College of Human Sciences, School of Geography, Planning & Environmental Policy, University College Dublin and Chairman of Comhar;
- Professor Thomas Sterner, Professor of Environmental Economics, Gothenburg;
- Jack Short, Secretary General, International Transport Forum;
- Paul Watkiss, Independent consultant specialising in environmental and economic policy advice;
- Brendan Walsh, Professor Emeritus of Economics in University College Dublin;
- Professor Peter Clinch, Special Adviser to the Taoiseach

Deputy Enda Kenny: Last December, the Government published Ireland’s framework for sustainable economic renewal, which set out a series of actions for the development of what was called a “smart economy”. The document was a revival and rehash of many different programmes that were already in existence. Of the 125 action points contained in the summary, only one action plan could be described as new, and it referred to a €500 million innovation fund. What is the status of that €500 million euro fund now? Is the money in place? How much of it is left? Will the Taoiseach identify what elements of innovation have been funded through the innovation fund referred to in the action plan?

The Taoiseach: The factual position I have to outline here relates to the questions. With regard to the specific issue raised by the Deputy, the question of supporting innovation is fundamental to improving competitiveness in the economy. A great deal of support has been given to that area, in the hundreds of millions of euro, through a wide range of research and development programmes. The question of setting up specific funds around existing funds or using them in addition to existing funds would be a matter for budgetary consideration.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Is the Taoiseach saying the committee dealing with sustainable economic renewal discussed this action plan? The sum of €500 million is a great deal of money. The Taoiseach referred to assistance for innovation and science related activities and so forth. That is welcome but was the €500 million referred to in the 125 action points in addition to what was in place previously? Does he have an account of what it has been spent on or what elements of it have been spent and, if so, on what they have been spent? Can we identify a report on progress made in dealing with the €500 million innovation fund?

In respect of the committee on sustainable economic renewal, the Minister for Finance, in his budget speech in April, stated:

There is scope to access significant private funds for infrastructure projects in order to sustain as many construction jobs and as much activity as possible . . . This would support existing PPP projects and other projects previously funded by the Exchequer.

What is the status of the Minister’s proposal in this regard? Is an activity report available on what has happened arising from his proposal? Is the Taoiseach able to identify the major capital projects discussed at the economic recovery committee arising from the Minister’s comments

[Deputy Enda Kenny.]

in April last? Have specific projects been attracted under the public-private partnership system arising from the Minister's comments?

In respect of the European Union, most Members of the House are very happy with the decision taken by the majority of the electorate when it voted last Friday. The European Union has established an €8 billion stimulus package for major projects. Has the economic recovery committee examined this package and is the Taoiseach in a position to indicate the number or kinds of applications, if any, that have been made to the European Union in respect of drawing down some of these funds, which have been made available across the Union, for Ireland?

The Taoiseach: As the Deputy is aware, it is not possible for me to discuss with him, in the context of replies at Question Time, what goes on at Cabinet committees or during Cabinet meetings. I can only do so in respect of decisions when they are taken. I am not, therefore, in a position to indicate to the Deputy progress made in any discussions in areas which are protected by Cabinet confidentiality.

On matters generally, the Minister for Finance has been emphasising the need for value for money in the capital budget. Great value for money is now available because of the more competitive pricing that is in play. I understand an average improvement in pricing of 20% has been achieved.

There has been a wide range of continuing significant capital commitments during this year. Despite the difficult fiscal position, the Government is spending more than €7 billion on public capital programmes and a capital programme will also feature next year. The important aspect of the programme is the ability to improve and increase output from resources that are not as plentiful as they were. This is a big plus in terms of ensuring that the absolute maximum of employment is achieved in respect of the implementation of the programme.

Similarly, in respect of European Investment Bank funds and other supports, continuing access is being made, where appropriate, from various Departments.

Deputy Joan Burton: If I understood the Taoiseach correctly, the committee on economic renewal is due to meet tomorrow.

The Taoiseach: The next meeting will be tomorrow.

Deputy Joan Burton: The committee last met on 9 July.

The Taoiseach: It met on 27 July.

Deputy Joan Burton: In other words, what is arguably the most important committee has had nearly three months holidays at a time of massive unemployment, the collapse of the banking system and the publication of the Commission on Taxation and McCarthy reports.

The Taoiseach: The Cabinet has been meeting every week.

Deputy Joan Burton: I understand the committee on economic renewal is supposed to be a key operator in terms of the cross-cutting, interdepartmental Cabinet committees. Given the economic crisis and weight of the budgetary and banking matters that must be addressed, does the Taoiseach believe it is appropriate to hold a meeting every two and a half months or have a two and a half month summer break? The last time the Taoiseach answered questions on the committee on economic renewal, it did not appear that this committee had any function in the banking crisis. Does it have a function in the banking crisis? When it meets, will it have referred to it, the fact that JP Morgan has

3 o'clock

indicated that Allied Irish Bank and Bank of Ireland will need capitalisation of €17 billion and Anglo Irish Bank, which is a dead bank, will need a further €6 billion? Is the banking issue discussed by this committee when it meets? In regard to the budgetary situation, will the committee have an opportunity to discuss the McCarthy report and, particularly, the Commission on Taxation report? Is that parked, as the Taoiseach indicated in remarks he made a couple of weeks ago?

In regard to the counterpart committee——

An Ceann Comhairle: I have to remind Deputy Burton that these questions, statistical or otherwise, could undermine Cabinet confidentiality. I have to remind the Deputy of that.

Deputy Joan Burton: I am very sorry to take issue with the Ceann Comhairle on anything, but the banking crisis and unemployment are central to everything that is happening in the country.

An Ceann Comhairle: Do you see my problem?

Deputy Joan Burton: How could this committee, which seems to be central to Cabinet and Government — I think the term is “cross-cutting committees” — manage to have a two and a half month holiday? It is a reasonable question.

In regard to its counterpart committee dealing with social inclusion, children and integration, would that committee have had an opportunity to discuss the social impact of the report of the McCarthy committee, an bord snip nua, in particular the impact on children of the cuts proposed by the McCarthy report?

An Ceann Comhairle: These matters impinge on Cabinet confidentiality.

The Taoiseach: The Cabinet meets every week, sometimes more than once a week and, from time to time, twice a week, depending on the workload or requirements. All of these matters are discussed at Cabinet. Cabinet committees can meet in smaller format and their purpose is to provide assistance on specific issues that arise or specific areas of policy that require co-ordination or further discussion. That is the basis on which the economic, social or any other committee meets. Frequency of meetings is not a full indicator of activity or consideration being given by Government in respect of any of these matters. Full Cabinet meetings deal with these matters extensively on an ongoing basis as a priority. I cannot go into any more detail, other than that, to explain the workings of the committee.

In regard to the committee on social inclusion, we have been dealing with all those matters in full Cabinet meetings. The Deputy asked about various reports being considered by Government. We are beginning the budgetary and Estimates process. A very serious challenge to our public finances exists and we have to come forward with a budgetary position which will meet that. From our point of view, the role of Cabinet committees is to supplement the role of Cabinet and not to replace it.

Deputy Liz McManus: On climate change, I was glad the Taoiseach attended the United Nations summit on climate change. It sent out a very important signal. I also welcome his statement today that he will ensure the facilitation of a meeting between the sub-committee and the Joint Oireachtas Committee. Would it be possible for the Taoiseach to attend that meeting, because he is chairperson of the sub-committee? It would be important for us to have a round-table discussion in advance of what will be decided in Copenhagen. Can the Taoiseach give the House some clarification on the advisory panel?

[Deputy Liz McManus.]

I understand the climate change committee has an advisory panel of in-house civil servants and senior departmental officials. Who are the members of the international advisory panel mentioned by the Taoiseach? I am a little unclear on the role of that panel. I will not ask the Taoiseach about the agenda for tomorrow's meeting of the sub-committee because the rules of Cabinet confidentiality prohibit him from giving me such information. However, I advise him that certain organisations representing the interests of the developing world are concerned that our overseas aid budget will be hijacked to ensure we can meet our obligations under the EU's climate change policy. Will the Taoiseach ensure that does not happen? Will he focus on the additionality that is so important if we are to protect the overseas aid budget? I understand it is no longer proposed that heads of state will attend the Copenhagen summit. Does the Taoiseach share that understanding? Perhaps he will update the House on the matter.

The Taoiseach: I have asked the relevant officials to support the idea of close co-operation between the Oireachtas joint committee and the expert panel on climate change and energy security. I have written to the Chairman of the joint committee to suggest that the best means of achieving such co-operation is to engage in discussions with the relevant officials. We await the outcome of that process. The members of the informal expert advisory panel on climate change — those who are offering us advice — are Professor Stefan Proost, who works in the faculty of business and economics, within the department of economics, at the University of Leuven in Belgium; Professor Alan Matthews, who is a professor of European agricultural policy in the department of economics, within the school of social sciences and philosophy, at Trinity College Dublin; Professor Frank Convery, who is a professor of environmental studies in the college of human sciences, within the school of geography, planning and environmental policy, at University College Dublin and is also the chairman of Comhar; Professor Thomas Sterner, who is a professor of environmental economics at the University of Gothenburg; Mr. Jack Short, who is the secretary general of the International Transport Forum; Mr. Paul Watkiss, who is an independent consultant specialising in environmental and economic policy advice; Professor Brendan Walsh, who is the professor emeritus of economics at University College Dublin; and Professor Peter Clinch, who is a special adviser to the Department of the Taoiseach. I have not yet heard who will attend the Copenhagen summit. I am sure there are plenty of rumours and views on who will or will not attend. I hope the summit will take place. I think many Governments will be represented at the summit at the highest level. The heads of government and state focus on this urgent global issue whenever the European Council meets. It is usually an important item on the agenda. I am not quite sure to what Deputy McManus referred when she spoke about overseas development aid. It is obvious that we will seek to meet our burden-sharing commitments, just as everybody else will.

Deputy Liz McManus: While I hope the Taoiseach attends the Copenhagen summit, I understand that will probably not happen. Does he accept that it would send a strong message if the Government were to publish a climate change Bill before the Copenhagen summit? Even if the Bill had not gone through the Oireachtas, its existence would indicate that Ireland is playing its part. Will the Taoiseach ensure that the Bill that has been promised by the Government will be published by that stage?

The Taoiseach: The Deputy will be aware that the Government will have to consider many legislative commitments between now and then. Obviously, there is a view that the climate change Bill can be worked on. At the moment, the real issue is whether the Copenhagen summit will be a success. There are many major policy issues and further discussions will take place to try to ensure that states such as the US and China will engage and be in a position to contribute to a solution. The UN conference to which the Deputy referred arose on foot of the

efforts by the UN Secretary General to create more political momentum as we enter a critical phase of negotiations. The conference was successful in that regard but everyone's focus is now on converting political momentum into political will and outcomes which measure up to the challenge.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: The “Yes” side in the recent Lisbon treaty referendum told us we had a choice between ruin and recovery. Some drew an equation between the passage of Lisbon and the creation of jobs. Will the Cabinet committee on economic renewal now address the need to formulate a plan or strategy to seriously tackle growing unemployment levels in this State, given that the Government has not produced any such strategy since the general election of 2007 and certainly has not since the current economic crisis began?

Would the Taoiseach agree that it is nauseating to hear some economic commentators refer to the so-called first shoots of recovery as indicative of the clock having turned when they are actually referring to the international stock markets, that is, the very gambling dens which contributed heavily to the creation of the crisis in the first place? Would he accept that the real first shoots of recovery will not be international stock markets but the reversal of the trend of growing unemployment across this country? Unemployment currently stands at 440,000 people and this figure is projected to rise significantly over the coming months. Can he give the House an assurance that the Cabinet committee will be coming forward with proposals to tackle the unemployment crisis through real and imaginative initiatives that curtail the continuing haemorrhage of unemployment and create new and sustainable work opportunities?

The Taoiseach: The role of the committee is of course to assist the economy back to recovery in whatever way we can. With respect to Deputy Ó Caoláin, that cannot be done in a void. It must be done on the basis of a stable financial system both domestically and internationally. The purpose is not to bail out banks but to ensure we have a system which is geared to bring about the recovery that everyone seeks. Without a functioning and viable financial system, our prospects of recovery are greatly postponed. The reason priority must be given to this matter is because of the global nature of the crisis in the financial markets.

Our second consideration is improving competitiveness in the Irish economy. Now that we are in a recession and experiencing depleted demand for the goods and services we provide to international markets, we need to be competitive and maintain market share in order to sell in similar volumes, if with tighter margins, the goods and services we produce and provide. Unless everything we do is geared towards that objective, the availability, sustainability and creation of jobs is put at risk because that is the only way we can increase enterprise and opportunity.

I reject the assertion that the Government lacks a plan. We have provided a mid-term fiscal consolidation plan which has been approved by the EU, as we were required to do. Through our smart economy framework, we have also provided a mid-term economic recovery programme emphasising areas of the economy which can create wealth and jobs. At the same time, we are required to correct our public finances because otherwise we put at risk the sustainability of public services and, more important, divert the resources currently being provided by the people towards increasing debt and interest repayments. I remind Deputies, however, that while we have a large deficit, we have a relatively low debt burden compared to some other countries because of our prudent management of finances in terms of halving our debt during the good times. That headroom, which is now available to us in the coming years, must be prudently managed and prioritised towards areas of activity that will generate economic growth and provide us with the prospect of recovery. That is the position.

The decision made on Friday last by the Irish people is a positive step by all of our citizens to help effect recovery by showing confidence in the strategic direction in which this country

[The Taoiseach.]

must go. While there would be democratic debate about all of these matters, the vast majority of the Irish people indicated that they wanted the European Union to be part of the framework for recovery in this country.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: Would the Taoiseach give some sense of what innovative ideas the Government has been considering in tackling the growing unemployment? For instance, what is his position on the German approach of giving support to employers to retain people at work rather than facing the even more costly situation of growing numbers on the employment queues? Just to give us a sense of where he stands on same, has he given any consideration to that proposition?

The Taoiseach: The Government, since June, has provided an employment subsidy scheme to help those export-oriented industries in the SME sector that need our assistance and support, and that is being taken up in broad measure. There is a commitment given by Government over the two fiscal years to meet that commitment up to the tune of €250 million. That is a significant commitment in terms of that aspect of employment support, while at the same time everyone must understand that unless the economy is competitive, the prospect of maintaining existing jobs — let alone creating new jobs — is put at risk without that adjustment that must be made.

Priority Questions.

Departmental Expenditure.

116. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the concerns raised as to the level of value for money that has been delivered by schemes and bodies operating under the remit of his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34096/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The achievement of value for money for each of the schemes and programmes it delivers and funds from its Vote is a priority for my Department. Similarly, ensuring systems are in place to secure value for money across the bodies that are funded from my Department is also a key priority.

Against this background, my Department has put in place a range of financial monitoring, performance measurement and systems review mechanisms. These include the regular carrying out of independent audits, value for money, VFM, reviews, programme evaluations and the measurement of programme and scheme outputs against targets set in the annual output statement. The findings arising from each of these review and evaluation systems are monitored by my Department and acted upon.

I should also advise the Deputy that a programme of direct project verification and evaluation is carried out by my Department's dedicated inspection services and where value for money issues arise, these are followed up.

As the Deputy will be aware, I am committed to meeting on a regular basis the many people, groups and communities across the country that my Department serves. Where issues or concerns are raised with me on value for money issues regarding schemes and programmes delivered by my Department, or in the context of bodies funded from its Vote, I can assure the Deputy that any such issue or concern is followed up assiduously.

Deputy Michael Ring: This Department has probably come under the most scrutiny as a result of the report of an bord snip nua. An bord snip nua recommended abolishing the Department, discontinuing the RAPID programme, reductions in funding for community and voluntary support and phasing out the CLÁR programme. However, the most damning matter is that the Department of Finance raised fundamental questions to the Minister in written format on whether we are getting value for money from Údarás na Gaeltachta. Údarás na Gaeltachta could not provide information to the Department on how much it was costing per job, on its level of debt and on the amount of grants paid out.

I want to make my own commitment. I am committed to rural Ireland. I am committed to this Department. Fine Gael is committed to rural Ireland, but we are also committed to getting value for money. If the Department of Finance is worried about us not getting value to money, I want to know what the Minister has done since he received the letter from that Department querying his Department on value for money, and what precautions he has put in place. Has the Minister contacted Údarás na Gaeltachta to see whether it can give the Department the information on staffing and on the cost per job? What has he done since that letter was sent to him from the Department of Finance?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Information on staffing at Údarás na Gaeltachta is readily available to my Department, which monitors the organisation on an ongoing basis. Údarás has a good record in job creation; for example, 1,269 new jobs were created in Údarás-assisted companies in 2008, while full-time employment in Údarás-supported enterprises was 8,193.

One of the issues that arises is that of the cost per job, which is sometimes queried. I have made criticisms in this regard in the past, and I understand Forfás has now moved away from the cost-per-job measure and is employing a more complicated and thorough way of considering value for money. I recently met representatives of the board of Údarás to discuss this issue. My view was that in considering the cost per job we must also consider the sustainability of the job. Thus, if we spend money on an industry that goes on for 30 or 40 years, the cost per job, taking into account the years of operation and the repayment to the State in taxes and so on, cannot be compared to that of a company that lasts for five years. Therefore, I stressed to the representatives of Údarás that they must consider the sustainability of the jobs created, the risk element, and the benefit to the Irish language. The latter consideration applies to Údarás more than to any other State agency. I would put a higher premium, for example, on jobs created by Údarás that not only sustain viable employment in the Gaeltacht but also sustain the language in the area. That is the whole justification for having a separate agency in the Gaeltacht.

Deputy Michael Ring: The Taoiseach recently said while speaking to a radio station or TG4 — I am not sure which — that he would retain the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Has the Minister spoken personally to the Taoiseach about this, and has he assured the Minister the Department will be left intact in light of the McCarthy report?

Has the Minister monitored the schemes he set up — some of which are very good — to see whether we are getting value for money? If not, will he put something in place to monitor them? I want to see real jobs for real people in rural Ireland.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: As the Deputy knows, I always look out for value for money. The Deputy mentioned schemes I was particularly associated with setting up, of which I will take three examples. The rural social scheme, which costs €7,000 more per year than keeping the same person on unemployment benefit or farm assist, is incredibly good value for money in terms of the amount of work done. The report I launched recently at the National Ploughing Championships will testify that the payback from the scheme is a large multiple of the amount

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of money we put in. In addition, when one considers the social benefit of providing these people with employment and preventing them from living a lonely life without any outside activity other than farming, one must conclude the scheme is a success.

Because of the CLÁR programme, there are houses in rural Ireland that have water from group schemes; we were willing to provide a top-up to prevent people in rural Ireland from paying inflated costs for water, and that was justified. I have been very strict with local authorities, as the Deputy knows. In his own county I refused to pay because the local authority did the work first and then applied for the grant. Anybody who tells me it is not a worthy social objective to give high-quality piped water to the houses of rural Ireland does not understand the problem.

The local improvement scheme for roads project has also been good value, although I have questioned the prices given by local authorities and so on. We do our best to monitor these matters, but I believe it is value for money. If we move on to rural recreation——

Deputy Michael Ring: Has the Minister spoken to the Taoiseach about keeping the Department?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: The issue of the configuration of Departments is, as I have said time and again, solely one for the Taoiseach. I heard what he said on TG4 and I leave that utterly to his discretion.

Departmental Programmes.

117. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on to the recommendation contained in the report of the special group on public service numbers and expenditure programmes that the allocation for local and community development programmes should be cut by €44 million; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34306/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): As indicated to this House on a number of occasions, the recommendations in the report of the special group on public service numbers and expenditure programmes represent a set of options for consideration in the context of the 2010 budget and will fall to be examined by the Government at the appropriate time. Any decisions on the specific matter referred to by the Deputy will be made in that context.

Deputy Jack Wall: Like Deputy Ring, I am interested in rural Ireland and the local and community initiatives that have been undertaken. My concern in this regard is that although expenditure will be decided in the context of the budget, the recommendations have been put into the public arena now. I have listened to the Minister say he has conducted reviews and so on. However, in the McCarthy report it is stated, “There is little evidence of positive outcomes for these initiatives.” My concern is that the Minister of State and his line Minister did not put their case strongly enough to the group. Did they put any case at all, or was it the Department of Finance that did all the running? That matter must be cleared up.

We heard the Tánaiste, Deputy Coughlan, say there were many things in the McCarthy report with which she did not agree, and there are certainly many with which we on this side of the House do not agree. I am talking about reductions in the allocation not only for local community development programmes but also for many other programmes. In recommending a reduction in the allocation for the community services programme, the report states, “There

is little information available on the outcomes achieved through the scheme.” It seems the Ministers did absolutely nothing——

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: It is an absolute joke.

Deputy Jack Wall: ——in terms of making a presentation to the McCarthy group to try to obtain a positive outcome. It is no wonder the group then concluded there was no evidence with regard to these programmes and stated the Department was not worth having in the first place.

Deputy John Curran: The McCarthy report is an independent report. The Deputy mentioned specific instances in which the report was not supportive of programmes or stated there was little evidence for positive outcomes. I do not agree there is little evidence of positive outcomes from those initiatives. I refer in particular to the local development social inclusion programme and the community development programme. It is my objective that my Department’s schemes and programmes, whether delivered directly or on the Department’s behalf, give good value for money and meet the needs of all the communities and people we serve. In this regard, they are quite successful. My belief is based on successive independent reviews, audits and studies and, more importantly — the Deputy will agree with this — the detailed feedback I receive directly from communities and groups on a daily basis.

That being said, I have had concerns for some time about the manner in which we have programmes running in parallel. I knew we needed to redesign the community development and social inclusion programmes and it is in that regard I made the announcement a number of weeks ago that the programme would be redesigned to provide a single mechanism of delivery in order to be more effective and streamlined. However, I do not agree with the comment that these programmes do not deliver benefits for communities. I have seen it first hand. More importantly, however, these programmes have been running for a number of years and we have had a number of independent reviews and audits of their outcomes.

Deputy Jack Wall: I conclude from that reply that the Minister of State’s opinion is the same as my own — he does not agree with the recommendation in the McCarthy report that the financing of these schemes be reduced.

Did the Department make a submission to the McCarthy group or did it meet with the group about the assessment of the Department?

Deputy John Curran: My understanding is that Department officials met with the McCarthy group; neither I nor the Minister did. In case there is any misunderstanding, I reiterate that while the report specifically stated there was little evidence of the benefits of certain schemes, I do not agree with that statement, and I do see their benefits.

Irish Summer Colleges.

118. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has received representations on the proposed withdrawal of supports to Gaeltacht households supporting students attending Irish language courses; his position with regard to this scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34111/09]

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I confirm that representations have been made to me on this matter by CONCOS, the Irish summer colleges’ representative body, and by householders in the Gaeltacht who accommodate Irish students while attending such colleges. On 2 September 2009 I addressed a meeting of college representatives and householders from around the Gaeltacht on the subject. As I indicated, the recommendations in the report of the Special Group

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on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes represent a set of options for consideration in the context of the 2010 budget and will fall to be examined by Government at the appropriate time. Issues relating to the Gaeltacht and the Irish language will also fall to be considered by the Cabinet Committee on Irish and the Gaeltacht in the context of its work in the preparation of the 20 year strategy for Irish.

Deputy Michael Ring: Abolition of this scheme would be the greatest national scandal. There are three Gaeltacht areas in my constituency of Mayo to which people and families from Dublin and all over the country come to learn and to speak Irish. This provides an income for many people in those areas. This year, but for the Irish colleges, there would have been little tourism in the Gaeltacht.

I want the Minister to assure the people involved in this scheme that the grant will be available to them next year. They need to know this now to plan for next year. These people have already endured cutbacks this year by the Department of Education and Science in terms of grant aid. The Minister and his Department are responsible for promotion of the Irish language. The Minister already referred to the Irish language strategy.

I disagree with the Minister's remarks on the McCarthy report. It is a Government report. It was paid for by Government.

Deputy John Curran: It is an independent report.

Deputy Michael Ring: Officials in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs recommend the abolition of some of these schemes. Will the Minister reassure the people involved in the Gaeltacht and promotion of the Irish language that this scheme will continue next year and that the necessary grant aid will be available? It is only right that it should continue. There is no point in being hypocritical in terms of promoting the Irish language if at the same time we introduce measures that take people away from the Gaeltacht.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I am delighted to hear the Deputy supports this scheme.

Deputy Michael Ring: I do.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: My grandfather, Sean Ó Cuív, proposed setting up the first Irish college in Baile na Gharraí in 1903. I, too, was involved in setting up an Irish college. The Irish colleges benefit the Irish language. Some 95% of people surveyed stated they are favourably disposed towards the language. I attribute much of this to the generations of people who have had positive experiences learning the language in the Gaeltacht. The Irish language has brought Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht areas together. I have often remarked that many people here have an attachment to Gaeltacht areas be it in Donegal, Mayo, Kerry or Galway. It is good to note that the numbers of people visiting the Gaeltacht are holding up despite the downturn in the economy. The only significant drop has been in Donegal.

Everybody, including the media and the Opposition, agrees that cutbacks are necessary but no one will state in what areas these cutbacks should be made. The Government will have to make hard choices and will have to make cutbacks. However, in making those hard choices I will reflect on the support Deputy Ring has shown today for the Irish colleges. I take from the Deputy's support that regardless of what cuts are imposed by my Department he would not wish to see any in this area.

Deputy Michael Ring: I confirm to the House and to the people involved—

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The normal procedure is that the Minister answers questions posed by the Opposition.

Deputy Michael Ring: I support the Minister and I call on him to announce this week that the necessary grant aid will be provided next year to allow the people involved to make their plans. More important, has the Minister made representations to the Department of Finance to ensure that funding will be in place for next year?

I know from where savings can be made. Do not go ahead with NAMA and take some of the money being given to the banks and invest it in the Gaeltacht areas. That is a simple solution.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I wish it were. Obviously, the Deputy has not listened to what I had to say. If we were to do anything as foolish as allow the collapse of the banking system there would be no Irish colleges and so on.

Deputy Michael Ring: I disagree with the Minister.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: We can have that debate another day.

Deputy Michael Ring: NAMA is the cause of the problem.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: On the specific question, I cannot give any assurances on any of the programmes ahead of the budget.

On discussions, the Cabinet and not the Department of Finance will decide the allocations to Ministers. We will have detailed collective discussions in terms of arriving at a budget that is acceptable and ensures savings. I again thank the Deputy for his support for this scheme. When making choices, we will note that this scheme is one the Deputy values highly.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Táimid uilig ar an taobh seo den Teach ag tabhairt tacaíocht don Aire maidir leis na coláistí Gaeilge.

National Drugs Strategy.

119. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he is confident that the new National Drugs Strategy will reduce the extent of the drug problem here; his views on whether the actions outlined in this strategy are workable and will have positive end results; his further views on the fact that the realisation of many of these actions are dependant on adequate funding from several Departments, which has not been guaranteed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33441/09]

Deputy John Curran: I am confident that the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 will significantly tackle the problem of drug misuse in Ireland over the period of its implementation.

As the Deputy is aware, in developing the new strategy I established a steering group comprising representatives of all relevant sectors to develop proposals and to make recommendations to me. The Government subsequently accepted the recommendations of this broadly based group. I am satisfied that in developing the strategy full consideration was given to all aspects of the drugs problem, including through the comprehensive consultation process involved.

The strategy seeks to tackle the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on the five pillars of supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research. This pillar approach is being retained as it has to date proved effective, was widely supported throughout the consultation process and dovetails with the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2009-2012. The associated actions of the strategy comprise a well thought

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out plan of what needs to be done to achieve the overall strategic objective. They are workable and will have positive results.

Among other things the new strategy focuses on the co-ordination arrangements. The changes made in institutional structures facilitate the Minister who is given responsibility by Government for the drugs strategy to effectively fulfil that role. These changes will also streamline administration and facilitate more effective co-ordination and partnership.

Funding will be scarce over the coming years and we must ensure optimum use of available resources. However, it is important to be aware that these resources are considerable, with the estimated expenditure on the drugs problem across Departments and agencies in 2009 being in excess of €275 million.

As part of the strategy I will twice a year meet various Ministers and officials directly involved in seeking to address the drugs problem. At these meetings, which have already commenced, I will endeavour to ensure that high priority is given within Departments and agencies to achievement of the actions of the strategy. I will also stress the importance of the continued effective implementation of other programmes that impact on the factors underpinning problem drug use.

As part of the institutional arrangements to support the work of the office of the Minister with responsibility for drugs, the strategy provides for the establishment of an oversight forum on drugs. The forum, which I will chair, will have its first meeting this month and progress across the strategy will be reviewed and blockages addressed. The difficulties facing our society as a consequence of problem drug use are significant and addressing all the factors involved is an onerous undertaking, whether in the area of reducing supply, improving treatment and rehabilitation or continuing to promulgate the prevention message with a view to effecting attitudinal change in Irish society. However, I am determined that real progress will be made across the period of the new strategy, with all sectors working in a co-ordinated and targeted way to achieve implementation of the agreed actions.

Deputy Catherine Byrne: It appears funding is at the top of everybody's agenda. Last week, we heard loudly and clearly from the streets the response from the community sector to local drugs task forces, after school projects and community employment schemes. While I am aware the Minister of State does not have a crystal ball it is important these groups know what funding will be available to them into the future.

The national drugs strategy report, which comprises 125 pages, lists what the statutory groups want for communities into the future and sets out what response is needed in the current crisis. The Minister of State stated that the drugs problem has changed. I agree that it has changed; it has worsened. In every community young people are getting involved on a daily basis in drug abuse. Many young people are dying because of drugs. We heard in the statement made last week by Tony Geoghegan of the Merchant's Quay project that each week 20 new people involved in drug misuse attend the services. I attended the launch of the report and I listened carefully to what the Minister of State had to say. I was struck by one of his comments, about which I was very angry. We are proud, as a nation, of our tradition of giving to communities, particularly in the Third World, and I was disappointed to hear the Elton John AIDS Foundation had to provide €750,000 towards needle exchange services in this country. I am sure there are other charities in England and elsewhere that are more needy than ours, and the Government has failed to put money into the national drugs strategy. It is a glossy document and it does not indicate to me or to the community at large what will happen in the future to many of our young people.

I refer to a statement about homelessness in the report. What plans has the Minister of State under the strategy to involve more volunteers who are the voices of communities rather than paid officials in deciding what is needed in their communities and how the problem can be tackled? Many of them are being left on the outside.

Deputy John Curran: Expenditure in this area is considerable at €275 million. As I stated in reply to earlier questions, the budgetary position for next year is not known. However, it is important that these considerable resources are spent in a co-ordinated way to ensure we are achieving maximum output and delivering effective services to the groups that need them. If we believe we can make a substantial change in addressing the drugs issue, we can have all the treatment we want and seizures by the Garda but the attitude and behaviour of people ranging from children at risk, school children to adults who talk about soft drugs and recreational drugs must change. Prevention is the area where we will make the most significant change in the strategy.

The Deputy asked about the involvement of community activists. The strategy builds on community involvement through the drug task forces and, in particular, the establishment of policing fora, which provide access for community representatives. Local task forces and the new established office of the Minister for drugs have community representatives on the drug advisory group. We recognise the role community groups have to play and they have been accommodated throughout the development of the strategy.

Scéim na mBóithre Áise.

120. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cá mhéad iarratas a fuarthas ina Roinn de bharr na dtuille a tharla i nGaoth Dobhair, i mí Mheithimh seo caite, cá mhéad acu atá ceadaithe go dtí seo, cá mhéad den obair atá déanta, cá mhéad airgid atá ceadaithe agus íoctha, an mbeidh breis airgid á cheadú; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [34307/09]

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Fuair mo Roinnse 114 iarratas ar chúnamh deontais ag eascairt as damáiste a rinne tuilte i nGaoth Dobhair níos luaithe i mbliana.

Go dáta, tá 18 de na hiarratais sin cáilithe ag mo Roinnse faoi Scéim na mBóithre Áise. Tá deontas de €87,000 ceadaithe agam i leith 15 cinn díobh seo a bhfuil meastacháin faighte ina leith agus tuigim go gcuirfear tús leis an obair dheisiúcháin ar na bóithre seo go luath. Maidir leis an trí iarratas eile atá cáilithe, tá mo Roinn ag fanacht le meastacháin ó Chomhairle Contae Dhún na nGall ar oibreacha deisiúcháin ar dhroichid ar na bóithre seo. Déanfar cinneadh maidir le deontais a cheadú sna cásanna seo ach na meastachán sin a bheith curtha ar fáil.

Tá iarratais eile a bhféadfadh a bheith cáilithe faoin scéim agus déanfar cinneadh fúthu siúd chomh luath agus is féidir.

Maidir leis na deontais atá ceadaithe, déanfar íocaíocht leis an gComhairle Contae ach deimhnithe cuí a bheith faighte go bhfuil na hoibreacha deisiúcháin déanta chun sástacht mo Roinne.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Gabhaim buíochas den Aire maidir leis an méid eolais atá tugtha aige, go bhfuil €87,000 ceadaithe le haghaidh 15 cinn de na bóithre áise.

Rinneadh damáiste mór de bharr na dtuille agus tá sé beagnach ceithre mhíó tharla sin. Bhí an tAire agus an Tánaiste agus mé féin ansin cúpla lá ina dhiaidh sin agus bhí lúcháir orainn go raibh deis ag an Aire a fheiceáil cé chomh holc agus a bhí cúrsaí. Dé bharr chuairt an Aire, cuireadh 125 iarratas isteach chuig an Roinn agus ní raibh ag muintir na háite ach seachtain chun sin a dhéanamh. Rinneadh dóchar do thalamh na ndaoine seo, do na bóithre agus do na

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droichid. Tá 15 ceadaithe anois ach tá 110 eile nach bhfuil ceadaithe go fóill. An bhfuil sé i gceist ag an Aire agus ag an Roinn aon rud a dhéanamh faoin 110 iarratas nach bhfuil ceadaithe go fóill?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Is cosúil go bhfuair mo Roinn 114 iarratas, sin an t-eolas atá agam agus glacaim leis go bhfuil sé cruinn. Tá os cionn 60 acu seo nach bhfuil cáilithe ar chor ar bith, agus beimid ag scríobh chuig na daoine sin go luath chun sin a chur in iúl. I gcuid de na hiarratais bhí bóithre comhairle condae i gceist agus níl siad cáilithe faoi Scéim na mBóithre Áise. Ansin, bhí iarratas amháin a bhain le talamh príomhaideach, rud eile nach mbaineann leis an scéim.

Ar an lá a bhí muid thíos, dúirt mé gur iarratais faoi Scéim na mBóithre Áise a bheadh i gceist. Má thógtar an 18 iarratas atá measúnaithe déanta, tá fadhb leis na droichid — caithfidh na háitreabhaigh cead a fháil faoin Acht Siltin Airtéirigh 1945 sular féidir na droichid a dheisiú agus tá meastacháin ag freastal freisin. Sin 18 ó 114, agus fágann sin níos lú ná céad. Bainfear 60 eile as sin fosta so tá níos lú ná 40 go gcaithfear measúnú agus cinneadh a dhéanamh an bhfuil siad cáilithe. D'fhéadfadh cuid den 40 sin bheith cáilithe.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Nuair a bhí an tAire ansin, rinne sé, mé féin agus daoine eile scrúdaithe ar pháirceanna agus ar an fhéar a bhí loite ag na tuilte, talamh agus féar a bhfuil feirmeoirí ag braith orthu lena gcuid stoc a chothú. Más cuimhin liom, dúirt an tAire go bhféadfaí b'fhéidir cúiteamh éigean a thabhairt do na feirmeoirí. Tharla rud éigin cosúil leis sin in iarthar na hÉireann, i Maigh Éo nóait éigin, cúpla bliain ó shin. An bhfuil scrúdú déanta ag an Aire ar chás na bhfeirmeoirí agus an bhfuil aon chúnamh gur féidir a thabhairt dóibh chun bia a cheannach do na hainmhithe fá choinne an gheimridh atá buailte orainn i láthair na huair?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Shíl mé go bhfuair an Teachta cóip de na nótaí a tugadh dom an t-am sin. Scríobhadh ansin má bhí cruatán i gceist do dhuine ar bith le rud éigin príobhaideach, ba cheart don duine sin dul chuig an community welfare officer agus cúnamh a iarraidh uaidh. Rinne mé soiléir an lá sin go raibh mé ag caint faoi bhóithre áise agus faoi Scéim na mBóithre Áise go ndéanfaimis na bóithre nach bóithre comhairle condae iad a athchóiriú agus sin atá dhéanamh. Aon iarratas nach mbaineann le bóithre áise, níl sé incháilithe faoin scéim a d'fhógair mé an lá sin. Má bhreathnaíonn daoine ar na foirmeacha feicfidh siad gur mar sin atá. Foirmeacha bóithre áise a cuireadh amach.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: An bhfuil aon foinse cuidithe eile ann? Má thugann an tAire an t-eolas dom, déanfaidh mé féin an chuid eile den obair.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: The community welfare officer. Má tá cruatán ar dhaoine mar gheall ar rud mar seo, dúradh sa chaipéis a scaipeadh ag an am gurb shin an dream ar cheart dul chuige, agus go bhféadfadh sé breathnú ar exceptional needs payment.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Cé atá chun an talamh a ghlanadh agus na clocha a thabhairt as? Cé a dhéanfaidh sin?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Cuirfidh mé cóip de na nótaí a bhí sa doiciméad ag an am chuig an Teachta.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Le do thoil.

Other Questions

Departmental Expenditure.

121. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Group on Public Services Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that the CLÁR programme should be phased out; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34200/09]

126. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Group on Public Services Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that the Dormant Account Fund Board should be abolished; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34198/09]

128. **Deputy Kathleen Lynch** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Group on Public Services Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that funding for the community services programme should be cut by €10 million; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34199/09]

137. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Group on Public Services Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that his Department should be abolished; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34195/09]

139. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Group on Public Services Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that funding for community and voluntary support sectors should be cut by €10 million; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34196/09]

143. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Group on Public Services Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that development functions of the Western Enterprise Board should be transferred to Enterprise Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34201/09]

147. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Group on Public Services Numbers and Expenditure Programmes that RAPID programme should be discontinued; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34197/09]

159. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if it is intended to transfer Uadarás na Gaeltachta's enterprise development functions to Enterprise Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34190/09]

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I propose to take Questions Nos 121, 126, 128, 137, 139, 143, 147 and 159 together.

As the Minister of State stated in reply to Priority Question No. 117, and as indicated to this House on a number of occasions, the recommendations in the Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes represent a set of options for consider-

[Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív.]

ation in the context of the 2010 budget and will fall to be examined by Government at the appropriate time. Decisions on specific matters referred to by Deputies will be made in that context. Matters relating to the Gaeltacht will be also considered by the Cabinet Committee on Irish and the Gaeltacht in the context of its work on the preparation of the 20-year strategy for Irish.

Deputy Jack Wall: The Minister of State, Deputy Curran, said that members of the Department met with the committee that published the McCarthy report, but that no Minister or Minister of State from the Department did so. Was any documentation presented at those meetings? If so, is that information available to spokespersons from the Opposition? In all the documentation I have seen, it seems we have put forward a very poor defence of these schemes.

For the €100 million that the McCarthy report claims was spent on CLÁR, how many employment opportunities were created from that spending? Over what period were they created and in what areas were they created? If we are to take it that meetings took place and we are to look at the McCarthy report as published, it would seem as if the defence of these schemes was meek and timid, to say the least. How can we rectify that matter? Were papers exchanged? Can the Minister give us some detail on the benefits to rural communities by the investment of €100 million?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I do not know the totality of the papers that were made available, or what was their status. I will find out what can and cannot be made available. There might be some FOI issues, but I am not sure. I will look into it.

I do not know how many jobs were created. I do not know if anybody knows. It is very hard to get cause and effect. I worked for many years in job creation. It is not just about creating jobs, but about creating sustainable jobs. It is about something growing to a stage that it no longer needs further State support, but keeps growing and growing. The measure of job creation is the number of jobs created by the number of years they are sustained and the number of jobs they, in turn, self-sustain. I do not know if anybody has that data. We can collect endless figures and make endless cases. However, we must make sure that the collection of the data does not become more important than doing the work. I have no doubt as to the efficacy of the schemes we run. We have debated these time and again during the Estimates process. If one believes that there are schemes such as CLÁR, RAPID, the Gaeltacht schemes and so on that should be wiped out, then I am all ears.

This was meant to be an independent report. The idea that we can have an independent report which only states what the Department thinks is a kind of a nonsense. Of course, given that it is an independent report, we do not have to accept the findings. I was a little bit surprised, shocked and horrified when my colleague mentioned that not all the proposals in the report would be implemented. Everybody in this House would disagree with aspects of the report, and say that the experience of the people writing it would not be the experience of the Deputies on the ground of the efficiencies of various schemes. I think the scheme I inherited has grown and is run efficiently. I do not accept the criticism of the community services programme that the outputs are uncertain. I guarantee that if we were to stop the community services programme, there is not a Deputy in this House that would not be in here with multiple delegations, explaining to me the importance of the schemes of that programme in his or her local community. Every Deputy would be in here and they would tell me that it is a tragedy that anybody was even considering cutting back on that scheme.

Mr. McCarthy obviously had a different view, and he is entitled to that. It is an interesting report and there are some very thought provoking proposals in it. My officials are looking at

every one of his proposals, and writing our critique of his critique. That will work its way through the system and the Government will make decisions on where we go from there.

Deputy Jack Wall: I think the Minister may be misinterpreting what I am saying. I agree with these different projects, but the Minister is only now talking about a reply to the McCarthy report, when in the first instance he should have been in there fighting his corner. The doubt has been cast on these wonderful programmes, and the Minister has allowed that doubt to be cast on them. He is now going to write the critique, but it is too late because the general public thinks differently following the McCarthy report. The Opposition spokespersons were not given any opportunity to be part of the case for the defence.

The case put forward by the Department was obviously too weak. The report constantly states there is no evidence for the programmes, so is it not a bit late to be putting forward evidence when the door is closed? The Minister needs to come out strongly and he will have our support. Deputy Ring is supportive of the schemes, and I am supportive of the schemes, because they are all involved with the community. If the McCarthy report is trying to close down rural Ireland and if the Minister continues to write up reports at a late stage, then he will assist Mr. McCarthy in doing that.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I do not accept that there is not a huge amount of evidence, be it documentation, paperwork, reports and so on, so much that the Deputy is always complaining about the reports we get commissioned on re-evaluating——

Deputy Jack Wall: Why were they not presented to the McCarthy group?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: They are all available.

Deputy Jack Wall: The report states that there is no evidence.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: That is Mr. McCarthy's call. The report also stated that there is an obligation to translate every document into Irish, which is factually incorrect, as the Deputy knows because he was in the House when this issue was being legislated. Mr. McCarthy is entitled to his view and we are entitled to our view. The great thing is that the McCarthy report is only a report. It is the Government that will make the hard decisions, and there will be hard decisions. Anybody who tells me that he can save €4 billion and not make any cuts anywhere is not living in the real world. We have hard decisions to make and we will make them on this side of the House, because it seems to me that they are telling us on one hand to make the cutbacks, and on the other hand, they tell us to make some other cutback but not the one at hand.

The decision to commission the McCarthy report was purposely done so that the Ministers would not write the report. What was the point in bringing in somebody independent——

Deputy Jack Wall: I am not talking about writing the report. I am talking about submitting the evidence.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Allow the Minister to respond.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: The evidence is there.

Deputy Jack Wall: McCarthy said there is no evidence.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Allow the Minister to reply.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: That is his call. I am telling the Deputy that the evidence is there and he knows the evidence is there——

Deputy Jack Wall: I support it. McCarthy states that there is no evidence.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Yes, but the Deputy knows that Mr. McCarthy is wrong on that issue.

Deputy Jack Wall: Why does the Minister not come out and say——

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I am saying that there are many value for money reports carried out in our Department, that we have complied with all the regulations. The Deputy knows this and should make his judgment as to whether the evidence on all our schemes is publicly available or not. If there was any criticism levelled at us, it was that we were getting too many reports commissioned on LEADER and Gaeltacht schemes and so on.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: There is much repetition involved here. I call on Deputy Ring.

Deputy Michael Ring: I agree with Deputy Wall. It was the job of the Minister and his departmental officials to defend the Department. Instead of that, the McCarthy report and the Department of Finance have stated that they could not get information from his Department. He could not tell them the cost per job in Gaeltacht areas. He could not even inform them of the number of staff in *Údarás na Gaeltachta*. It is here in a letter from the Department of Finance. We need life in rural Ireland. The Minister and his Department are creating a problem for us because the McCarthy report states that there is duplication. There is certainly duplication. We have so many agencies in the Gaeltacht and elsewhere doing the same job. That is where the problem lies. It is an industry in itself. I go down to Erris where there are many agencies. The Minister promised a one-stop shop, but it never happened. We need a one-stop shop in Gaeltacht and rural areas so that people can be dealt with there, whether it concerns *Údarás na Gaeltachta*, employment, social welfare or whatever. Instead of that we have a clutter of organisations. We need to clean up this situation fast.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I am glad the Deputy is singing from the same hymn sheet as me and I give credit to my colleagues in the Opposition for all the support and assistance they gave in the difficult task of trying to rationalise the structures, between the Leader companies and the partnerships. They are aware from working of the huge resistance and delays put up against that process. In recent weeks, I had to tell the three umbrella bodies there used to be for the community — partnerships, planning for the earlier partnerships and *Comhar Leader na hÉireann* for the Leader companies — that I wanted one umbrella body and that 1 November was D-day for that. This is after nine months. I credit the Opposition with supporting this type of rationalisation. As Members are aware, the Minister of State announced recently that we will do a *comhtháthú* and will bring the community development programme, CDP, and the local development social inclusion programme, LDSIP, into synch because there is duplication in that area.

I am working on the question of *Údarás na Gaeltachta* but this is difficult because issues have arisen with which I must deal. In the longer term, we should not have both *Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta*, MFG, and *Údarás na Gaeltachta* in the Gaeltacht. There should only be *Údarás na Gaeltachta*. I have stated this publicly and am working slowly and steadily in that direction. However, we cannot bring this type of change about overnight. People have employment rights and there are various procedures to be gone through. There must be a reasonable time for consultation. I have taken the view, with my Minister of State, that when we have gone through a reasonable period, we will have a decision day, as we have now for

the umbrella bodies. Decision day for them is 1 November. I look forward to the continuing support of the Opposition when we continue with the process of rationalisation.

Deputy Brian O'Shea: Does the Minister agree there is justifiable and grave concern among the people about the future of the Gaeltacht? Can he give assure us that scéim labhairt na Gaeilge agus scéim na bhfoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge will not be phased out over two years? Why, in the name of God, is it taking such a long time to publish the 20-year strategy? It has been promised over and over again, but we still have not got it and from what the Minister has said today, we appear to be no closer to it. Has the Government abandoned the Irish language in the Gaeltacht?

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Deputy is broadening the scope of the question.

Deputy Brian O'Shea: The issue was referred to in the Minister's response.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: I understand the papers the Department gave to the committee were published on the website of the Department of Finance. Therefore, the documents the Deputy requested are available.

On the issue of the Gaeltacht, when in the Gaeltacht in the past two weeks, the Taoiseach reiterated the Government's commitment to the Irish language. We are nearing completion—

Deputy Brian O'Shea: Words.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: And actions. We have done a significant amount for the Irish language in the past ten years, and will continue to do it. The recommendations of the McCarthy report are just recommendations. Therefore, unless and until the Government accepts them, there is no point in criticising it for something that has not yet happened. The proposals in the McCarthy report and the 20-year strategy for the Irish language will be considered in tandem. We will publish the 20-year strategy and those decisions will be reflected in the budget for next year. The 20-year strategy is a long-term strategy and we will look way beyond the short-term problems we have with finance in laying out the strategy. The Deputy may rest assured that the Government is committed fully to the Irish language.

However, in looking at existing schemes, it would be a mistake for us to get trapped into believing the schemes we have currently are necessarily the optimal schemes. I have questioned and question again whether giving a grant to children of four or five years of age whose language was decided when they were born does much to convert English speaking families into Irish speaking families. I question whether that money would be better spent on supporting language transmission to children when they are born rather than trying to work a miracle that never works of converting the language of a child at four years of age.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Is the Minister, who comes from and represents a Gaeltacht area, aware of the concern and anxiety among Gaeltacht communities, from Donegal to Cork, at the proposals in this report, particularly with regard to scéim labhairt na Gaeilge, scéim na bhfoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge and other such schemes? It is important before more harm is done that in the interest of the Gaeltacht and the Irish language Gaeltacht communities are reassured as soon as possible that these schemes will not be discontinued.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: There was no recommendation in the McCarthy report to discontinue the scheme next year, even if the McCarthy recommendations are applied. The Deputy can take it therefore that the coláistí Gaeilge will go ahead next year. Even a full implementation of the McCarthy report indicates this.

[Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív.]

Scéim na bhfoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge has been one of the most effective schemes agus go bhfuil sé tar éis an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn ar bhealach nár éirigh le haon scéim ó thús athbheochan na Gaeilge. Creidim gur ceann de na fáthanna go bhfuil an oiread cainteoirí breátha Gaeilge taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht ná de bharr scéim na bhfoghlaimeoirí Gaeilge. Bhí mé i Ros a'Mhíl le gairid nuair a d'oscail muid ionad nua do Choláiste Chamuis. Mar is eol don Teachta freisin, bhí mé thuas i nGort an Choirce. Tá mo Roinn ag déanamh infheistíochta sna coláistí Gaeilge. Mar sin, mar adúirt an Taoiseach faoi na coláistí Gaeilge, tuigeann muid tábhacht na gcoláistí Gaeilge. Táim sásta sin a rá anseo sa Teach, ach ní shin le rá nach féidir athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar na scéimeanna go ginearálta.

Irish Language Newspaper.

122. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs when Irish speakers here can expect to have an Irish language newspaper available to them again; and if, in view of the fact that the closing date for applications to Foras na Gaeilge has passed he will ensure that Foras na Gaeilge will deliver a speedy decision. [34148/09]

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: As the Deputy is aware, funding for the publication of a weekly Irish language newspaper is provided by Foras na Gaeilge. I understand from Foras na Gaeilge that a new competition was advertised lately and that several applications were received by the deadline of 4 September 2009. Those applications are being assessed and I am advised that it is proposed to interview applicants on the basis of their written applications. I understand that it should be possible for Foras na Gaeilge to present a recommendation for consideration by its board in November.

Foras na Gaeilge is committed to the provision of a weekly Irish language newspaper and, accordingly, I understand that a decision will be made in the matter as soon as possible.

Deputy Michael Ring: My colleague, Deputy McGinley, has said it often here that the loss of *Foinse* is a big loss to the Irish language and, particularly, to teachers and students doing the leaving certificate. They looked to *Foinse* for assistance. It is appalling that we cannot have even one Irish language paper. Will the Minister put pressure on Foras na Gaeilge to ensure that whatever grant aid is required by the group seeking to reproduce this Irish language newspaper is available and that Foras na Gaeilge announces quickly who has won the contract so that the paper can be up and running again before Christmas. The paper is a big loss to Irish language speakers, to the Gaeltacht and to the people who lost their jobs. I hope some of these people will be re-employed. Some of the people involved used to cover the Irish language issues in the Dáil. I hope the Minister will arrange everything behind the scenes to ensure the paper is up and running soon.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: As the Deputy knows, I believe we should have an Irish language newspaper. I regret the events that led to the closure of *Foinse*, but the person offered the contract decided not to continue with it. In such a situation, there is no choice but to tender again. However, I have no intention of involving myself in an independent procurement process. The Deputy would be the first to complain if I did.

Deputy Michael Ring: I would not, not in this case. Make sure the deadline they have given will be honoured.

Deputy Bernard Allen: Did the Minister ever hear the Deputy complain?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Never.

I have no doubt that Foras na Gaeilge will carry out this procurement process efficiently and effectively. However, it must follow the correct process. I would hope it will reach its deadline of bringing this before its board meeting in November, and that we will get notification afterwards. For very good reasons relating to tender processes, I always take the clear and unequivocal stand to the effect that I do not, in any way, become involved once they are advertised. It is in the interests of everybody in the House that I maintain that particular stance.

Deputy Dinny McGinley: Nach n-aontaíonn an tAire liom — agus tacaim leis an méid a bhí rá aige le Teachta Ring — nach bhfuil sé inghlactha? Tá an Gaeilge mar theanga oifigiúil ins an Eoraip. Tá Bille teanga ins an tír seo. Nach n-aontaíonn an tAire liom nach bhfuil sé inghlactha ar chor ar bith nach bhfuil páipéar nó foilsíú an Ghaeilge seachtainiúil no laethiúil ins an tír i láthair na huaire?

Anuraidh bhí *Foinse* againn, bhí *Lá* againn, bhí *Lá* nua again, agus anois níl aon rud againn agus tá géarghá go ndéanfaidh cinneadh gan mhoill agus go gcuirfí liteartha ar fáil do phobal na Gaeilge, ní amháin ins an Gaeltacht ach ar fud na tíre.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Mar is eol don Teachta do bhí páipéar seachtaine Gaeilge, *Foinse*, ag fáil deontas, agus gnóth an chomhlacht chéanna, Móinéar Teoranta an chomórtas le pháipéar a chur ar fáil do na blianta seo. Ansin, le cúiseanna ar bith go maith dó féin, tharraing siad siar as agus ní raibh éinne eile fágtha ar pháirc na himire. Ní raibh aon rogha ag an bhForas ach dul amach agus tairiscintí nua a lorg. De bharr an chóras tairiscintí poiblí tógann se sin am, ach táimid dóchasach go n-éireodh leis an bhForas seasamh leis an rud atá ráite aige agus go mbeadh sé in an ann fógairt a chur amach tar éis an chruinnithe i mí na Samhna, go mbeidh páipéar seachtanúil ann i nGaeilge.

Deputy Brian O'Shea: I take it from what the Minister says that he expects a positive outcome this side of Christmas. Do I hear him correctly in that regard?

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Tá an cheart ag an Teachta O'Shea. I understand that several applications were received. Obviously I do not know their identity. I know nothing about them and neither am I aware of their quality. However, I understand there are several applications and that they should be able to come to a decision in November. That is the intention at the moment and they are reasonably confident they can achieve their target in that regard.

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 Paul Connaughton — the proposed cessation of turf cutting on raised bogs; (2) Deputy Fergus O'Dowd — the possible loss of more than 100 jobs at the IFF factory, Drogheda, County Louth; (3) Deputy John Cregan — medical cover at the rehabilitation unit of St. Ita's community hospital, Newcastle West, County Limerick; (4) Deputy James Reilly — the need for remedial safety works to be undertaken at Ward Cross, County Dublin; (5) Deputy Michael McGrath — that the HSE implement the new "Fair Deal" nursing home support scheme as soon as possible; (6) Deputy Ciarán Cuffe — to discuss the importance of the Road Safety Authority improving road safety for cyclists by running a public information campaign educating motorists and HGV drivers on the need to give adequate space to cyclists, particularly child cyclists; (7) Deputy Chris Andrews — as Georgian Dublin is of huge cultural significance to the city and deserves to be protected and promoted as an integral and beautiful part of Ireland's history, to this end the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local

[An Leas-Cheann Comhairle.]

Government should seek to ensure that it is designated a UNESCO heritage site; (8) Deputy Joan Burton — the closure of the Phoenix Park gate at Castleknock for two months; (9) Deputy Ulick Burke — the urgent need for the Minister for Education and Science, Deputy Batt O’Keeffe, to provide professional dental support services to a pupil who suffered a serious accident while attending school, requiring ongoing professional orthodontic treatment for which no agency has taken responsibility and which has been appealed to his Department on the expectation that costs involved would be recovered; (10) Deputy Brian O’Shea — the need to appoint additional dermatologists in the south-east region, HSE south; (11) Deputy John O’Mahony — the urgent need to address the long waiting times to process jobseeker’s allowance and jobseeker’s benefit in Ballinrobe — 14 weeks, Claremorris — 15 weeks, and Swinford — seven weeks; (12) Deputy Joe McHugh — the need for Government to pressurise Irish banks to provide stocking loans to Irish farmers; the cattle trade has collapsed this year because farmers with long records of not defaulting on agricultural credit are being refused stocking loans and credit extensions from banks; the establishment of the National Assets Management Agency provides the Government with an opportunity to pressurise banks to provide stocking loans to farmers; (13) to ask the Minister with responsibility for community development projects in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to outline in detail his plans to restructure community development projects across the country, to say what cost savings he anticipates making from this plan and to guarantee that communities currently benefiting from locally run CDPs will continue to get this service provision; (14) Deputy Tom Hayes — in light of the serious financial situation facing farmers across the country, calls on the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to outline what measures he is taking to assist cereal, beef and dairy farmers who are experiencing huge drops in income and finding it very difficult to survive; (15) Deputy Ciarán Lynch — to ask the Minister for Health and Children when a child (details supplied) in urgent need of brain surgery can expect to receive treatment and the reason for the delay, and if she will make a statement on the matter; and (16) Deputy Tom Sheahan -the erection of a telecommunications mast in Annascaul, County Kerry.

The matters raised by Deputies O’Dowd, Cregan, O’Shea and Sheahan have been selected for discussion.

Leaders’ Questions.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Yesterday, a former Member of the House from the Taoiseach’s party branded Fianna Fáil as a party of sleaze and corruption because of the actions of a minority of its members. That branding came about because of the use and abuse of both privilege and power for quite a number of years by the persons concerned.

It was not confined to Members of the House but also concerned persons associated with various organisations. The issue concerning the former director general of FÁS, Mr. Rody Molloy, is a case in point. The Taoiseach said here in the House: “The chief executive of that organisation is a person whom I hold in the highest regard and whose integrity I would defend at all times.” He went onto say at the end of this saga that Mr. Molloy had done the honourable thing. On that, will the Taoiseach clear up a number of matters that are a cause of concern? Can he confirm whether Mr. Molloy threatened legal action on his stepping down as director general? There has been a deal of confusion about this.

If he did not threaten legal action and was retiring, why then did his package amount to a golden handshake of more than €1 million on top of his pension? I met workers from Waterford Crystal during the Lisbon treaty campaign who worked for 40 years and have no pension and they made the point about the gulf of anger in the streets. The Taoiseach also said he had full faith and confidence in the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to

deal with FÁS, yet he overruled her when she was about to issue a press release expressing full confidence in its board. What did the Taoiseach overrule his Tánaiste if he had full faith in this sad FÁS episode?

The Taoiseach: I should point out to Deputy Kenny that in the quote attributed to former Deputy Jim Glennon, he regarded such portrayals of Fianna Fáil as being unjustified, as I do. As regards the specific matter the Deputy has raised on the director general of FÁS, the comments I made about Mr. Molloy at any time were and are based on my knowledge of the situation and of the person concerned. It is a fact that I made those comments because that was my belief at that time.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: Is it now?

The Taoiseach: I do not see any evidence to the contrary at the moment in that regard.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: The Taoiseach should put on his glasses.

The Taoiseach: I do not go around challenging everyone's integrity. In fact, on the day in question, Deputy Kenny said he was not challenging anyone's integrity at the time the resignation took place. I do not want to get involved in personalising matters in that manner.

The context of all this is that there was a controversy as regards travel arrangements which had been in place. It was regarded as being in the best interests of the organisation that Mr. Molloy should move on. That was facilitated as a result of a discussion that would take place, initially between the board chairman and himself, and which would be submitted to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and subsequently approved by the Department of Finance.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: He gave the go ahead for it.

The Taoiseach: Those arrangements were agreed under the provisions of the Labour Services Act 1987 which cover the director general's remuneration and superannuation. Under this Act, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment determines the terms and conditions of employment, including superannuation, for the CEO of FÁS, with the consent of the Minister for Finance. Securing a speedy departure in a non-litigious manner was considered to be in the best interests of FÁS, its clients and the taxpayer. That was the basis upon which his departure was negotiated and effected.

Deputy Noel J. Coonan: Departure? That is where he got the car.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Taoiseach is changing his story. Where are the guidelines?

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: Did he drive or walk?

An Ceann Comhairle: Allow the Taoiseach to finish.

The Taoiseach: There is no difference between what I said and what the Secretary General had to say last Thursday. What was being asked by Mr. Molloy was that he would reserve his position on the basis of discussions that were taking place. There is always a risk of action. I am not saying action was threatened.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Taoiseach is changing his story.

The Taoiseach: I am not. I am trying to give a factual answer to Deputy Kenny. I have nothing but the interest of ensuring the truth is known about this matter and the circumstances in which we were dealing with it.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Taoiseach is not telling the truth. He is changing his story.

The Taoiseach: I am sorry, Deputy——

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Shortall has no involvement in Leaders' Questions.

The Taoiseach: I thank Deputy Shortall. The issue in regard to this situation, as far as the Government is concerned, was to effect the departure of the chief executive, and to do so in a way that was broadly in line with the guidelines that are in place——

Deputy Róisín Shortall: Broadly.

The Taoiseach: Yes. These provide for increased superannuation for people in that situation. That is what happened. It was our judgment at that time that this was important in the interests of the organisation, its clients and the taxpayer, and because it was being stated inside and outside this House at the time that this was what should happen.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: Up Offaly.

Deputy Enda Kenny: I am not sure, arising from the Taoiseach's reply, whether Mr. Molloy threatened legal action or not. This seemed to be a cause of considerable controversy throughout the country. The Taoiseach says he made his comments in the House on the basis of his own knowledge, which he did, and he sees nothing that leads him to a contrary opinion at this stage.

The comments by former Deputy Glennon were made, I believe, out of a sense of frustration and as a reflection of the anger of so many people at where mismanagement, lack of accountability and lack of transparency have led this country. It is evident from the information that under the director generalship of Mr. Molloy, the FÁS organisation, spending almost €1 billion of taxpayers' money, had very serious and glaring gaps in terms of accountability and management. The Government now seems to be hiding behind a position where, to effect a speedy departure, a package "broadly in line", as the Taoiseach says, was produced. I can tell the Taoiseach he would get thousands of people to line up for a speedy departure if he gave them a €1 million golden handshake on top of their pension.

Deputy Noel J. Coonan: And a car.

Deputy Enda Kenny: Which was not to be mentioned until afterwards.

The point is that what has happened under the stewardship of the Taoiseach and the Government is that although mismanagement, lack of accountability and lack of competence were clear at the very top of an organisation, which has done good work in many parts of the country, a person is rewarded with a golden handshake of €1 million on top of his pension. How can the Taoiseach justify this? How can anybody in Government, including the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, justify this by saying this was to effect a speedy departure so that the organisation would not be damaged? The reporters of *The Irish Times* today deal with the case of a FÁS assistant manager who was charged today with defrauding more than €600,000 from the State training agency. In order to effect a speedy departure and not to damage the organisation, a €1 million golden handshake on top of a pension, broadly in

line with the guidelines, was effected with the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and was signed off by the Minister for Finance.

The Taoiseach knows Mr. Molloy — that is no fault of either. However, the Tánaiste, as the deputy head of Government, and the Minister for Finance were fully in possession of all these facts about the mismanagement and lack of accountability at the top of FÁS when this deal was signed off on. How in Heaven's name can the Taoiseach justify a decision like this to effect a speedy departure by a person who, by his own admission, was lax in his competency at managing an agency spending €1 billion of taxpayers' money, where a golden handshake of €1 million applied on top of his pension? From what perspective in regard to not damaging an organisation, and not giving the truth to the branding by former Deputy Glennon that the Taoiseach's party has become a party, in perception at least, of corruption and sleaze, can the Taoiseach justify this?

There is a gulf in understanding on the streets, which this does not help, but the Taoiseach stands here, as leader of the country, and justifies a golden handshake of €1 million plus for the former director general on top of his pension. I would like to hear the Taoiseach's stance as to why this was agreed, in what circumstances it was agreed and how he can justify it when thousands of people have seen their savings go down the black hole of the banks, have no pensions and no time in their lives to reconstruct any kind of financial lifeline? Can he justify that to the House?

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: After he offered his resignation.

The Taoiseach: What I must put back to the Deputy is, first, the fact the Government had to act lawfully in this matter. Second, in regard to the conditions and terms of the person's employment, were the contract terminated there would have been an entitlement broadly in line with what was arranged.

Deputy Damien English: If he had done the job properly. There is a difference.

The Taoiseach: Excuse me. At the time of the resignation, nobody in this House impugned the person's integrity and no one said it was their purpose to do so.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: No one knew what was going on.

The Taoiseach: Excuse me. I am trying to make the simple point that had the contract been terminated, there were entitlements and accrued pension rights that had to be dealt with in any event.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: That was not clear.

The Taoiseach: Where a person's contract is not renewed for a second term, there are analogous arrangements in place. It was on that basis——

Deputy Damien English: What happens if somebody gets fired?

The Taoiseach: I listened. It is the Deputy's decision to interrupt when others speak.

An Ceann Comhairle: Allow the Taoiseach to finish.

Deputy Michael Creed: Nobody gets fired.

The Taoiseach: The details of that severance package were arranged on that basis, and it was in the interests of the organisation that this change take place.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: It has no basis in law.

An Ceann Comhairle: Allow the Taoiseach to finish. He is answering Deputy Kenny.

The Taoiseach: It was in the interests of the organisation that this change take place, and take place quickly. I can understand people looking at this situation from the outside and making some effort to suggest we were doing something other than what was going to happen if the contract was terminated. That is what had to be done. We had to take that into consideration and move the situation forward quickly, which is what was done. The approvals were sought and obtained.

Deputy Paul Kehoe: Did he threaten legal action?

A Deputy: You approved it.

An Ceann Comhairle: I call Deputy Gilmore.

Deputy Eamon Gilmore: On Sunday, when I read the reports of the expenses claimed by the Ceann Comhairle over the past two years and the supplementary information which was supplied to us later in the day by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, I felt that the pattern of extravagance was unacceptable. It was unacceptable to me as a public representative, unacceptable to me as taxpayer and, I believe, unacceptable to the vast majority of taxpayers. I considered that it was an something that Dáil Éireann would have to deal with, and deal with quickly.

Recognising the independence of the office of Ceann Comhairle, I felt it was not something that should be done unilaterally or in a partisan way. I wrote to the leaders of each of the political parties in the House suggesting that we should meet to discuss how this issue should be appropriately dealt with. I suggested that there should be a reply by 2.30 p.m. so that we would know where we were going with the matter before the Dáil recommenced today. I thank the party leaders who responded to me but I am disappointed that it has not been possible to arrange the kind of meeting I had envisaged. I am particularly disappointed that the Taoiseach did not agree to such a meeting. The issue that arises therefore is an issue of Dáil Éireann's confidence in the Ceann Comhairle. Do the Taoiseach and the parties in government continue to have confidence in Deputy O'Donoghue as Ceann Comhairle?

The Taoiseach: It is greatly to be regretted that the issue was brought to the House in this way. I have said to the Deputy that I believe that the appropriate forum for a discussion to take place is the meeting tomorrow of the commission that is charged with responsibility for the running of the Houses and the privileges and various arrangements of the Members in this House. The Ceann Comhairle has indicated that he intends to put his proposals to the commission on that basis. That is the appropriate forum and we should await the outcome of that process.

It is important that the confidence of the House in the Ceann Comhairle can be confirmed on the basis of a discussion and decisions that should be taken at that commission meeting. I assure Deputy Gilmore that it is my view and that of the Government that we ensure full transparency in respect of all that we do here. There is nothing for us to hide and nothing that we should hide. We need public confidence in our democratic institutions. I am of the view that the means by which that can be done is always in our interests. It is on that basis that I have asked that that meeting take place at the commission tomorrow.

Deputy Eamon Gilmore: A Cheann Comhairle, I did not want to bring this issue onto the floor of the House. That is why I suggested the course of action that unfortunately has not

been accepted, namely, that the leaders of the political parties would meet, discuss the matter and agree a course of action on a cross-party basis.

I do not agree that the appropriate forum is the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission. It is essentially an in-house committee which deals with the administration of the House. It meets in private. It is not a political body in the sense that there is political accountability to it. The Ceann Comhairle is elected by the Members of this House and therefore it is a matter for the House, for Dáil Éireann itself, to deal with.

A Cheann Comhairle, I regret to say this but I consider that your position is no longer tenable. I think you will either have to resign or be removed from office. Following the Order of Business today it is my intention to meet with my colleagues in the Labour Parliamentary Party and to recommend to them the tabling of a confidence motion.

An Ceann Comhairle: Thank you Deputy Gilmore.

The Taoiseach: I was very much of the view that the Ceann Comhairle be given an opportunity to put his proposals and his views to the commission which is meeting tomorrow. I felt that that would be in keeping and consonant with the independence of his office and that he should be afforded an opportunity to do so.

Request to move Adjournment of Dáil under Standing Order 32.

An Ceann Comhairle: Anois, iarratas chun tairisceana a dhéanamh an Dáil a chur ar athló faoi Bhuan Ordú 32. Now we come to a request 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 risk to 500 jobs at Bord na Móna plants, which are due to close for repairs over the next two years at Lanesboro and Shannonbridge. Such a loss of vital jobs would be a devastating blow to the sector and to the local economy.

An Ceann Comhairle: Having considered the matter raised it is not in order under Standing Order 32.

Order of Business.

The Taoiseach: The Order of Business is as follows: No. 12, motion re ministerial rota for parliamentary questions; No. 13, motion re proposed approval by Dáil Éireann of the terms of the convention on the European Forest Institute, back from committee; No. 21, the National Asset Management Agency Bill 2009, Second Stage (resumed). It is proposed, notwithstanding anything in Standing Orders, that Nos. 12 and 13 shall be decided without debate. Private Members' business shall be No. 66 — motion re FÁS.

An Ceann Comhairle: There is one proposal to put to the House today. Is the proposal for dealing with Nos. 12 and 13 without debate agreed to?

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: It is not. Before agreeing to take the motion on the ministerial rota for parliamentary questions, I seek a commitment from the Taoiseach on the accountability of all Ministers, Ministers of State and high officeholders in this Dáil, and more important, not only in the Dáil, to the Dáil but to the people. That is what is critically missing at this point.

Deputy Seán Power: Deputy Ó Caoláin is accountable to the people himself. He should not be lecturing us.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: Ministers come to the Dáil to make themselves accountable to the elected representatives of the people but the people have never had, and we have to face up to this fact, less confidence not only in people in ministerial office but in politics right across the board. We must all be regretful of that.

To help restore public confidence in politics, will the Taoiseach commit to a totally new approach to all expenses claims, including claims by Ministers and Ministers of State, where all such expenses are vouched, published and fully open to public scrutiny? Will he ensure that that same regime applies to State agencies and boards? Will he show that he is serious and that we are all serious about accountability and transparency by beginning that process with a call on the Ceann Comhairle to step down from his position, which in the view of many, including many in this House of varying views — let us make no mistake about it — has become untenable? This is a crucial test that must be faced up to if we are to restore public confidence in politics and the democratic process itself. I put it to the Taoiseach that he should accede to the requests I have made, which I believe also reflect the views of many in his own party's number in the Chamber at this time. If he does not, I will call a vote on this matter.

The Taoiseach: I have made it clear in previous interventions today that as far as I am concerned that it is in the interests of this House, the parties in government and the parties opposite that we have a system in place that has public confidence in all respects. I have always believed that should happen in respect of the issues Deputy Ó Caoláin has raised. As far as I am concerned that can and should be done.

On the other matter raised by the Deputy, the purpose of the Government is to ensure that we get on with the job of doing what now needs to be done in the aftermath of what we have seen in the referendum where people are asking that we get on with ensuring that we bring a stability to our public finances. We will bring forward proposals in the coming months in that regard.

As to the specific issues that were raised today, I am not in the business of impugning integrity nor saying things that might meet the populist view of the day on a specific individual. My job is to ensure that we do what is right in respect of those agencies and organisations that are under our aegis. That is what we sought to do. We have to do so lawfully and the contention that we would do otherwise would have risked even greater expense on the taxpayer were we not to do so properly.

An Ceann Comhairle: Is the proposal agreed to?

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: It is not agreed.

Question put: "That the proposal for dealing with Nos 12 and 13 be agreed to."

Deputies: Vótáil.

An Ceann Comhairle: Will the Deputies claiming a division please rise?

Deputies Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Martin Ferris and Finian McGrath rose.

An Ceann Comhairle: As fewer than ten Members have risen I declare the question carried. In accordance with Standing Order 70 the names of the Deputies dissenting will be recorded in the Journal of the Proceedings of the Dáil.

Question declared carried.

Deputy Seán Barrett: On a point of order, changing the rota for parliamentary questions affects Deputies with regard to the day on which the questions were supposed to be answered. We should at least be given an explanation as to why the date is being changed. Parliamentary questions are a matter for the House. I ask the Ceann Comhairle to ensure in future that if there is an alteration of the rota, Members are given an explanation for it.

An Ceann Comhairle: The Deputy can discuss that at the Committee on Procedure and Privileges. I call Deputy Kenny on the Order of Business.

Deputy Enda Kenny: We are in an unusual situation. Perhaps the Taoiseach will indicate, given the difficulties he faces with his Government and confidence, whether he intends to seek a full mandate from the people? In the meantime, is it likely that Committee Stage of the National Asset Management Bill, if we get that far, will be taken in the Chamber?

Arising from the vote of confidence given by the people on the Lisbon treaty question last Friday and given that other countries are moving swiftly to make their nominations for commissionerships, has the Government or Taoiseach considered the nomination of a person of suitable calibre to be presented to Commission President Barroso to guarantee this country a priority and high profile commissionership?

An Ceann Comhairle: While the question on NAMA is relevant, I am not so sure about the remaining questions.

The Taoiseach: Committee Stage of the legislation will be taken in the normal way and will be dealt with efficiently. On the second question raised by the Deputy, that is a matter for the Government to decide upon. A Commission cannot be formed until a High Representative is appointed by the European Council because the High Representative will be a vice-chairperson of the Commission. The President of the Commission made this clear to me in a discussion I had at the weekend.

Deputy Eamon Gilmore: I have two questions for the Taoiseach. Has the Government decided on the date for the budget and, if so, what is it? On the appointment of a Commissioner, does the Taoiseach intend to consult the leaders of the Opposition parties about the choice of nominee for Commissioner?

The Taoiseach: I understand from the past position that the choice of commissionership is dealt with by the Government and is done on the nomination of the Government. If the Deputy wishes us to consider names, we will do so.

On the date for the budget, it will be in December. We are having a discussion on a budgetary strategy beginning tomorrow. We will deal with those matters then and give an exact date.

Deputy Lucinda Creighton: On promised legislation, the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Bill is purportedly to ensure funding to the Oireachtas for the three year period from 2010-12. Is it intended that this legislation will ensure value for money and accountability for this funding? Furthermore, will it include measures to control the expenses regime for the Office of the Ceann Comhairle?

The Taoiseach: The Bill is for this session. I cannot give more detail than that.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: I seek clarification. Two motions have been circulated on one sheet this afternoon. The first of which is a motion from the Minister for Foreign Affairs seeking Dáil approval of the treaty of Lisbon. It is not clear from the circulated text when it

[Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin.]

will be taken. When will the motion be taken and will it be taken with or without debate? I urge debate if that is permissible.

I am putting the Taoiseach and House on notice that the second motion, tabled by Sinn Féin, is on the position of the Ceann Comhairle.

Given that the people of Donegal resoundingly rejected the campaign for a “Yes” vote created by the political parties in last Friday’s referendum, does the Taoiseach intend to make an early announcement on the by-election for Donegal South-West?

The Taoiseach: The resolution to which the Deputy refers is consequent to the decision of the people on Friday last and will be taken without debate on Thursday morning. There are no plans at the moment in regard to the by-election writ being moved.

Deputy John Deasy: In recent days, an issue has arisen regarding the imposition of PRSI on the redundancy payments of former Waterford Crystal workers. I believe the Department of Social and Family Affairs made a mistake in defining the workers’ redundancy payments as income when it should have been considered a termination lump sum payment. The result has been that the workers have been landed with a PRSI bill because the receiver at Waterford Crystal has refused to pay their previous employer’s PRSI bill. The workers have lost almost the total value of their pensions, not to speak of having lost their jobs. I ask the Taoiseach, as a former Minister for Finance, to have his office look into the matter.

An Ceann Comhairle: The question is whether the Taoiseach can be helpful in this matter, which is not in order.

The Taoiseach: Perhaps it could be taken up directly with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. I do not have prior knowledge of the details.

Deputy John Deasy: The Department of Social and Family Affairs is the Department involved.

The Taoiseach: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment would also be involved in respect of the insolvency fund.

Deputy Joe McHugh: A plethora of anomalies has been raised regarding non-principal private residences, including, for example, the position of parish priests who have bought retirement homes but whose primary residence is the parochial house. Advice has been sought on this matter from the Attorney General who is working flat out providing information on the matter. Given the large number of anomalies arising from the recently enacted legislation, does the Government intend to introduce an amending Bill?

Many of those who live abroad, having left Ireland in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, have an ancestral home in their county to which they return for perhaps one or two weeks every year. Are such persons liable to the levy on second homes? Will amending legislation be introduced to address these and other anomalies?

An Ceann Comhairle: Is legislation promised?

The Taoiseach: I am not aware of any promised legislation. Perhaps the Deputy will table a question to the Minister for Finance.

Deputy James Bannon: Given that Ireland, with 5,500 new cases per annum, has the highest incidence of skin cancer per head of population in Europe and in light of the Health Service

Executive's sham practice of issuing bogus appointments for the dermatology unit at Midland Regional Hospital in Mullingar, a practice which may also have occurred elsewhere, will the public health sunbeds Bill be published as a matter of urgency for the purpose of prevention rather than cure?

An Ceann Comhairle: On the public health sunbeds Bill, Taoiseach.

The Taoiseach: I understand public consultation has just finished in regard to the preparation of legislation in that respect.

Deputy P. J. Sheehan: Under promised legislation, will the Taoiseach indicate to the House the date for publication of the long-promised Forestry Bill to update the Forestry Acts from 1947 to 1988, which was first to be published in 2005, according to the legislative programme in 2004. It was promised in 2006, according to the legislative programme for that year. It was again promised in 2007, according to the legislative programme in spring 2007. It was again promised in 2008, according to the legislative programme in autumn 2008. In this year's spring legislative programme it was stated that publication was expected, but that it was not possible at that stage to indicate when. In this year's summer legislative programme the same was stated and in this year's autumn legislative programme, which was published three weeks ago, it reappears as "publication expected 2010". Can the Taoiseach give a definite date as to when the new Forestry Bill will be debated in Dáil Éireann?

5 o'clock

An Ceann Comhairle: It sounds like a lot of acorns have fallen.

The Taoiseach: I am not in a position to give that commitment to the Deputy because, as he said, it is a question of the Bill being ready. It is unlikely to be ready before the end of this year. The best thing we can do is ask the relevant Minister to communicate directly with the Deputy as to what progress or preparation is being made.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: I wish to ask the Taoiseach how the talks are going with "na glasraí".

The Taoiseach: Ar fheabhas.

Deputy Pat Rabbitte: What did the Taoiseach say?

An Ceann Comhairle: Ar fheabhas ar fad.

Deputy Joan Burton: Tá an grian ag taitneamh.

Deputy Joe Costello: Given the proliferation of dangerous dog breeds around the country, when can we expect the control of dogs legislation?

The Taoiseach: This session.

Deputy Seán Sherlock: Will the animal welfare Bill be published within the lifetime of this Government?

The Taoiseach: I have no date at the moment for that Bill.

Ministerial Rota for Parliamentary Questions: Motion.

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

That, notwithstanding anything in the Resolution of the Dáil of 14th June, 2007, setting out the rota in which Questions to members of the Government are to be asked, Questions

[Deputy Pat Carey.]

for oral answer, following those next set down to the Minister for Defence, shall be set down to Ministers in the following temporary sequence:

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

whereupon the sequence established by the Resolution of 14th June, 2007, shall continue with Questions to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Question put and agreed to.

Convention on the European Forest Institute: Motion.

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

That Dáil Éireann approves in accordance with Article 29.5.2 of Bunreacht na hÉireann, the terms of the Convention on the European Forest Institute, a copy of which was laid before Dáil Éireann on 17th September, 2009.

Question put and agreed to.

National Asset Management Agency Bill 2009: Second Stage (Resumed).

The following motion was moved by the Minister for Finance, Deputy Brian Lenihan, on Wednesday, 16 September 2009:

That the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Debate resumed on amendment No. 2:

To delete all words after “That” and substitute the following:

Dáil Éireann declines to give the National Asset Management Agency Bill 2009 a Second Reading because:

1. The Government has published neither the Bacon report that underpins the NAMA proposal nor any proper analysis of this enormous initiative in terms of:

- a. The enormous risks for taxpayers of using a dubious and politically influenced valuation methodology to pay €90 billion for assets of highly uncertain long-term value;
- b. The growing doubts regarding its impact on bank lending;
- c. The growing concerns from creating a secretive, politically directed, state-managed, tax funded work-out process for 1,500 property developers.

2. The Government has not facilitated a review by the Oireachtas of independent analysis of alternative banking solutions which international evidence suggests are likely to be more effective at getting credit flowing, less costly and fairer for the taxpayer and less vulnerable to political manipulation and business lobbying.

—(Deputy Richard Bruton).

Deputy Michael D. Higgins: I believe that the Bill before us regarding the National Asset Management Agency is the most important legalisation that will probably come before the Dáil in the next decade or decades, raising, as it does, issues not only for this generation of taxpayers but also issues for future generations. It touches on an issue of inter-generational justice. Surrounding this Bill there has been a neglect of its implications are. Any detailed analysis of the Bill has been replace by a kind of myth-making in which many have participated,

which suggests that the NAMA legislation, as proposed by the Government, is, as has been put in some of the media, “the only game in town”.

I would like to begin by raising a few questions which are notable in the Minister’s failure to answer them or to be addressed in the Taoiseach’s speech. The first question is why a Joint Oireachtas Committee on the banking system has not been established. At one stage the Minister for Finance, Deputy Lenihan, seemed disposed to such a committee. The issues are how we came to this position, what were the decisions taken and what were the great failures of regulation. The suggestion is that we can move on without addressing them. The Oireachtas Committee should be sitting now and addressing the issue. The public want it addressed.

The myth which covers for that failure is the suggestion that somehow or another, we were all guilty of an excess of spending or whatever and that this produced the financial crisis. It is very difficult to have published the basic fact that 2,000 individuals make up €77 billion of what we are dealing with in regard to toxicity. There are 150 individual borrowers who are responsible for €50 billion and Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide, the heads of which have now gone, are responsible for €32 billion. A question of the first order in the public mind is why we are not investigating how this circumstance came about. The argument is that we are advance in our preparations for doing so, but perhaps the Minister or a member of Cabinet can reply and tell us when the inspectors will visit Anglo Irish Bank, return and put a report before the public on what went on there, which was scandalous by any consideration.

The public are naturally interested in the fact that the top 15 borrowers in Anglo Irish Bank are responsible for €7.5 billion, some €500 million per client. We still do not know the terms of reference given to the Garda Commissioner in regard to the possibility of fraud or inappropriate corporate behaviour. The public is entitled to know this before it accepts the Bill for the new banking system, inform the new banking culture or acquire a huge burden that will go forward to future generations.

The failures in regulation are being considered by those who are largely responsible for them. There is no evidence of independent distance between the examination and the failures in regulation, which were scandalous — the only word that can be used for it. People will be searching through remote footnotes in Central Bank quarterly reports to say that they warned of this or that. It is a ridiculous but sad, pathetic exercise in bureaucracy that seeks to recover credibility where there is none to be found.

In terms of the options before us, which are in the content of the Bill, one might reasonably ask what options were negotiated with the European Central Bank. Let me clear something up. The European Central Bank is simply accepting collateral from the Irish banking system, collateral which consists of Irish Government bonds. It is not involving itself directly with the Government’s failure or pathetic response to the toxicity it presided over because of its deadly political intersections.

One might ask a question which is more than academic. What would happen if, instead of taking over such a large bundle of toxicity, the Government decided to address the issue of the mortgage books of the different banks? There is a tradition in this and many other European countries, such as Britain, of people paying their mortgages. It would have provided the Government with a mechanism for achieving liquidity. It would, in addition, have incurred a much lesser risk in terms of asset cover on behalf of the taxpayer and the Government would have been able to direct policy by restructuring the boards of the banks. The Government would, most powerfully — a point I will return to — have been able to head off home repossessions of people in danger of losing their homes.

The Government could have achieved this through temporary nationalisation. It could have cleaned the banking boards. It could have set up an agency to handle transitions from mort-

[Deputy Michael D. Higgins.]

gages to leases to rental income and the right of return. In addition, it could have a far greater guarantee for taxpayer into the future in terms of assets generating a real income. That would have created some stress for the bond holders, however. I have not seen any evidence offered in relation to a number of other issues. It is a matter of opinion. In the short term, the public is entitled to know the terms of reference of the Garda investigation, which I have already mentioned.

I would like to speak about the public interest directors, who represent another little cosmetic aspect of this proposal. Every now and again, an opinion floats in from the directors. The public interest directors will not be able to function very much unless the Companies Acts are amended in a manner that enables the Minister to define to the House what precisely he expects them to do by way of public interest. I am reminded of the trammel on worker directors that was provided for under the Companies Acts. In one company after another, worker directors were compromised by the fact that they were bound by the Companies Acts. They were unable to act in the way that many people demanded of them. In the case of the public interest directors, all that has happened so far is that someone who was once a politician became a banker overnight and described the reasonable request for the public to be given information as “prurience”. I assure the person in question that the correct rage which is at the basis of the public’s demand to get answers to the questions I have highlighted is being guided by more than prurience.

I read the speeches made by the Minister for Finance and the Taoiseach at the beginning of this debate. It seems to me that they seem to be relying for liquidity on a change in banking culture. If I had time to go through the Minister’s speech, I would focus on his reference to the agreement that has been reached with Bank of Ireland or AIB for this year or next year. There is nothing in the legislation to enforce liquidity. This Bill will not change the banking culture that brought us to this poisoned place into something that can serve the needs of the real economy in liquidity terms. The Taoiseach coined a new cliché when he started to talk about a banking system that is “fit for purpose”. Clichés can last for more than a decade in economics, sadly. We wanted a system that dealt with banking rather than gambling.

It is interesting how language can slip away in a manner that prevents us from engaging in a critique. When I examined AIB’s annual report, I read Mr. Dermot Gleeson’s statement that “the turbulence experienced in the global economy and financial markets in the second half of 2008 was without precedent in our lifetimes”. I remind Mr. Gleeson that the salaries taken by him and the other non-executive directors were without precedent in any decent society. I congratulate the Minister for Finance on becoming the majority shareholder in a bank that, according to Mr. Gleeson, is well capitalised, well diversified and has a strong balance sheet. Mr. Gleeson, who was the Attorney General when I served in the Cabinet, also suggests in the annual report that AIB has millions of customers who do business on a regular basis and deliver repeatable earnings. I assure him that his former Cabinet colleagues would not have been impressed with such speculative commentary. It is like saying one thinks the piebald horse will win.

The public rage has been informed by the notion that we can keep going as if nothing has happened. We are not getting the kind of analysis we want, sadly. I would have no difficulty with going in detail through the various issues that were raised in the Second Stage speeches of the Minister for Finance and the Taoiseach. Many questions have not been answered. It seems that this proposal is based on a number of extraordinarily weak assumptions. Where is the evidence that the property market has bottomed out? I have the height of respect for the Minister, Deputy Brian Lenihan, who is an intelligent man. In his contribution, he quoted from a limited piece of data relating to the Dublin commercial property rental market. It is important

to note that the market in question is being sustained by legislation that stops commercial rents from decreasing, even at a time when businesses are going out of business and jobs are being lost in the retail sector. One cannot draw general conclusions for any other sector of the rental property market from such a little sliver of data.

It is interesting that everyone has accepted the myth of the month, which is that NAMA, as proposed, is the only game in town. Those who believe it is the only game are not pressing for answers to the questions I have listed, nor are they testing the assumptions on which this notion is based. It is interesting to compare Dr. Alan Ahearne's suggestion that we may be bottoming out with what he has said in academic publications. In one publication, he described the cycle of property values as being approximately twice as long the cycle he projects when he speaks about the end of the Irish cycle. One cannot analyse historical cycles by saying they conventionally finish within a certain number of years. Dr. Ahearne must have been informed by some special evidence that has led him to change the theoretical position he previously espoused. Perhaps he has been so informed.

In their speeches, the Minister and the Taoiseach referred to the investigations that have been carried out in the main banks — AIB, Bank of Ireland and Anglo Irish Bank. When I refer to the long night in September 2008 for which we are paying such a high price, I am not interested in distorting anybody's position. I appreciate the urgency of the situation at that time, but that cannot explain the conclusion that Anglo Irish Bank had the same systemic value as AIB and Bank of Ireland. I can see how one could make the case that the disposal of the loan books of AIB and Bank of Ireland was linked to the future of the Irish economy. However, the loan patterns that were approved are indefensible. I could ask similar questions about the disposal of various assets — 36% of which are land, 28% of which are buildings and 36% of which are contractual paper — to which the Minister referred in his speech. If I remember correctly, the Minister said at one stage that we were not exposed to any derivatives, in the United States sense of that term, and their toxicity. I am not sure whether he said that last September or last week, but that is academic. I would like confirmation of what precisely is meant by the third category of commercial paper.

Deputy Brian Lenihan: It is commercial property, rather than commercial paper.

Deputy Michael D. Higgins: Yes. We can come back to that.

Deputy Brian Lenihan: I am trying to be helpful.

Deputy Michael D. Higgins: We can go into such detail on Committee Stage. I hope the Minister will agree to hold Committee Stage in plenary session so that all of us who have gone to the trouble of going through this Bill in detail will have an opportunity to ask him questions of this nature.

As we look at this moving object, there is an assumption that the property market has bottomed out. The Minister has suggested that an increase of just 10% in property values is needed if NAMA is to be a viable vehicle. The first mistake with that assumption is that we will be moving 10% from where the Minister thinks we are. When one considers the evidence that was presented before the High Court in the recent Zoe Group case, it is clear that we are dealing with a declining entity, rather than a stable one. Therefore, one's 10% will have to be stretched a little further if one is to finish ahead at the end of the period suggested by the Minister. The detail of the Bill seems to indicate that the Minister believes NAMA will restore liquidity in the real economy. When the Taoiseach allowed himself a flourish earlier in this debate, he extended that point and said it would lead to renewed growth. We all want that to happen. We agree that we want the real economy to flourish. My problem is that the Bill is

[Deputy Michael D. Higgins.]

based on the Minister's assumption that he can expect a change in this country's banking culture without a fundamental change in the boards of the banks. Approximately 80% of the board members are still in place. The Minister seems to think that those who engaged in wild lending — most of the commitments into which they entered were abroad — will suddenly fall in love with the real economy. When the Minister responds at the end of Second Stage, I would like him to spell out where he sees the evidence that he will be able to extract that liquidity from people. The ratio is improved through the issuance of a guarantee which they can in turn use as collateral for getting real money. What is to stop them from reducing externally based liabilities rather than those which are internal to the Irish economy? I looked through the legislation for the answer but the Minister is not taking any powers which would enable him to address that issue. If he had gone down the road of temporary nationalisation and decided to enter discussions with the European Central Bank on using the mortgage books of lending agencies as the assets on which he would issue bonds he would be in an easier position in respect of preventing home repossessions. I accept the good faith of Government Members in this regard. Nobody wants to see repossessions. Thus far, however, all we have achieved are tenuous six and 12 month agreements from banks which I simply do not trust. That is where we probably differ.

The matter is full of politics. One should head off interest rate increases by putting in place a mechanism that protects the home if a person falls into arrears because of interest rates. This is partly addressed by the aforementioned agreements but we should be able to turn mortgages into forms of lease, develop insurance mechanisms or transfer mortgages into tenancy purchase options. I remind Deputies that in many cases both partners have had to work to sustain outrageous and unsustainable mortgages. If conditions improve, people could move back along the chain and we would have a stable housing market. Not to do that is to wait until the end of this or next year, when the banks begin to issue court proceedings or people start to apply to local authority housing lists. I am simply suggesting an outline and if the Government does not pursue the matter I will advocate that the Labour Party establish its own commission under someone such as Professor Drudy to produce options which would ensure that even in the worst of economic conditions the family in the home will not suffer.

I look for the paragraph in the NAMA legislation which deals with liens on lending institutions for preventing home repossessions. This is not an abstract or academic point. Similar proposals have been considered in the context of the insurance model in the United Kingdom and some of the mechanisms put in place in the US approach to avoiding home repossessions. One would have expected similar proposals in the Bill before us. I am not worried about what such a mechanism would be called.

I have outlined a number of questions which I believe must be answered if we are to restore trust. We need more than an assurance that we are creating a new culture of banking. We need to see significant change on the boards and to receive all the information on how we arrived at this juncture and what was discussed with the European Central Bank. We need to know why certain options were rejected and why NAMA was chosen above other solutions. We must also reform the Bill on Committee Stage to give it the transparency it currently lacks. Above all, we must be able to head off the worst of the consequences. The option before us is a disastrous one. It puts an albatross around the necks of this and future generations. Even if the Bill passes Second Stage, let us at least put in place protections on Committee Stage so that families can remain in their homes until they climb out of the trough of unemployment and crisis economics.

Let the odd person out of the 166 Members of this House recognise this paradigm of greed has failed both in Ireland and internationally. Not everyone is guilty. Like many people who

built houses, I am aware that some craftsmen can cut timber or lay blocks while others can estimate the price of building a house or lay out a curved wall. All these were replaced by people who put no value on these skills and who were told by banks to borrow on the basis of fantastic property inventions and price escalations of 300% or 400%. Leading players in the banking institutions lashed money at these individuals. These are the guilty parties and the Irish public wants answers to the questions I have posed.

Deputy Noel Ahern: We all know that the banking system has let us down. I do not disagree with Deputy Higgins in regard to the extraordinary greed of people in the banking sector. As the private sector cannot solve this problem on its own, governments around the world have had to step in. Credit is the lifeblood of the economy and we need a healthy banking system to support mortgage holders, businesses and service providers. All Deputies more or less agree on the nature of the problem but shades of opinion differ on the solution.

Since the advent of our severe economic problems in the summer of 2008, the Government's strategy has been to restore public finances, solve the banking crisis and restore competitiveness and, therefore, employment growth. These are not easy tasks. Some people in the big bad world believe the Minister for Finance can wave a magic wand and suddenly all is well. However, months of work were required to develop a strategy. After hearing from people both within the system and outside it, the Government came up with the NAMA proposal in April and draft legislation in July. It is a bit rich that in recent weeks people have suggested bits of ideas they read in *The Economist* or the *Financial Times*. The details of these suggestions are fairly sparse and, while they may have been valuable months ago, at this stage we cannot afford to waste another year by starting again from square one. To quote Deputy Higgins, NAMA is the only show in town.

Deputy Michael D. Higgins: I said that was the myth of the month.

Deputy Noel Ahern: I apologise but he used the phrase. I do not think it is the myth of the month.

Deputy Michael D. Higgins: It is the myth of six months.

Deputy Noel Ahern: It is a fact because we do not have another year to start afresh. We have to work on the Bill before us. It may not be perfect but we can improve it on Committee and Report Stages with some of the suggestions made in this Chamber. We simply do not have the time to develop other proposals because we need to get the economy moving again. If there is an upturn in the world economy, we must have our banks giving credit to good ideas and ventures to move forward.

The homework on the Fine Gael proposal was not done in time. Labour spent months speaking about nationalisation, which, I accept, is a lovely, sexy fashionable slogan, but we all know that even if one nationalised, one would still need some sort of agency to move matters on thereafter. However, I was pleased to hear the leader of the Labour Party and others state in recent weeks that the party never really had in mind that there would be 100% nationalisation and that just increasing the equity share was what it had in mind. If that was made clear months ago, we might have made progress and we might have had a greater understanding of where we were and gone some way towards reaching a consensus on some of the issues.

Sometimes when there are significant problems it is no harm to reflect on the good days and the good that has been achieved. The economy enjoyed a good spell over the past ten, 12 or 14 years. There has been fantastic growth and improvements beyond what many of us would have thought of in our wildest dreams. I always was impressed by the number of people working

[Deputy Noel Ahern.]

in the economy, where 15 years ago or so there were 1.8 million employed and then we reached employment of more than 2 million. In recent years I was amazed, surprised and delighted on several occasions to see people who had not got a job for 10 or 20 years becoming employed. In parts of my constituency which would not be regarded as well-off areas, entire households, not just individuals or fathers, had not got jobs for years, if ever, and the progress made in the economy in recent years made all the difference. I accept that 200,000 of those jobs have now been lost — hopefully, temporarily — but there are still approximately 1.8 million people working which is much better than was the case when there were 1.1 million employed.

We can look back as a society and state that we lost the run of ourselves. I suppose everyone would say that another group lost the run of themselves. Government was not the worst offender over those ten or 14 years. When the coffers were full Government did extraordinary work — reducing the national debt, with the pension reserve fund and the various infrastructural projects. We all enjoyed tax reductions and there were significant improvements in services in health, education, special needs and so on.

This is not just a Government matter. Much of the anger and hurt is because people borrowed vast sums for productive, and perhaps not so productive, purposes. This recession is different from ones in the 1980s and at other times because of the level of personal debt. Much of people's annoyance and hurt is because of the money people borrowed to buy property here and abroad.

The economy is like a pendulum. Some of the gains made in recent years were not sustainable when the pendulum swung in the other direction. Many still feel that we could have had a soft landing, that we could have come down off our own ten-year high were it not for the world recession which came along and hit us for six. We all are wiser after the event but, as Deputy Michael D. Higgins stated, the main blame for everything lies with the banks which were basically shovelling out credit.

For five years I was Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government with responsibility for housing and I recall that for the first two or three of those my mantra at Question Time or when out and about was "Supply, supply, supply". At the time I felt, as we all did, that only by increasing supply could one help to bring down and control prices. Because people were no longer emigrating and because they had jobs, they needed accommodation and like anything in short supply, houses were too dear. Then approximately half way through my five years in the Department I began to realise that something was wrong, that despite the supply house prices were still increasing. Basically, it was because there was too much credit. While I did not favour developers for the first couple of years, I really began to feel that the builders were not really at fault. If there were people coming to look, not even at show houses but at a building site and a plan, to be told where their house or apartment would be located in a field, and if they were trying to knock the builder over with bits of paper showing what loans they had got from the banks, it was difficult for the builder not to increase his price.

At that time I remember strongly objecting to 100% mortgages, not so much in principle but for the way they were being sold or advertised. If one gave a 100% mortgage to a person or a couple who were well set in careers, that was all right, but at that time some of the financial institutions were giving out leaflets on Grafton Street at lunchtime, as one would give out leaflets promoting an early pint, buying a pizza or something frivolous. Handing out leaflets encouraging impulsive buying and asking people to take out a mortgage with no deposit was shameful. It was naked greed. At the time as a mere Minister of State I made several references in speeches to the media about it and the general reaction was a mixture of being ignored and being rubbished. I was surprised that many of the media were horrified at me sort of saying

nasty things about the financial institutions and I remember being amazed at the way many in the media protected the financial institutions. At that time I remember in the Department we had meetings with many organisations such as the Central Bank and the Department of Finance. We suggested that the amount that financial institutions put on deposit in the Central Bank in relation to their mortgages be increased by the slightest amount merely to give a message that we needed to put a gentle foot on the brake, but that was rejected. They were not interested in hunches. They always wanted quantified, verified researched data so that one had to prove everything to them ten times over before they would——

Deputy Michael D. Higgins: Generate the bonuses.

Deputy Noel Ahern: Whatever, but that was the way it went. In the 15 months, life has moved on. We have had the guarantee of deposits and liabilities and the nationalisation of Anglo Irish Bank, along with the acquisition of 25% shares in AIB and Bank of Ireland. We now have billions of euro in impaired loans and banks are not servicing the economy, as we know. However, we must deal with it and move on.

NAMA is purchasing loans of €77 billion from the various financial institutions, for which we are paying €54 billion. Each loan will need to be assessed and valued independently, but I am surprised that the valuations to date have come out so high. House prices are down by about 30%, but I thought development land would have fallen much more in price. I know the line that when somebody borrowed €100 million, theoretically that was only 75% of the investment, but I wonder about it.

The most similar event I can recall is the winding up of the Insurance Corporation of Ireland. After years in the Department of Finance, there must have been some conclusion to the file and recommendations about how to handle similar events in the future. I would love to hear from the Department about these recommendations. I can remember times when the banks were making major profits and we were all still paying levies to make up for the decision made back in the 1980s. That is my biggest fear this time. NAMA will work fine — that is not a fear. However, I look into the future and see the banks making great profits again in ten or 15 years, while much of the residue — or crap, if I may use that horrible, unparliamentary word — is still left in NAMA. Are we, as taxpayers and as the State, properly protected in this Bill? How do we need to change it in this regard?

I particularly like the arrangement that has been made to date whereby we have made a capital investment in Bank of Ireland and AIB in return for 25% equity, as well as dividends in the future. However, if we must give all these resources, in whatever form, to the banks, I would like to have more equity. I hope such things can be considered on Committee Stage. My problem is not so much with the €7 billion long-term economic value — in fact, I was surprised that figure was not higher — but the €9 billion in rolled-up interest that we are taking over. What are we getting for that €9 billion? I know what we are getting in terms of the long-term economic value of the €7 billion. That is reasonable, as one can only expect property values to rise into the future. However, for the €9 billion, we should be getting an equity stake and we should be buying it at the share price that prevailed some months ago and not the current price. It is on those points I have my concerns and I hope we can consider such things on Committee Stage to strengthen the Bill and give the State and the taxpayer more protection.

It is proposed to make lobbying NAMA a criminal offence, although I do not know whether such a provision is in the Bill yet. Of course, any attempt to influence the valuations would be terribly wrong and should be an offence, but we must be careful that we are not becoming daft with such provisions. I hope that if Deputy Noel Ahern were to write a letter or two to NAMA it would not be decided on the basis of a response to an FOI request in two, five or ten years'

[Deputy Noel Ahern.]

time that he was improperly lobbying. We must be careful what we put into such legislation because sometimes it can be daft. Everyone is against improper lobbying, but when a Deputy writes letters it is not the letters that do any harm.

We have this Bill and we cannot afford to waste a year going back to square one. It may not be perfect, but let us pass Second Stage and get on with Committee Stage so we can improve it for the good of society and the taxpayer and for our future. In addition, as Deputy Higgins said, we need to include a guarantee that the banks do not just take the money and fatten their balance sheets with it. It must be rolled over so that we achieve the outcome for which we hope.

Deputy Seymour Crawford: I support some of the comments made by the previous speaker. There are major questions over NAMA which need to be investigated and I am glad somebody on the Government side has admitted this.

I welcome the opportunity to speak on the National Assets Management Agency Bill 2009, which is supposed to deal with what Deputy Brian Lenihan admitted to be one of the more serious issues in the history of the State. He claimed that some of the commentary on the Bill was misinformed and even mischievous. However, I assure the Minister that from speaking to people at both constituency and national level I know there is still much anxiety and real fear because of the failure of the Minister to clarify many of the issues about which he was asked at committee meetings and, since then, in his Second Stage speech.

The Minister said the Government's proposal to establish an assets management agency had received the backing of the IMF and the ECB. It has certainly received support for increasing its share of our two main banks, but there is no guarantee for taxpayers and no funding through the banks to keep small industries and businesses alive. Only this morning I met a businessman in Monaghan who manufactures and supplies goods for the housing sector to county councils in Dublin and further afield as well as to the private sector. He advised me that he would have to put his staff on a three-day week from next Monday, not because he is short of work but because he cannot get his payments in from either the private or the public sector. Clearly the banks are not giving the necessary finance even to public-sector building projects, which should be a sure bet. This means more people will end up on social welfare.

Last night, together with my Oireachtas colleagues from County Monaghan, we met Castleblayney Town Council and the chamber of commerce, and it was simply impossible to explain to them how billions could already have been poured into the banking system while no relief is available for hard-pressed rate-payers in Castleblayney, which is on the Border and which receives the third lowest subvention in the whole of Ireland through the local government fund. During the discussion in Castleblayney regarding Irish and UK VAT rates and the price of alcohol, it was stated that 50% of alcohol sales in the island of Ireland are actually in the Six Counties. This is some indication of the loss of revenue occurring, especially in the Border area. We were also advised that business owners were not able to obtain the necessary capital to keep their businesses going. If NAMA does not provide this — and I do not believe it will — then some other rescue package must be put in place.

Those in the Border region are extremely worried about the fact that NAMA does not cover banks such as Ulster Bank, National Irish Bank and ACC. In fact, NAMA does not cover any borrowings under €5 million. I am sure the number of people in the Border region owing more than €5 million will be quite small, thus all the banks, including Bank of Ireland and the AIB, will be taking their customers, including developers down the legal path, leading to forced sales at low levels. This has already happened as has been well publicised in Ballinagh a few miles outside Cavan town. People who bought houses only a year ago are now seeing similar houses in the same development being sold at less than half price. How will NAMA, as it is now

structured, deal with situations such as this and how can the Minister suggest that property prices are going to rise in the foreseeable future? This structure, whereby smaller groups are not underwritten will curtail increases in property prices because they are not receiving the same benefit.

Several years ago, I brought to the notice of a number of people the expansion of the housing boom. In a constituency like mine, where little or no efforts were being made to maintain or produce permanent jobs, how could planners and for that matter builders and banks justify the mass production of houses? In late autumn 2006 and again in February 2007, as we approached the then general election, I raised this issue with senior colleagues and members of my own Frontbench and advised them of what would be the outcome in this regard. Anyone who at that time questioned the situation was accused by the then so-called saviour of Ireland of being negative and ill-informed. The former Taoiseach of our country, Deputy Bertie Ahern, advised them to go away and commit suicide.

The property bubble could not and would not have existed without the involvement of incompetent senior bankers who convinced themselves that they knew everything and that they in turn deserved huge salaries and bonuses. It is impossible for the ordinary taxpayer to understand the role of the Regulator or Central Bank in this regard. Across the whole Irish banking sector there was a failure at board level and the question must be asked if boards were properly or legally informed by senior management.

One cannot help but believe that the principle of the Central Bank and Financial Regulator was to hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil. One cannot but believe that the whole ethos of the builders, developers and banks was laid down by the Galway tent brigade where everyone worked together with senior politicians in one big happy club. The then Taoiseach and then Minister for Finance, Deputy Brian Cowen, now the current Taoiseach, gave out the money from the building boom like there was no tomorrow and as if it was coming from a permanent genuine base.

As far back as when the now European Commissioner Mr. Charlie McCreevy was Minister for Finance our party Leader Deputy Enda Kenny questioned the whole basis of the benchmarking structure and how it was put together but even then some of the relevant information had disappeared. We now find ourselves in a situation whereby people who benefited from the benchmarking structures, in particular young graduates, who purchased expensive houses with loans of up to 100% of the cost of an overpriced property find themselves with incomes inhibited by levies and pension funds and the benefit of mortgage relief removed. They now see themselves as victims of Government and bank mismanagement and they find it impossible to understand how bankers and developers are in reality the people who are being rescued. I have no doubt they as taxpayers, together with their children and grandchildren, will have to pay for Government mismanagement and for the mismanagement of banks and developers. While I appreciate there are some investigations into the activities of some people in Anglo Irish Bank and, possibly others, it takes a long time to come to grips with white collar fraud. No one can call it anything less.

The Minister for Finance, Deputy Brian Lenihan, stated in his Second Stage speech that the citizens of this country are understandably angry about the state of the banks. They are bitterly disappointed by the failure of our regulatory system and are appalled by the details of the reprehensible behaviour of some in the financial system and property sector in whom they placed their trust. They are also angry with the Government. Many ask why we are putting money into the banks while they endure the brunt of the difficult budgetary decisions which must be taken.

[Deputy Seymour Crawford.]

There is now, unfortunately, a breakdown of trust in the entire system, as was evident when we were out canvassing on the Lisbon treaty. My colleague, Deputy Richard Bruton, asked on 22 September what is the logic of using over €36 billion in taxpayers' money — 40% of the total NAMA bonds — to purchase toxic assets from two broken financial institutions, namely, Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide Building Society, that are almost certain never to lend again? What is the Government's strategy for these two broken institutions? What binding mechanisms can NAMA impose on the other banks to use the extra funding from the ECB to finance lending to households and struggling businesses rather than paying down other expensive sources of funding from international markets?

I want to return to an issue I raised earlier regarding the non-Irish banks. It is impossible for me representing a Border constituency to understand how NAMA can be responsible for one-fifth of its assets in Great Britain, 6% in Northern Ireland, only two-thirds in Ireland and the remainder in the USA and Europe. According to the Minister for Finance, Deputy Lenihan, those developers and customers dealing with the Ulster Bank, NIB and ACC are being ignored on the basis that they will be supported from their home base in the UK, New Zealand or Denmark. I would urge that this situation be re-examined as a matter of urgency to ensure there is no further damage to the Border area. If all the non-national banks follow the lead of ACC and withdraw their services from the area this will minimise competition in the long term. Of course, it will be customers, in particular small businesses, that will suffer. I believe the Minister for Finance, Deputy Lenihan, must, as has already been requested of him by Deputy Richard Bruton, contact his UK, Danish and other colleagues to ensure pressure is put on these banks to deal sympathetically with their customers in Ireland.

One other cross-Border group I must mention is the Presbyterian Mutual Society, which was clearly undermined by the introduction of guarantees to other banks. This group has a number of investors from the Border region, some of whom are in serious situations since it was put into administration. I am aware that the group's interests are under discussion at British Cabinet level and I, once again, urge the Taoiseach and Minister for Finance to show their interest in this issue as the amount of money needed to allow this organisation to survive in the interests of small investors is quite small. Clearly, the percentage of the funds in this all-Ireland institution from south of the Border would mean that any involvement by the Irish Government would be minimum as compared with the billions being committed elsewhere.

While I appreciate that if Fianna Fáil, the Green Party and the Independents, such as Deputy Mary Harney stick together the Bill will be passed through Second Stage, I urge the Minister and his officials to take seriously the well-intentioned, constructive amendments being put forward by my party Leader, Deputy Enda Kenny and our finance spokesperson, Deputy Richard Bruton. They proved on 29 September 2008, when called on by the Taoiseach to support the introduction of the State guarantee, that they can put the country first. Deputy Bruton's proposal for an economic recovery bank is clearly getting generous support from serious business people and economic advisors. In that context, one must be concerned to hear the Minister say that NAMA has been drawn up on the best expert advice and counsel available to the Government. Where was this expert advice and counsel during the past number of years which allowed us to walk blindfolded into this mess? We can only hope different personnel are involved.

With regard to Anglo Irish Bank and the type of personnel that were advising the Government on this issue, how can Minister for Finance, Deputy Lenihan, be so sure that Mr. Seán Fitzpatrick of Anglo Irish Bank will repay, to use his words "every cent" that he owes the current bank? If Mr. Fitzpatrick is unable to meet full interest payments on an estimated loan of €106 million, how will he ever be able to repay the capital? It is difficult for someone under

pressure to pay his mortgage to listen to Mr. Lenihan making such comments when he knows that such repayments will not happen while nothing will be done for mortgage holders. Imagine the situation for someone who had a high interest fixed rate mortgage who is now being told he will have to pay a further increase when the fixed term is over.

The Minister and the Government have a major job to do to establish NAMA and, more importantly, to get it to work so business, jobs and private borrowers can see the benefit. We will not tax our way out of this situation, we will only lose more jobs. I was amazed to hear the leader of the Green Party on TV3 saying the Government would not deviate from the norm for Seán Fitzpatrick or anyone else. What is the norm? What was the norm as far as these people were concerned?

I received an e-mail asking why only loans over €5 million qualify for NAMA. What will happen to development loans of less than €5 million from Bank of Ireland or AIB Bank, the person asked. He wanted to know if these banks will be instructed by Government to offer the same terms to holders of loans under €5 million as those offered by NAMA to holders of loans over €5 million. The Minister for Finance in his speech to the *6 o'clock* Dáil referred particularly to the past conduct of the banks, as well as the distressed assets of developers as a consequence of the failure of the banking system and the economy. Surely this applies equally to those who owe development loans of less than €5 million, asked the person who wrote to me. How can we make fish of one and flesh of the other, he wanted to know.

For many, answers to these questions are critical. I have already stated that Ulster Bank, NIB and ACC should be included in these questions. When the banks came before the committees some time ago, everyone was assured that they were sound. The Comptroller and Auditor General and all these different people were in before the committees and we were assured there was no problem. I fully understand there have been international situations but they were not the main cause of our problem.

I support the Irish Farmers' Association in its opposition to a proposed 80% capital gains tax. This is a serious situation. Many good farms were divided by road building or similar infrastructure projects. The land was taken through a CPO and now 80% of that money would have to be paid to the Government. What will be left to restructure the farm or buy somewhere else? This must be examined. It is not a windfall if someone is forced to sell property, leaving his farm not viable. It is back hand work that such a suggestion should be brought in through the backdoor as an amendment to the Bill.

The idea must be reviewed because it will not bring in any money. The former Taoiseach, Deputy Bertie Ahern, used to blow about the lowering of taxes and how that led to an increase in receipts because there were more transactions. Here, capital gains tax will increase from 20% to 80%. It is absolutely outrageous and will hit farming and rural communities hardest. It will destroy any opportunities they may have and I beg the Minister of State, as someone with responsibility for agricultural matters, to deal with this promptly. It is up to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Deputy Brendan Smith, to make sure this ridiculous proposal does not go through this House. It is unacceptable, unrealistic and will cause serious problems. There is someone there who wants to get at the farming community and we must cry "stop" somewhere.

Deputy M. J. Nolan: This is possibly the most important legislation that has come before this Dáil and I support it. The NAMA legislation is a response to the financial crisis that the country finds itself in as part of a global economic crisis. As a result of our circumstances, we have been more affected than many of our European partners or other economies.

[Deputy M. J. Nolan.]

I commend the Government, particularly the Minister for Finance, who has undergone a baptism of fire since the crisis began a year ago. At short notice and only a relatively short time in the portfolio, the Minister had to deal with it. By common consent, it has been universally recognised that the Minister for Finance is coming to grips with this crisis and dealing with it in a commendable manner.

There is a long way to go and the legislation before us faces a long journey through the Oireachtas. It is in all our interests, however, that it is passed speedily. I was glad to hear the Minister in interviews talk about accommodating individuals and parties if proposals were introduced on Committee Stage that would strengthen the legislation. Early in the summer, the Minister published the draft legislation so interested parties could debate and consider it. Of all the proposals made to deal with the unprecedented economic downturn we have seen, this is by far the best solution. For that reason, I have no difficulty in supporting it.

Some of the debate has been strange, to put it mildly, in that we hear individuals saying that in the good times the money was wasted. I disagree with that theory. Over the years we have invested wisely in infrastructure, with intercity motorways being a fine example. We invested significantly in education at all levels, in teachers and in resources. Local authority housing has seen a huge investment at a huge cost to the State. One might say, looking back, that some of the prices we had to pay for those houses were inflated because of the boom in the construction industry. I remember an answer to a parliamentary question three years ago that we would satisfy demand when we reached a stage when we were building 45,000 units a year and there would be a levelling off of prices for house price construction. However, that building boom went on and we saw building of up to 85,000 units per annum. Looking back now, that was clearly unsustainable. Having said that, we are where we are and we have to deal with that.

We invested wisely in some areas with more gardaí, nurses, teachers and this must be acknowledged. This was happening at a time when we were running surpluses on an annual basis. We have reached this stage in our economic development and we are now in a downturn. There are individuals and families who are suffering. There is not a Member of this House who is not aware on a daily basis of the hardships being encountered by them. What disappoints me is the development of a social divide, where clear division lines have come between public service workers and private sector workers. That will not resolve anything, and I ask individuals, groups or organisations who may be going down that road to recognise that it is a dangerous path to travel. We are all in this together. We will have to resolve this together, and I implore that we step back from that divide. We have enough problems on our hands without dividing among ourselves.

The NAMA legislation before us is a response to the global financial crisis which has caused extensive and rapid deterioration in the Government finances. The principle of the Bill is worthwhile. We will not work ourselves out of this financial crisis unless we have a stable and functioning banking system. While mistakes were made in the past with the regulatory oversight of our banking system, as an outsider looking in, it seemed to me as though the banks were chasing one another, and all that happened was that one particular bank went off on a tangent, was irresponsible in its lending and was allowed to be irresponsible. I blame our regulatory system for not reining in that bank. As a consequence of that, other banks then decided to follow. We had this tail chasing going on where banks were competing with one another to give out more and more funding for clearly unsustainable developments. We now have to clean up that mess. If there is one serious lesson to be learned by the Minister and the Department of Finance, it is that we must have a strong and functioning regulatory system that oversees our financial institutions. The fact that we are now obliged to take a stake in our main banks

means that we have directors on the board, and they should be in a position to see how that banking system works.

The basis of the legislation is sound. The loans will be transferred to NAMA at a discount, and while there may be some debate as to the level of the discount, I am convinced by the Minister's argument during his Second Stage contribution that the discounts will be brought back over a nine or ten year period. Over that period, I hope that we will see a surplus as a result of working through these loans. It is important that the assets are worked out and not just sold. The principle on which the Bill is based can succeed and the loans will ultimately bear fruit, so that the Government and NAMA will not be at a loss.

The Minister has been at pains to state that this has to be a transparent system. The legislation clearly outlines that. Some of the loans that will end up in NAMA will never be able to wash their face. For that reason, it is a complete package that NAMA will take over. It is also important that NAMA employs the best professionals to deal with this, not just on the basis of taking over loans and ensuring that value for money is obtained for them, but also for the valuation process. The Minister has assured us that each individual loan will be examined and that a proper value will be put on that loan. Having taken over the loans, he will need professionals on board and he has stated that he is prepared to outsource and get professional advice in dealing with them. That is not just for dealing with the loan, but also for dealing with the asset that is taken on board. There is development land that will clearly have a value for rental or whatever else. The fact that some of this land is in highly desirable areas means that the State agencies could avail of some of this for schools, hospitals, Garda stations or whatever. I am pleased to note that he has broadened the remit and that he is prepared to look at that aspect.

The financial system has been severely challenged over the past two years. This Bill will protect the financial institutions somewhat, and they need such protection at this stage. It must be at a cost and they will have to pay for it, but our economic future is dependent on having a good financial system in place. I would like to nail the lie that this is a bailout for borrowers or developers. The Minister was very clear when he stated that loans which are transferred to NAMA are still due to be repaid. NAMA is not an easy way out for borrowers or developers. That message must be put out. It is not a bailout for bankers or developers and that cannot be stated often enough.

All international banks are experiencing difficulties in accessing funding at the moment. When this Bill is passed, it will mean that our banks will be able to access funding again. It is important that the Minister and the directors he has appointed to the boards of various banks ensure that there is liquidity and that the banks lend again to small businesses and farmers. I met with a group of farmers yesterday, and one of the main difficulties they had was in securing working capital from their banks. These would be farmers with a track record stretching back two generations. Now, for the first time, they find it difficult to access working capital and funding from financial institutions. It is important, when the legislation is passed and banks are in a position to access money, that the money is lent out. That is the main purpose of the legislation.

It is important that we put on record the support of our European partners, the European institutions and, in particular, the European Central Bank. One shudders to think what might have been the outcome of this crisis had we not been part of a bigger, European community and the single currency. In that regard, I congratulate the Irish electorate which, in its wisdom, supported the Lisbon treaty last Friday. More than anything else over the past number of months, that support sent a clear message to our fellow Europeans that we want to be at the

[Deputy M. J. Nolan.]

centre of decision making in Europe. That is our future, it is where we have been for the past 30 years and is where we want to remain. That message was sent out clearly on Friday.

On the upcoming budget, I am aware the Minister has started to negotiate with various Departments about their funding for 2010. He has a difficult task ahead of him to draft a budget that will be acceptable to the majority. The direction he is taking towards spending cuts rather than tax increases is the correct way to go. I heard it suggested today that if we take account of the levies imposed recently, we have an effective personal tax rate of approximately 52% or 53%. We cannot impose much more personal taxation without returning to the bad old days of the 1980s, when we had a flourishing black economy because personal taxation was far too high.

I wish the Minister well in getting this legislation through the Houses. It is positive legislation and the best available. We cannot allow things continue as they are. This is the best option, although none of us wanted to reach a stage when it had to be introduced. I wish it a speedy passage through the House.

Deputy Paul Connaughton: I wish to share my time with Deputy Damien English.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Seán Ardagh): Is that agreed? Agreed.

Deputy Paul Connaughton: I am looking forward to the vote on the end of Second Stage of the Bill and will vote against it. This is one of the biggest gambles I have seen in the House in 30 years and like all gambles, nobody knows where it will finish. It is bad enough that the ordinary members of the public would not know or might not be expected to know where it will finish, but nor do the Minister for Finance, the Taoiseach or the Government.

One of the major reasons the people voted “Yes” in the Lisbon treaty referendum last Friday was because of the fear of the financial problems coming down the road. They believe the European Central Bank is becoming an anchor tenant for Ireland and believe that is from where the bailout will come. I hear Government commentators say regularly that the ECB promoted the idea of NAMA. I am not sure we are handling the situation the way it wanted us to, but it will be central to it. We are lucky the people of Ireland responded as they did on Friday. I hope, for everybody’s sake, this solution will work.

I would like to give a background to the situation from where I stand. It is a result of nothing but pure greed. That greed was shared by developers and builders and accommodated by the Government. Together they formed a cosy cartel. For that reason, the people, no matter if they must wait five weeks, five months or two years for the Government to go to the polls, want to get this Government out. They know they have been scuttled. I will give the House an idea of how this happened, as it has not been mentioned often in the debate so far.

Look for example at the countless thousands of young couples who bought houses at twice their value over the past five or six years. These prices were as a result of the greed of the property developers, builders, economists, banks and all involved. Now, these young couples face a drop in equity, but as long as they continue to live in their houses, they will get over that. However, as interest rates increase, they will be in a far worse situation. Worse still is that because of NAMA — there is no free lunch — these same people will end up bailing out the people who caused them to pay twice the value of their house in the first place. Young couples all over the country believed they were doing the right thing when they bought their homes because every night on television economists from financial institutions, a Minister or a Taoiseach, including the current and previous taoisigh, told them that the fundamentals of the economy were all right, that we had people in work and, in other words, they believed the

prices young couples were paying for houses were good value for money. That sort of rubbish went on for four, five or six years, but the economy was a bubble. It would not have worked in any country.

Now we have found ourselves in a terrible situation. Young people are paying twice the repayment on a house they should have to pay, but if they had to sell the house they would be ruined. At the same time, the NAMA solution will be brought forward. There is no such thing as a free lunch. Sometimes Ministers try to get the message across that because of NAMA there will be no real cost, because after five or ten years the various properties will reach market value again. Where could one borrow €54 billion on behalf of the State without a cost to someone? Who is going to pay this money back? It is very unlikely the builders or the banks will repay it. They will come out from under the canvas yet. It is because of this there is latent anger all over the country against the Government that allowed this to happen.

We hope serious amendments will be introduced to the NAMA legislation. I will not go through our proposals now, but there will be serious discussion in the Chamber on the amendments and, hopefully, the Government will yield to them. If the Government cannot ensure that the banks do not featherbed their reserves to build themselves up, and ultimately if the money does not return to the economy to provide jobs and help generate activity, then the anger will cut loose altogether. Insufficient thought has been given to this because it is an easy way out for the banks.

With regard to the Fine Gael concept of a good bank and a bad bank, at least pressure and responsibility would be put on the individual banks to try to straighten out what they had walked into at a time when even non-economists could see the banking system could not sustain such activity. My constituents in Galway East and people further afield are asking me whether anybody will actually be brought to boot for this. Will anybody be brought to court and sent to prison for the terrible problem that has beset thousands of Irish couples, for which they will be paying for the next 30 or 40 years? As far as I can see there will be very few and the process will be very slow.

The principle of the Bill is wrong and the gamble is too great. Should the slightest thing go wrong, we will ensure that countless thousands for two generations to come will be saddled with something they had not a hand, act or part in. From a rural Ireland viewpoint, the 80% capital gains tax that is being proposed as an amendment to the Bill is outrageous for land compulsorily acquired for road building. That land was not rezoned. It was acquired for a specific purpose, to build the roads. I do not have time to talk about the problems such acquisitions cause for farmers, but this process has put them out of business. When one considers the national good created, and that countless thousands will use those roads for generations to come for the benefit of all, the fact that the people who own the land will have to face an 80% charge is outrageous. I assume this will be given much greater scrutiny over the next couple of weeks because it is a bombshell in rural Ireland, something none of us can put up with.

I heard the former Minister for Finance, Deputy Charlie McCreevy, say glibly here one day, in explanation, when there was some type of pressure on the budget: "If I have it, lads, I'll spend it and if I haven't, I cannot". What way is that to run an economy?

Deputy Damien English: I am glad to have an opportunity to talk on this Bill because it is probably one of the most serious pieces of legislation we will ever discuss in Dáil Éireann. Apart from what went on today, which is a strange occurrence and something that has to be dealt with as soon as possible, the NAMA situation is very serious, and I do not believe it is being dealt with as it should be. We are not being given the right information.

[Deputy Damien English.]

My first concern is the book value of the loans. I do not believe that the banks do not know the exact amount of the debt nor that Minister does not know the exact amount. It was baloney to come in to this House, as the Minister did a couple of weeks ago, with estimates of potentially \$77 billion or maybe €60 billion because they know the true extent of the situation. Last October, 12 months ago, there were committee meetings here where the Regulator and his staff told us they were starting to go into every bank to look at every loan and do their sums. It does not take 12 months to put a portfolio of loans together and add them up. If I have to get the Minister an abacus I shall do so, but he should not tell us, with regard to something as serious as this, that 12 months on, he is working on estimated figures. That is unbelievable. It cannot be true and needs to be corrected before we vote on this.

Also last October we were told by the Regulator and his staff that developer debts and so on came to €39.4 billion. On the night of the so-called mini-budget, some months ago, on the announcement of NAMA, we were told it was €80 billion or €90 billion. I asked then, and I shall ask again today, how, in God's name, did it increase from €39.4 billion to €80 billion in less than six months? We got half an explanation from the Green Party Minister the day after the mini-budget, to the effect that this involved overseas property of €20 billion or €30 billion. Again, I do not believe that, so somebody misled us. Either it was the Regulator and his staff last October, or the Minister is doing it here.

On the night of the budget I repeatedly asked the Taoiseach, the Ceann Comhairle and the Minister for Finance to clarify the figure of €80 billion to €90 billion but they have yet to do so. They never came back to me despite assurances and reassurances that they would check it out. It never happened, yet we are being asked to vote on something such as NAMA. If it is €40 billion and €30 billion of Irish developers' debts in other countries, why are we even considering taking up such property debts in the US, France, England and so on? Whatever about the small merit there might be in having some type of NAMA for the Irish element, we should not be buying up the property debts that belong to Irish people in other countries. That is fundamentally wrong and I want the Ceann Comhairle or the Acting Chairman, Deputy O'Connor, to know that I want this clarified — indeed, he might be Ceann Comhairle shortly enough.

We are told that some of these loans will pay for themselves, and the Government will be able to pay for the cost of NAMA on a yearly basis out of the interest it collects. Are we missing the point? Some €9 billion is already owed in interest that has not been collected. This group of loans are not paying for themselves. Already they are €9 billion behind. Why does the Minister believe that as of November, these people will start to pay their interest? They will not and they cannot because they have been unable to do it for the last year. If the banks cannot get their money I do not see how the Government believes it is going to get it because it is not available.

We are told that the loan to value ratio is an average 70%. Again, I cannot accept that it is an estimate and an average figure, 12 months down the line. The situation is probably much worse. I believe many of these loans have a loan to value ratio of 120%, 130% or 140%, certainly at the present value levels. If the loan debt is €68 billion and the estimates are €48 billion or thereabouts, we are now at a loan to value ratio of 140%. The Minister is citing a 77% loan to value ratio on the previous valuation, but that is just to massage the figures to make them sound better. He should have inserted "now 140%" and let people realise exactly what they are buying into. That is, 140% on the Minister's figures, given that the valuation of the property is 50%. I want to deal with that now because it is not 50%.

The Minister must be some type of genius with mathematics that he can come up with this, rent yields and every other formula, to try to show it is 50% of the valuation. It is not 50%. We all know that on the open market it is 13%, 14% or in some good places, 20% for development property. Development property and land is completely different to someone's house or a usable asset. It is an empty field, and its valuation is certainly not 50%. Therefore it is wrong to mislead the people that it is because it is not. It is as simple as that and we should not be making decisions on false information.

Even before the current valuations developers had loans of 100% or 120%. Those people will not pay back their debts. The Minister gives the impression that we are going to go after all this debt, and I accept some of the €54 billion might be collected. However, many developers set up special interest companies when they were buying the land and separated themselves and their personal assets from the concerns which bought it. Before we vote on this Bill, I want the Minister to explain exactly how many of these property loans can be chased up. I have a suspicion that many developers cannot be touched because of their special interest companies. They will be let go and the developer will stay in the big house with the big car while the poor little fellow will be struggling to pay a €300,000 mortgage.

The Minister must know how many of these loans are to companies of a special nature, or to others. The unfortunate small local builder who put up his own house to borrow money will lose whereas the big guys, the special few who had all the legal and financial advice they could pay for over the good years, made sure to separate themselves. It is wrong of the Minister to give us the impression that he can hunt them down for their personal assets. I do not believe he can do so and I want the point clarified because it is not clarified as matters stand.

What was the Government's relationship with the regulator? Was the regulator acting independently of Government advice or were he and his staff of some 200 linking up with Government and doing as they were told. Something went seriously wrong and I can see the hand of Government evident within that. It needs to be clarified by the Government that its hand was not in it. If it was not, so be it, but if the question is not clarified, I will have to assume the regulator was acting according to Government policy, not independently. He acted wrongly, which we know.

A previous speaker stated that people need to be punished and that the average taxpayer needs to see somebody being held accountable. There is no sign of this as yet. There was quick dawn raid on Anglo Irish Bank and that was the height of it. I am afraid to say it but we will probably never see anybody in handcuffs or being made to take responsibility, which is a great shame and will damage this country for a long time. Nonetheless, people will lose their houses next year and the following year because they cannot pay small debts, which is very wrong. I want to hear where we are going in that regard.

I want to deal with the issue of a capital gains tax of 80%. The Greens intend to fix all problems in one fell swoop but NAMA is not concerned with this issue. I accept there is room to increase capital gains tax, but not to 80%, because the whole country will come to a standstill, if it is not at one already. This Bill will not fix every planning problem of the past. The Greens in their lovely speeches on the Bill spoke mainly about planning. While planning must be fixed, it is not the problem of NAMA, which is concerned with financial planning and corruption. It should remain focused on that area.

Although I do not have time to examine it in detail, I want to put on record that the Fine Gael alternative to NAMA is workable. Despite the Minister's puzzled look concerning it, such a scheme has worked and is currently working in many other countries, and it should be considered. A NAMA-type structure in France cost the taxpayer there over €18 billion in losses. In Ireland, the taxpayer has a potential exposure of €54 billion and, while I accept the Minister's

[Deputy Damien English.]

point that we will not lose €54 billion, the potential does exist. I believe many of the assets are much more toxic than we are being lead to believe.

What the Minister proposes, based on the information he has given us, is immoral and wrong. He does not care, however, because he will be out of politics when the real consequences are seen in 20 years. The Minister of State, Deputy Barry Andrews, and I might still be here, and our children will certainly be here, when we see the real cost of this. The issue is very serious. It should not be dealt with as it is being dealt with in the House, namely, using false information.

Deputy Michael Fitzpatrick: I am delighted to have the opportunity to make a brief contribution on the problems besetting our country. The collapse of the global economic economy, as well as our own domestic economic problems, have had a devastating on this country over the past 12 months or more. We have seen thousands join the dole queues, businesses going under and people's savings being wiped out.

Over the past year, the Government has undertaken a series of measures to stabilise the banking sector, including the bank guarantee scheme, which was supported by Fine Gael, the nationalisation of Anglo Irish Bank and the recapitalisation of AIB and Bank of Ireland. As fundamental as these measures have been, they have not been sufficient to relieve us of all of our serious problems. Throughout the country, businesses and households are being starved of credit, with dire consequences. Without a properly functioning banking system, our economy will not function. This is why the Government is setting up NAMA to buy loans from the banks and thereby remove uncertainty about the soundness of banks.

All of the Government's actions in the past year have been centred on the common good. The common good requires, first, a return to economic soundness — getting the public finances back in order, restoring our competitiveness and having a good banking system to serve the needs of the entire community. NAMA must ensure that credit flows again to viable businesses and households by cleaning the balance sheets of the banks. We would all like to see viable businesses receiving the required funding. Nobody is asking that non-viable businesses be funded but it is imperative that businesses which are viable but struggling should be funded.

NAMA is not a bailout for the banks or their shareholders. It is buying loans at a discount and bank shareholders will have to accept losses. NAMA is buying loans not properties. The same applies with regard to builders. Borrowers are expected to pay back the full amount and they will not be bailed out.

The debt itself will be repaid through the repayment of loans from developers and other borrowers, or through the sale of the assets securing those loans. It is intended that a levy be applied if NAMA incurs any loss over its ten to 15 year timeframe. As I have stated, this is not a bailout for developers, as some have suggested. The Minister, Deputy Brian Lenihan, has confirmed that developers who are insolvent will be liquidated and NAMA will have the full range of remedies already available to the banking system, including repossession, enforcement of mortgages, the appointment of a receiver and the liquidation of companies.

Members on the opposite side of the House have argued that the Government is going to pay the banks too much for the bad debts. In the Minister's words, the success of NAMA is not based on any assumption of a return to the recent bubble prices for property, which none of us would like to see happen. It is not correct to state we will or would want to return to the bubble prices of the past. Every single loan will be assessed on its own merits and will take into consideration that some property prices are artificially depressed because the banks are not in a position to lend to prospective buyers. The value will be based on a realistic and prudent assumption about the recovery of property prices over the next five to ten years, or perhaps a little longer, and will be subject to European Commission approval.

Some land will never be developed and will return to agricultural use. NAMA will pay agricultural prices for such land. It is only fair to note that some of these lands are not held by millionaires but by ordinary working people. In other cases, the assets are more valuable. We must remember that there is no liquidity in the banks at present. They are not lending and there is effectively no market. The introduction of NAMA will get the market working again.

In addition, bank shares have been depressed. This means that the banks have an incentive to work with NAMA to achieve a profit for the taxpayer and they do not get to share in any profits, as originally put forward by the new Governor of the Central Bank, Mr. Patrick Honohan. A number of other risk-sharing mechanisms have also been put in place to protect the taxpayer. It will be a criminal offence to lobby NAMA and the agency and the Minister will be required to report on progress to the Oireachtas.

Since the financial crisis began a year ago, the Government has made a number of decisions to stabilise the economy. We are not alone in that. A series of measures have been taken in the United States, the United Kingdom and across Europe to do likewise. The crisis has highlighted that collective action is required as we now live in a global economy. Today the Central Bank revised upwards its forecast on how the economy will fare this year. It predicted a return to modest sustainable growth by 2011. NAMA will get credit flowing again to viable businesses and households. That is key for economic recovery and for the generation of employment.

Some asset prices are artificially depressed because the banks are not in a position to lend to prospective buyers. In those circumstances, the European Commission indicated the assets should be purchased at their long-term economic value. That value will be determined on the basis of realistic and prudent assumptions about the recovery of asset prices over the next five to ten years. NAMA will not be paying prices for the loans based on recent bubble property prices. Nor will bubble property prices nor the expectations regarding future property prices that prevailed during the bubble period be used to determine the long-term economic value. The means for calculating the long-term economic value of assets will have to be approved by the European Commission so that it does not violate EU state aid rules. The banks will suffer substantial losses on the sale of assets to NAMA. The amount of losses will differ across banks. If, as a result of the transfer of assets, some banks are under-capitalised, the Government will inject the necessary capital by increasing the taxpayers' shareholding in those banks. To date, the Government has ensured that any capital injections into the banks have had a substantial return to the State.

Nationalisation of the banking system would not of itself clean up the banks' balance sheets. Anglo Irish Bank proves that point. NAMA is the best mechanism for repairing the banks' balance sheets so that they can start lending again. However, the Government is prepared to take an additional, and if necessary a controlling shareholding in the banks following the sale of assets to NAMA. Providers of funds to the Irish banks are sceptical about their land and developments loans in general. Therefore, unless that entire category of loans is cleansed from their balance sheets, irrespective of whether individual loans are performing or non-performing, the banks will not be able to attract the funds they need to support lending to the real economy.

NAMA will not overpay for the assets it buys from the banks. The price NAMA will pay for the loans will, in general, be related to the current market value of the property, adjusted to the long-term economic value in accordance with the EU framework. This price will reflect the likely return to NAMA from the assets over time. Asset prices move in cycles. Analysts believe we are nearing the bottom of the cycle, where nobody wants to sell because it maximises the loss. Everybody is waiting for the economy to recover, including the banks. However, the economy will not recover unless the banks are able to lend again to businesses and households.

[Deputy Michael Fitzpatrick.]

The Government wants to unlock this catch-22. The banks will sell their land, development loans and associated investment property loans to NAMA at their long-term economic value in return for Government bonds. The replacing of property-related loans with Government bonds will strengthen the balance sheets of the banks and that will increase their capacity to access liquidity in the financial markets and, if necessary, from the ECB.

The management of the top 100 exposures will be taken out of the banks and will be managed directly by NAMA. What remains with the banks will be managed under close supervision by NAMA and according to strict service level agreements. NAMA also provides for a mechanism to give incentives to the banks to maximise the performance on the repayment of the loans transferred to NAMA. Some institutions are likely to require additional capital to absorb losses and maintain appropriate levels of capital following the transfer of impaired assets to NAMA. To the extent that it cannot be raised independently or generated internally, the Government remains committed to providing the institutions with an appropriate level of capital to continue to meet their requirements.

Since the financial crisis began a year ago, the sole objective of the Government's actions has been the common good. That requires, first and foremost, a return to economic growth. Economic recovery is dependent on three key factors, namely, getting the public finances back in order, restoring our competitiveness by reducing our cost base and having a healthy banking system that will serve the needs of the wider economy. NAMA will ensure that credit flows again to viable businesses and households by cleaning the balance sheets of the banks. This is essential for economic recovery and the generation of employment.

When the Minister for Finance spoke in the Dáil on 16 September last he outlined that he expects that NAMA will purchase loans with a book value of around €77 billion for approximately €54 billion. The €77 billion is broken down between the following institutions: Allied Irish Banks, Anglo Irish Bank, Bank of Ireland, the Educational Building Society and the Irish Nationwide Building Society. It is projected that 36% of the assets for which the loans were used were for the purchase of land, 28% was for development property and 36% was spent on associated commercial loans. It is estimated that 40% of those loans are cashflow producing and that those will be sufficient to cover interest payments on the NAMA bonds and operating costs.

The ECB states that NAMA is consistent with its guiding principles on asset support schemes and it is designed to comply with EU state aid rules. The ECB states that "the preservation of private ownership is preferable to nationalisation", as that should prevent the high costs of nationalisation in both the short and medium term.

Everyone is in agreement that what is required is a healthy, working banking system. The course of action the Government has taken in establishing NAMA is based on advice it has received domestically, from institutions such as the IMF, and also the example of other countries taking similar steps. We are convinced that this response will ensure the safety, stability and capacity of the Irish banking system, all of which are key to supporting our economic recovery.

NAMA has requested 300 pieces of information about each loan that it will take over. Each loan will be valued separately and the actual amount of the discount to be applied will depend on a range of factors, including the location and quality of the underlying property and other collateral. The valuation method will have to be approved by the European Commission. It is impossible to estimate the correct value of the loans to be acquired without that type of detailed knowledge and anyone suggesting otherwise is being disingenuous.

Economic recovery is dependent on three key factors. Ireland has the strength to ride out this economic downturn. The economy will be well placed to benefit from the eventual recovery in the global economy because of its open nature.

Debate adjourned.

Private Members' Business.

FÁS: Motion.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: I move:

That Dáil Éireann:

- expresses its serious concern at the findings of the recent report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, which disclosed a shocking absence of financial control in FÁS including the expenditure of €600,000 on a television advertisement that was never broadcast, €9,000 on a car for a raffle that was never held and the expenditure of €622,000 which could not be accounted for;
- notes that serious breaches of procurement in the corporate affairs division of FÁS, over many years, had been detailed in the Comptroller and Auditor General's report of May 2008;
- notes that further evidence of waste of taxpayers' money on lavish travel arrangements, accommodation and entertainment for Government Ministers, FÁS board members and executives had previously emerged and had been confirmed in the interim report of the Committee of Public Accounts, published in February 2009;
- condemns the total failure of the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Deputy Mary Coughlan, and her two predecessors in that Department, Deputy Micheál Martin and Deputy Mary Harney, to exercise appropriate supervision of the agency and to prevent the wanton waste of taxpayers' money;
- believes that a far too cosy relationship was allowed to develop between the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the agency it was supposed to be supervising;
- condemns the generous financial package agreed with the former director general of FÁS, following his resignation in November 2008; believes that the package was not consistent with the Government's own guidelines governing the departure of chief executives of State bodies; and deplores, in particular, the irresponsible failure of the Tánaiste to seek legal advice on the matter;
- instructs the Tánaiste to examine all options for recovery of moneys paid to the former director general, over and above his statutory entitlement;
- calls on the Minister for Finance to bring forward revised guidelines on appropriate severance arrangements for officials who leave the public service;
- notes the resignation of the chairman of FÁS announced on 1 October 2009 and the statement confirming the intention of other members of the board to stand down;

[Deputy Róisín Shortall.]

- notes the importance of an effective and efficient training agency against the background of almost 450,000 on the live register; and
- believes that the majority of the staff at FÁS are hardworking and committed employees, who did not benefit from the regime of lavish expenses that has caused such public outrage;

calls on the Government to:

- restructure the board of FÁS along the lines proposed in the report of the Committee of Public Accounts;
- refocus FÁS on its core work as the State training agency, capable of meeting the needs of those seeking employment, by providing relevant and high-quality training; and
- ensure stringent accountability and oversight in respect of the spending of public moneys within both FÁS and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

I wish to share time with Deputies Joanna Tuffy and Martin Ferris.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: That is agreed.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Labour Party motion before the House tonight is about basic accountability. It is about addressing low standards in high places, which have been the hallmark of Fianna Fáil's hold on power over the past decade.

The scandals exposed in FÁS and the failure of the Government to address them adequately, typifies all that is wrong with the Government's attitude to the public service. The FÁS saga has been characterised by significant failings on several fronts, namely, a scandalous waste of taxpayers' money, an absence of accountability, serious breaches of procurement rules, a disregard for proper corporate governance, a lack of oversight by the board, an all too-cosy relationship with the supervising Department, a back-scratching culture arising from close personal and political connections between the executive, the board, the Department and the Ministers, and a disgraceful indulgence by senior executives in lavish entertainment and first class travel for themselves, their wives, their ministerial masters and various other hangers-on.

What makes the revelations in FÁS so difficult to take is the context in which they are set. There are 424,000 people signing on the live register at present. For many, notably those in the construction and retail sectors, there is unlikely to be much work for the foreseeable future. In that context, they need a training agency that is fit for purpose. They need an agency that is focused on identifying where they should upskill, and an agency that provides relevant and high quality training. The scandals hanging over FÁS for the past 18 months have deflected attention from this basic goal of the organisation. To some extent they have masked the dubious quality of many FÁS courses for the newly unemployed, the lack of co-ordination of services in certain areas and the short-term nature of much of the training courses offered. This is where the focus of the organisation should be, and the absence of this focus is probably the Minister's greatest failing.

The scandals are also set in the context of the call for wage restraint across the economy, but especially in the public sector. How can the Government possibly hope to convince any public servant to accept pay restraint when public servants witness the massive waste and see

a senior executive with a dubious track record walk away with a €1.1 million handshake and a free car to boot — especially when that golden handshake was overseen and sanctioned by the very Ministers who are advocating pay cuts? How can the Minister possibly think people will accept that? At a time when Government Ministers are talking about cutting basic welfare payments to save money, how can this pay-out be justified? Just a few weeks before the golden handshake the Government told us it could not afford a cervical cancer vaccine for young girls.

For workers, taxpayers and citizens, this is contemptuous. Taken together with the bailout of the banks, the bailout of reckless property developers and the ongoing excesses in the Office of the Ceann Comhairle, it sends a clear message that Government Ministers and others who hold senior public positions care more about themselves and their cronies than the public they are meant to serve. The profligate attitude to public money so prevalent at a senior level in FÁS has tarnished the entire public service. The failure of Ministers to deal with this wastefulness has also completely undermined the moral authority of Government and has played into the hands of those commentators who question the very principle of public service.

I now turn to the severance package agreed with Mr. Rody Molloy. There are several aspects to this agreement that remain clouded in mystery. In the first instance, it is unclear under what legal instrument the top-up arrangements were made. At the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on 24 September 2009, the Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment stated that the top-up was provided for under section 6(3) of the Labour Services Act 1987, yet Government Ministers now insist it was made under guidelines issued by the Department of Finance. If it were made under these guidelines, did anybody in the Department read them before they concluded the negotiations?

The regulations show quite clearly that increased lump sum payments and enhanced pension entitlement for the departing executive of a semi-State body are only permissible in the case of the non-renewal of a contract or where a decision has been made to terminate a CEO's employment before the termination of the contract. The guidelines specifically state, "It is not therefore appropriate to make such payments where the initiative for the termination of a contract comes from the CEO concerned." However, both the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste are on the record as stating that Mr. Molloy resigned voluntarily. The Taoiseach told the Dáil on 26 November 2008 that Mr. Molloy "tendered his resignation to the board of that organisation", adding later that "he tendered his resignation of his own volition...". The statement issued by the Tánaiste on the previous day was headlined, "Tánaiste confirms resignation of FÁS Director General". Equally, the Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr. Sean Gorman, referred consistently to the departure of Mr. Molloy as a resignation during his recent contribution to the Committee of Public Accounts.

If Mr. Molloy resigned of his own volition, there was no basis for the huge financial package he was awarded at the expense of the Irish taxpayer, and the Tánaiste acted *ultra vires*. If Mr. Molloy did not resign of his own volition, the Dáil has been misled in a most serious way by the Taoiseach. There is a direct conflict between the accounts of Mr. Molloy's departure given to the Dáil in November 2008 and claims now being made by the Government. The only way to clarify this is for the Government to publish the text of the written agreement concluded with Mr. Molloy at that time. I call on the Tánaiste to do that now.

We also need clarity as to the role played by the Minister for Finance in approving the Molloy deal. The Minister has ducked and dodged on this issue, avoiding giving a direct answer at all costs. It was incumbent on the Minister for Finance, before he gave his consent to the deal, to be satisfied that both section 7 of the Superannuation and Pensions Act 1963 and his own Department's guidelines were adhered to. The Minister and his Department would also

[Deputy Róisín Shortall.]

have required evidence of the status of Mr. Molloy's departure — if it was a retirement or a removal from office.

When the Department of Finance and the Minister heard the Taoiseach inform the House that Mr. Molloy “tendered his resignation of his own volition,” they would have been aware that, *prima facie*, severance payments were impermissible under the 1963 Act and, further, were inappropriate and in total and express violation of the clear terms of their own guidelines. The Minister for Finance needs to account for his Department's total disregard for the law on this issue and this conscious and deliberate misuse of taxpayers' money. As regards the Minister's role, he appears to acknowledge he was generally aware of the negotiations; he does not say he sanctioned and approved the deal such as would amount to consent for the purposes of the Act. The Minister must also clarify the tax implications of the enhanced lump sum payment made to Mr. Molloy as well as possible benefit-in-kind implications of the famous company car.

The question also remains as to whether there was a legal threat and how that impacted on the generosity of the agreed package. The Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment stated, “The threat of the courts was hanging over us.” He went on to state. “It was also made clear that, if the individual believed that he was not being treated reasonably, he would reserve his right to take court action.” Last week, however, the Taoiseach was quoted as saying, “The situation as I understand it is that the overall package was offered on the basis that it would be the agreed way by which he would leave the organisation quickly...- the question of the threatened legal action, that's a matter...which could have emerged subsequently if there wasn't an agreement.” Either there was or was not a legal threat. Either a legal threat was or was not made clear to the Government. If there was no legal threat, why the generous severance package? If there was a legal threat, why was legal advice not sought?

Reports suggest Mr. Molloy was granted his car as part of his resignation package. As we learned recently, a FÁS car going missing is not exactly a new phenomenon. This is all the more reason to ask if Mr. Molloy's FÁS car was part of his severance package. If it was part of his package, who approved it and on what basis? If there was no legal basis for it, can we have the car back, please?

The problems at FÁS do not begin and end with Rody Molloy. There is also a question of wider political accountability for the problems that have beset the organisation for several years. The former Ministers for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Deputies Martin and Harney, must take their share of the blame for the excesses and absence of adequate controls in the organisation in the recent past. They, too, practised their share of cronyism.

In failing to respond to the problems, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Deputy Coughlan, in particular, has a number of questions to answer. Her actions so far bear all the hallmarks of a Minister scurrying for cover rather than tackling the serious issues in a meaningful way. Why did the Tánaiste not take action on FÁS much sooner? The first indications of serious problems at FÁS came from a Comptroller and Auditor General report as far back as May 2008. That report identified a number of breaches of procurement rules, mismanagement of public money, overspending and a failure to achieve value for money. What did the Tánaiste do about the report? It seems she did little or nothing. She dithered and delayed and did nothing until the second Comptroller and Auditor General's report was published last month, at which point renewed media interest forced her into paying some attention to the problems.

As far back as February this year, the Committee of Public Accounts made several recommendations on foot of the first report of the Comptroller and Auditor General. None of these recommendations has been implemented to date. Later revelations in the *Sunday Independent*

about the extravagant spending by FÁS executives brought the full media spotlight on the problem. Rather than sack anyone, the Tánaiste allowed the situation to drift and refused to take charge of the agency which had, for some time, been shown to be wasting huge amounts of taxpayers' money. Eventually, following public pressure she did an extraordinarily generous deal with the man who felt his only option was to resign. The Tánaiste should have consulted the Attorney General for his advice and specifically to have him clarify what rights and entitlements, if any, Mr. Molloy had, given that he was resigning and was neither dismissed nor was he retiring. This legal advice is available free of charge from the Office of the Attorney General. If the Tánaiste had bothered to seek it, she would have been told that Mr. Molloy did not have any rights since he had tendered his resignation.

Clearly, the Tánaiste hoped that by agreeing a sweetheart deal with Mr. Molloy, he would go away quietly and the whole FÁS debacle would fizzle out. Not only did she behave recklessly in throwing away €1.1 million of taxpayers' money and act *ultra vires*, but she set a very dangerous precedent for other cases in that she has provided what amounts to a general, blanket acknowledgement that resigning chief executive officers are entitled to certain rights and entitlements, irrespective of the true facts and circumstances surrounding their departure. The Tánaiste needs to make a statement regarding the role of the FÁS board in respect of the severance payment regarding the code of practice for the governance of State bodies. It is precisely this kind of action by Ministers which gives the public service a bad name and is seen to be condoning low standards in high places. In any other jurisdiction, the Tánaiste would no longer be in Cabinet.

Today, the Tánaiste published the Labour Services (Amendment) Bill 2009. Yet again, however, she has not gone far enough. From an initial reading, it appears the Minister will retain greater control of who is appointed to the board, perpetuating the cronyism that has riddled the FÁS organisation for many years. This makes matters worse. When the heat dies down FÁS will inevitably return to being the play thing of the Fianna Fáil Party.

Deputy Mary Coughlan: That is not true.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Committee of Public Accounts recommended that the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment be given a central role in selecting candidates for the FÁS board. Such a provision is not contained in the Bill in which the Minister has taken it upon herself to have full responsibility for all appointments made to the board. That is not progress.

Deputy Mary Coughlan: Des Geraghty may have something to say about the Deputy's views on the board.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: It is also interesting to note that while whistle-blowing protection is offered to employees of FÁS when they speak up against a serious wrongdoing in the organisation, no such protection is offered to employees in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. This is a significant problem which I ask the Tánaiste to address. Furthermore, it is astonishing, in light of the Molloy deal, that the Minister has published a Labour Services (Amendment) Bill which will not prevent further similar deals being made in future. If the Bill is meant to herald a new beginning, it falls a long way short.

The Government seeks to defend its position tonight by proposing a counter-motion which, in the usual self-congratulatory tone, seeks to pretend that the Tánaiste is doing something about the problems in FÁS. Nothing could be further from the truth. Long before the Tánaiste announced her investigation, the Comptroller and Auditor General was conducting an investigation and the Committee of Public Accounts was hearing evidence from the parties involved.

[Deputy Róisín Shortall.]

While these detailed examinations must continue, by their nature they are taking place after the event. What we need now from Government is for meaningful action to be taken. The Labour Party motion seeks several key actions from Government to deal with the problems with FÁS and to effect greater accountability. It is long past the time we saw these measures taken.

I note that on this, the first night of this debate, not a single backbench Deputy from Fianna Fáil or the Green Party is present and the only person on the Government benches is the Tánaiste.

Deputy Mary Coughlan: A parliamentary party meeting is taking place, as are discussions on a programme for Government.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: I have a simple question for Fianna Fáil and Green Party backbench Deputies. Do they believe Rody Molloy deserved his golden handshake? Quite simply, that is the question on which the House will divide tomorrow night. If Government Deputies had been in charge, would they have allowed the golden handshake? Do they believe FÁS and other areas of the public service will ever be reformed if these cosy deals continue to be done? If they believe Mr. Molloy deserved his golden handshake, they should by all means vote to support the Tánaiste and Government. If, however, they do not believe he deserved it, they do not have any other option but to vote with the Labour Party tomorrow night.

Deputy Joanna Tuffy: The Labour Party motion calls for FÁS to be refocused on its core work as the State training agency. The organisation is needed more than ever. As Deputy Shortall noted, almost 430,000 people are on the live register. It is extremely important, therefore, that FÁS is made fit for purpose. While the organisation has had many positive achievements over the years, in many respects it has not worked and has many faults. In addressing the revelations surrounding FÁS and restoring public trust in the agency, we must ensure an employment agency emerges that can deal with the needs of jobseekers.

The Labour Services (Amendment) Bill 2009 published today by the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment does not make provision to reform the functions of FÁS. Section 4 of the original legislation, the Labour Services Act 1987 which established FÁS, sets out the purposes of the new organisation. The needs of jobseekers in 2009 are much different from the needs of jobseekers in 1987. We are playing a different ball game in terms of the type of employment we need to create in this period of unprecedented economic crisis. What will the Minister do to reform the functions of FÁS in terms of how it provides services to job seekers and so on?

I mentioned an OECD report in the Dáil, which was published last year, which examined the services provided by FÁS and made recommendations. I asked for a debate on that report. It did not happen and I have not heard the Minister discuss taking a broad review of the services of FÁS.

FÁS has done innovative projects over the years. It has trained thousands of apprentices and we have very skilled tradespeople here. With all the talk about the smart economy, we must not forget that we will always need skilled tradespeople. It is extremely important that we provide the best of education for our apprentices. There are many issues. We will require our apprentices to do different types of work in the future than was done in the past. For example, there are issues about needing to conserve energy in homes, which includes the work carpenters and electricians do.

There have been innovative programmes. My brother went on a placement as an engineering graduate to Japan. I worked on a social employment scheme in the early 1990s and it certainly helped me to get employment. There were problems; it was not perfect and there were many gaps, which I will discuss later. The McCarthy report recommends cuts in the numbers of special needs assistants by the Department of Education and Science. Many such posts were initially provided through FÁS training schemes.

FÁS training schemes have provided services in local communities which were not otherwise provided. Many schemes are unnecessary; the picture is not all bright in terms of the work done. However, there were innovative FÁS training schemes and much work was done in renovating heritage buildings and so on. One problem is that in 1995 there were 40,000 community employment schemes but now there are approximately 20,000 and growing numbers of people are unemployed, including graduates who have no jobs and are sitting at home drawing the dole. We need to do something about providing opportunities for people and FÁS is the obvious agency to do that.

I will discuss the negatives. In the OECD report I mentioned there is no engagement with jobseekers when they sign on now. That is the reality. People do not know where to go. In Lucan a person who loses his job, signs on for the dole but nobody is in place to discuss his needs, direct him to the various agencies or tell him what courses are available. There were 1,000 FÁS places announced by the Minister, which is a drop in the ocean, but most people in Lucan who have lost their jobs do not know about them and are reliant on people like me telling them about them. That is not good enough.

There needs to be much more engagement. People who have never been unemployed before and have been in the workforce for years are being left without proper engagement with the various training agencies and one of the most problematic in that regard in FÁS, because it waits for people to go to it. It does not go to jobseekers or examine their needs, except in a statistical sense, and that needs to be changed.

There is a lack of feedback. When I worked on a FÁS social employment scheme 20 years ago — I presume it is the same now — I was not asked if the scheme was any good, if it helped me or if training has been involved, because there was no training. Nothing like that is done by FÁS. There is duplication and a lack of liaison with other agencies such as the VECs and colleges who provide training and education for young people.

There are issues about the way FÁS is structured. None of that is being examined. There is a problem regarding all the scandals that have come out. There was a culture in FÁS which came from the Government, because there has been a culture of waste of public money and extravagant expenditure by the Government, which was followed through in terms of how the management and board of directors managed and governed FÁS.

Several things need to be done. Deputy Shortall raised the need to deal with ethics, the scandal about expenses and how the board of FÁS is structured and appointed, all of which needs to be followed up. The recommendations in the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Committee of Public Accounts need to be implemented. We also need to examine what we want FÁS to do, its functions and the services it provides. That is the bigger picture. The Minister has fallen down. She must use her ministry to provide for the needs of jobseekers and make sure we have trained and skilled people for our workforce according to the needs of the future and make sure we have sustainable employment.

There is a need, in terms of restructuring FÁS, to consult with the people who work there from the bottom up. There are many good people working there and it provides many good services. We need to bring everybody on board in the improvement of the agency because it is very important to our future economy. There is also a need to consult jobseekers. We should

[Deputy Joanna Tuffy.]

not just have statistics about the men and women who are unemployed. We need to know exactly who these people are, what their needs are, what level of training they have, what area of work they have aptitude for and what services and training FÁS can provide for them. When doing all of this it is very important that we engage all the agencies, not just FÁS, and work together to meet the needs of employees.

Deputy Martin Ferris: I thank the Labour Party for the opportunity to speak tonight. What benefit or advantage from the scandal at FÁS have those who have been left unemployed by a Government-fuelled recession? Was too much money spent on training initiatives or on unemployment schemes? If any excess in expenditure arose in FÁS, it should have related to training, upskilling and providing employment and opportunities for the thousands of people unemployed. There was massive institutionalised waste of public funds by Government and senior management in FÁS. Who would have thought that the main beneficiaries in the State training and employment authority would be those secure enough in their jobs to go on holidays to Florida while the recession hit those who needed FÁS most.

Today we see the publication of the Labour Services (Amendment) Bill. While we welcome actions to improve the governance of FÁS and the strengthening of accountability, some of the provisions are laughable. The greatest farce is the power bestowed on the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, in consultation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Education and Science, to select the members of the board of FÁS. The Minister, Deputy Coughlan, gave Rody Molloy an extremely generous golden handshake on his way out without getting legal advice.

The Minister should not be empowered to make such decisions when her blatant incompetence has been plastered all over the news in recent weeks for all and sundry to see. Reform has to be implemented as quickly as possible. Sinn Féin already called for the Tánaiste to resign. She has stood over the indecent golden handshake given to the disgraced former director general, Rody Molloy, and has shown herself to be incapable of addressing the unemployment crisis and getting FÁS to do the job it was set up to do.

Unemployment continues to grow daily. Young men and women join the dole queues in alarming numbers. The unemployment rate in the country is more than 12.5%, but in my county it is now 27%. A new board needs to address the dire unemployment crisis and put in place training and upskilling programmes to meet the needs of unemployed workers. That this mess has been dragging on for the past 18 months is hugely damaging. Time has been lost, during which training and upskilling to assist in economic recovery could have been put in place.

Rody Molloy should have been sacked, fired, booted out and shamed for his disgraceful behaviour in FÁS, but he was not. He was allowed to resign and save face having squandered millions of euros of taxpayers' money. What we have seen is double standards in government. Government officials across the board have looked after their own by making sure they got a little extra something, while workers across the State have been feeling this recession harder than anybody else. Where was the Government intervention and support when, for example, the Thomas Cook workers had to protest in the headquarters of that company after being brought before the High Court for seeking a decent remuneration for themselves? Rather than helping such workers, Government officials went to a seedy backroom to negotiate with Rody Molloy, fluff up his best egg and give him a pat on the back. The FÁS expenditure scandal is another example of a branch of Government having no accountability. We should not have to wait for resignations. There should be no hesitation in sacking these people on the spot. It should be a case of "do not pass go and do not collect your executive pension".

Action needs to be taken now. We need to put in place a framework to monitor and enforce accountability procedures. These people are not above the law and should not remain in privileged positions when they readily abuse their power. There is palatable anger among the ordinary citizens of this country as they struggle to hold onto their jobs, their incomes are slashed and Government taxes further reduce their take-home pay. The Government has responded to that anger by establishing NAMA and offering extravagant pensions to directors. It is totally out of touch with the people. It has demonstrated its incompetence time and again. It has neither the brains nor the brawn to get Ireland back to work and out of recession. It has no mandate at this time. It is so compromised by its close relationship with developers, bankers and oil companies that it is unable and unwilling to relate to working-class people. An ideology of greed has manifested itself among this country's political elite, including the Government and its cronies. The Tánaiste has suffered from ostrich syndrome over the last few months as this expenditure wastage was revealed. The Minister, Deputy Harney, was embroiled in this scandalous affair during her reign as Tánaiste. Senior civil servants also enjoyed the fiesta at FÁS. It is apparent that burgeoning unemployment, cuts in social welfare and excessive taxes do not affect those in the Government's golden circle.

Not only do we want an end to this behaviour, but we also want to know how it came about. Who was to blame? Where does the buck stop? How was this allowed to happen? The answer is simple. As a former Member of this House said on television last night, successive Fianna Fáil Governments have developed a culture of corruption, cronyism and golden handshakes. NAMA is a case in point. The only beneficiaries of this form of Government intervention will be bankers and developers. There is no NAMA for ordinary people, such as the young couples who are currently in debt to the banks, struggling to pay their mortgages or whose houses have been repossessed. Young couples have been evicted by banks, which have then re-let those houses to those they have evicted. The taxpayers of Ireland did not consent to this when they were forced to bail out the banks. The banks, the developers and their political cronies have abused this country's system for their own greedy needs. There is a culture of cronyism and corruption within FÁS and within the Government. Deputies Coughlan, Harney and Martin have been embroiled in this scandal. The controls that were in place were simply bypassed, public money was squandered shamelessly and senior management oversight did not exist. The key issue that has to be addressed is the weakness in the system that allowed such wastage and disregard for taxpayers' money to occur without being uncovered. We need to consider how these indignities were dealt with.

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment is responsible to the Dáil for overall expenditure, employment and labour force policy. How well has she done to date? That her home county has the fifth highest rate of unemployment in the State speaks volumes in itself. The result of the referendum on the Lisbon treaty in her constituency was a further reflection of the dissatisfaction of citizens with her job performance. The underlying truth is that the buck stops with the Tánaiste. I commend the Labour Party on proposing this motion. I hope the legislation that was published today will deal with this problem, although I have my doubts. We do not want the circumstances over which the Tánaiste has presided to arise again. I refer, for example, to the expenditure of €600,000 on a television advertisement that was never broadcast. Similarly, €9,000 was spent on a car for a raffle that was never held, while a further €622,000 cannot be accounted for.

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): I move amendment No. 1:

To delete all words after "Dáil Éireann" and substitute the following:

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

“recognises:

- the critical role of FÁS, as the State’s employment and training agency, in assisting the Government meet the current training, upskilling and employment needs of the workforce;
- the difficulties that the current economic situation poses for the unemployed and their families;
- the work ethic and commitment of the majority of FÁS employees across the country;
- the serious deficiencies in financial controls highlighted in the Comptroller and Auditor General’s Special Report No. 10 on Non-Commercial State Sponsored Bodies (Special Report No. 10), published in May 2008, and the subsequent confirmation of irregularities in the report of the investigation, requested by the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, by the Comptroller and Auditor General into Advertising and Promotion in FÁS (Special Report No. 66);
- the need for change and reform of the governance structure at FÁS;
- the need to ensure greater accountability and transparency at FÁS; and
- the need to restore public confidence in the ability of FÁS to deliver on its training and employment mandate;

commends the Government on:

- the speedy and appropriate response of the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to the issues raised regarding the lack of financial controls in certain areas in FÁS contained in Special Report No. 10, which came to her attention in May 2008, including:
 - securing immediate clarification and assurances from FÁS that the practices highlighted in the Special Report No. 10 with regard to FÁS had ceased and that adequate systems and controls were in place to prevent any recurrence;
 - requesting the Comptroller and Auditor General in September 2008 to undertake an investigation of the Advertising and Promotion activities of FÁS Corporate Affairs since 2000 and to report on the effectiveness of management and control systems across the FÁS organisation;
 - obtaining confirmation from FÁS that it was now fully compliant with Department of Finance regulations regarding foreign travel;
 - instigating a review by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment into the science challenge programme that resulted in the cessation of the programme and its related foreign travel activity;
 - securing the speedy departure of the former Director General of FÁS without further damage to the FÁS organisation and interruption to the work underway to improve financial controls and governance at the organisation, on terms in line with

the arrangements available should his contract have been terminated by the Board of FÁS;

- seeking a review of the severance arrangements provided to the former Director General of FÁS in the light of a recent statement from a FÁS board member regarding the deliberate withholding of information from the Board of FÁS; and
- ensuring that FÁS implemented measures to improve financial control and governance across the organisation including:
 - the restructuring and tightening of controls in the Corporate Affairs function, which is at the centre of the Comptroller and Auditor General's investigation;
 - the implementation of a revised structure for its Internal Audit including resources for additional staff and external co-sourced audits;
 - the commencement of a full audit of all procurement locations by FÁS Internal Audit which is due for completion by the end of the year;
 - the cancellation of all credit cards in FÁS with the exception of one which is used to purchase books and periodicals; and
 - the reduction of the FÁS advertising budget to a minimum;
- confirming her determination to implement all appropriate changes arising from the fourth interim report and recommendations of the Committee of Public Accounts on Special Report No. 10 following its publication in February 2009, and the report (Special Report No. 66) and recommendations of the investigation requested by her and undertaken by the Comptroller and Auditor General into Advertising and Promotion in FÁS following it being submitted to her in June 2009; and
- publishing legislation to amend the Labour Services Act 1987 so as to provide for a governance structure with greater accountability to the taxpayer, and including:
 - the restructuring of the size and composition of the Board;
 - removing the automatic right to nominate individuals for appointment as Board members from bodies not directly accountable to the taxpayer;
 - making the Director General of FÁS accountable to the Oireachtas;
 - a situation where a director's fiduciary duties do not prevent the P.T.O. director in question from reporting to the Minister;
 - requirements in relation to disclosure and conflicts of interest; and
 - protection for members of staff who report serious wrongdoing in the organisation; and
- the work of the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment in:
 - refocusing and targeting FÁS policies and budgets on the particular needs of those unemployed and seeking work;
 - putting measures in place to ensure that those who become unemployed are given effective employment services and training supports to assist their return to employment, including:

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

- doubling the capacity of the job search supports system provided by FÁS Employment Services and the partnership-based Local Employment Service to 147,000 places per year;
- the quadrupling to 92,000 places in short training courses, which are occupation-specific and will give individuals specific skills so they can compete for specific job vacancies;
- the introduction of specific initiatives to activate the unemployed including the creation of 3,800 places for redundant apprentices, increasing the total number of places on the Community Employment Scheme to 22,700 this year; and the introduction of an innovative new Work Placement Programme;
- the introduction of new FÁS courses to train and re-skill people for the new clean-tech and green economy; and
- instigating a comprehensive review of the efficiency and effectiveness of labour market programmes, the report on which is currently being finalised.”

Since my appointment last year as Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, my goal has been to get the bottom of what happened in FÁS and to fix the problem in a way that ensures, to the best of my ability, that it does not happen again. These are simple and clear objectives. It is understandable that people can sometimes be frustrated by how long the process takes. Members of the House will be aware of the importance of due process. If I were to adopt a course of action that prejudices due process in any way, or if I were to deal with the serious issues that have arisen in FÁS in a purely politically expedient way, the Deputies opposite would be the first to object and to call me to account in this House. The Labour Services (Amendment) Bill 2009 was published today following proper and due consideration of the various issues by me, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Committee of Public Accounts and the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Bill's strong and considered proposals send a clear signal to the public and to FÁS that there will be a root and branch cultural change in accountability and transparency at the agency. I acknowledge that members of the Committee of Public Accounts from both sides of the House have rightly played an important role in the legislative process. The importance of following due process was further emphasised today, in a separate development, when the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation decided to bring criminal charges against a FÁS senior manager for deceiving FÁS of taxpayers' money. This is a significant indication of the seriousness with which the State is taking what has emerged at FÁS. A further Garda investigation is continuing at the agency. The work of both the Internal Audit Committee and the Comptroller and Auditor General is also continuing.

For the benefit of the House, I wish to set out some specific details of the actions I have taken since I was appointed as the Minister with responsibility for this matter. The full extent of the content of the FÁS internal audit report, INV 137, which raised concerns about certain procurement practices in the FÁS corporate affairs division, came to my attention after the publication of the Comptroller and Auditor General's special report No. 10 in May 2008. That report dealt with a number of issues that arose in recent audits carried out by the Comptroller and Auditor General on non-commercial State-sponsored bodies. The issues identified centred largely on failures relating to procurement processes, governance and financial management.

In the case of FÁS, the Comptroller and Auditor General concluded that formal internal procedural guidelines were not observed in the corporate affairs division. He found there was a failure to achieve value for money in the way FÁS managed its relationship with its principal advertising agency and the way it conducted business with contractors for major events. He said that the absence of a strategic IT plan within FÁS while a website project was being developed facilitated the misdirection of resources. Following the publication of this report, I took immediate steps to deal with the problems that had been identified. When I met the chairman and the director general of FÁS in June 2008, I sought assurances that the issues raised in the special report were being addressed and emphasised the importance of FÁS securing value for money in its expenditure. On 30 June, I instructed the Secretary General of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to write to the then director general to ask for a comprehensive report from FÁS setting out the measures it had taken to tighten its internal controls to prevent a recurrence of the practices raised in the Comptroller and Auditor General's special report. The then director general responded in writing on 1 July, setting out in detail the remedial actions taken in addressing my and my Department's concerns. Notwithstanding the actions taken by FÁS and in the light of the seriousness with which I viewed the findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General's special report No. 10 and the issues that emerged subsequently, in September 2008 I considered that it was necessary to have an independent review of the effectiveness of management and control systems in place across the entire organisation. I therefore requested the Comptroller and Auditor General to consider undertaking a special review of FÁS and he acceded to that request.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: That was under way.

The Tánaiste: No, it was not.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: It was not up to the Tánaiste to request the Comptroller and Auditor General to do anything.

The Tánaiste: My intention in requesting the review was to ensure that appropriate public procurement procedures exist to prevent or detect irregularities or wrongdoing and to examine and report on the activities of the FÁS corporate affairs area since 2000. This was in order to achieve reasonable assurance on whether there were any occasions of potential fraud or irregularity in that area other than those already brought to light by the FÁS internal audit unit. The Comptroller and Auditor General confirmed that he would finalise the scope of his new review after the Oireachtas Committee of Public Accounts had completed its hearings with the management of FÁS in October and November 2008 regarding the Comptroller and Auditor General's special report No. 10 and the 2007 FÁS accounts. The report of those hearings issued in February 2009, by which stage the Comptroller and Auditor General had begun preliminary inquiries in his new investigation. This action resulted in the publication of the Comptroller and Auditor General's special report into advertising and promotion in FÁS in September 2009.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: What did the Tánaiste do about that?

The Tánaiste: This is the first of two reports into FÁS, the second of which is currently being drafted by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

In November 2008, after initial intense negotiations on the terms of his departure, the then director general tendered his resignation following reports of excessive travel expenditure in the organisation. In the interest of allowing FÁS to focus on its core mission, an interim director

[The Tánaiste.]

general was appointed. I again met the chair and some members of the board of FÁS and expressed my further concern at events that had taken place in the corporate affairs division.

In regard to the issue of foreign travel in FÁS, I instructed the Secretary General of my Department to ensure that FÁS was compliant with Department of Finance regulations.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Tánaiste should have been doing that anyway.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Allow the Tánaiste to continue without interruption.

The Tánaiste: In December 2008, the chairman of FÁS confirmed in writing that FÁS was fully compliant with Department of Finance regulations in regard to foreign travel.

As the foreign travel issue centred around the science challenge programme, in December 2008 I commissioned an internal review into the science challenge initiative. The review focused on whether the initiative as it then operated offered value for money and in drawing its conclusions would make recommendations with regard to its future. The working group carrying out the review comprised officials from my Department, FÁS officials who had not hitherto been involved in the administration of science challenge, Forfás and Science Foundation Ireland. Senior officials from the Higher Education Authority were also consulted.

The working group's principal conclusions were that the science challenge programme was outside the main remit of FÁS, did not represent best value for money on the basis of efficiency, effectiveness and economy and offered no evidence to show that it had, in itself, contributed to the goals of the Government's strategy for science, technology and innovation.

In light of the working group's findings, I directed the Department to make the necessary arrangements for the commencement of the orderly wind down of the science challenge initiative once all existing commitments for the 2008-09 academic year had been met.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Department should have been doing that anyway.

The Tánaiste: This has now been carried out.

In terms of supervision of any agency it is important that a parent Department should satisfy itself that systems are in place to effectively manage public funds. However, this should not be interpreted as Departments having to take onto themselves responsibilities that properly belong to the bodies concerned. That is why, in addition to my Department's monitoring of activities, the second mechanism for ensuring adherence to the requirements of the code of practice for the governance of State bodies is so important. My Department ensures this is achieved through the assurances in the FÁS annual report each year that steps have been taken to ensure an appropriate control environment. This is in line with Department of Finance guidelines that require that Accounting Officers should satisfy themselves that the requirements of the code of practice for the governance of State bodies are being implemented in State bodies under their aegis.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: The Tánaiste had a representative on the board.

The Tánaiste: Since the code of practice was issued, it has been confirmed by FÁS each year over the period 2002-07, with the exception of 2006, that steps were taken to ensure an appropriate control environment. It also stated that the audit committee on behalf of the board conducted a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial controls and that no weaknesses were found in the system which resulted in any material loss, contingencies or

uncertainties being disclosed in the financial statements or the auditor's report on the financial statements. It was not until the 2006 statement on internal financial control, which was dated 27 June 2007, that it was noted that an internal audit had pointed to some weaknesses in procurement and that the board had taken steps to address them.

Since becoming aware of the issues in FÁS, I and my officials have been in constant contact with the organisation to ensure that it puts in place proper procedures to improve corporate governance. In this regard I welcome both the work of the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Committee of Public Accounts, as well as the publication of the committee's fourth interim report.

The measures FÁS has implemented to improve financial control and governance across the organisation include the restructuring and tightening of controls in the corporate affairs function, which is at the centre of the Comptroller and Auditor General's investigation; the implementation of a revised structure for its internal audit including resources for additional staff and external co-sourced audits; the commencement of a full audit of all procurement locations by FÁS internal audit, which is due for completion by the end of the year; the cancellation of all credit cards in FÁS with the exception of one used to purchase books and periodicals; and the cessation of the opportunities exhibitions and the reduction of the FÁS advertising budget to a minimum.

I want to address the issue of the severance package awarded to the former director general of FÁS. Mr. Molloy's severance package, which was negotiated to secure his departure from the post of director general, was broadly in line with the package he could have claimed under his employment contract had it been terminated by the board of FÁS.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: No, it was not.

The Tánaiste: I assure the House that the decision to agree to the addition of years to his pension entitlement was not taken lightly. Securing his departure in a non-litigious manner was considered to be in line with the best interests of both the FÁS organisation and the taxpayer. The severance package was agreed in accordance with section 6(3) of the Labour Services Act 1987.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: No legal advice was taken.

The Tánaiste: I should point out to the House that any question of dismissal is, in the first instance, a matter for the board of FÁS. In this regard, it should be noted that if the board had dismissed him, the procedures involved would have been time consuming and in the absence of due and fair process could possibly have ended up in a court action.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: It might have been within the law, however.

The Tánaiste: It would not have been possible to effect the necessary speedy change of director general, which was in the best interests of FÁS, its clients and the taxpayer. At all times during this process I acted in line with the advice of officials of my own Department and the Department of Finance.

There had been considerable comment both inside and outside the House in regard to the issue of whether legal advice was obtained, and whether it was necessary to obtain legal advice on this occasion. I want to make it clear to the House that in regard to the issue of legal advice on the veracity of any possible legal action by Mr. Molloy, this did not arise as, although present, concern over legal action was not the deciding factor.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: No, it is that what the Tánaiste decides to do should be within the law. That is the point, she broke the law. She did not take legal advice.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Allow the Tánaiste to make her contribution.

The Tánaiste: As I outlined at the outset of my remarks, I have today published the Labour Services (Amendment) Bill 2009.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: She did not break the law.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: She did break the law.

The Tánaiste: When enacted, this legislation will improve the effectiveness and governance of the board of FÁS and strengthen the accountability of its director general to the Oireachtas. The Bill takes account of the recommendations made by the Committee of Public Accounts in its fourth interim report and the work of the Comptroller and Auditor General. My main purpose in this Bill is to effect a number of amendments to the Labour Services Act 1987 in order to improve the effectiveness and governance of the board of FÁS and strengthen the accountability of its director general to the Oireachtas. I propose to make the following amendments: to reduce the size of the board from 17 to 11 members; to change the composition of the board by providing that the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment may select its members, in consultation with the Minister for Social and Family Affairs and the Minister for Education and Science——

Deputy Róisín Shortall: More cronyism.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: Are the unions cronies?

Deputy Róisín Shortall: It is making matters worse.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Members should allow the Tánaiste to make her contribution without holding side debates.

The Tánaiste: ——in a non-prescribed manner based on a person's particular talents and experience——

Deputy Róisín Shortall: Common membership, no doubt.

Deputy Mary Coughlan: ——to include the director general as an *ex officio* member of the board; to introduce a rolling system of appointments to the board; to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Public Accounts relating to the accountability of the director general of FÁS and the fiduciary duties of directors appointed by the Minister; to introduce provisions relating to the disclosure of interests by board members and the staff of FÁS; and to provide protection for FÁS staff who act in a bona fide manner as whistleblowers. My publication of this Bill sends a clear signal to the public, and to FÁS, that I want to restore public confidence in its ability to deliver on its training and employment mandate.

Last month the live register fell by 16,500 persons. This was a welcome development and was the first decrease in the live register figures since September 2008. However, despite this decrease 423,600 persons remain on the register and the Government is committed to continuing to provide these individuals with the necessary assistance during this difficult period.

On an on-going basis significant numbers of unemployed persons leave the live register. From October 2008 to September 2009, 150,530 are recorded as leaving to employment. This is a positive trend that shows there are still jobs available and that the Government activation measures are assisting the unemployed to develop their skills and secure employment.

To respond to the increasing numbers of people on the live register, I am working closely with my colleagues, the Ministers, Deputies Hanafin and Batt O’Keeffe, to ensure that appropriate responses are developed and put in place to meet the upskilling needs of those who are losing their jobs or facing uncertain employment prospects. My Department alone is investing €1 billion in the provision of a range of labour force measures that will provide training and work experience opportunities to assist those who have lost their jobs.

FÁS employment services, together with the local employment services, have put in place measures to double the capacity to cater for the rise in referrals from the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The implementation of these measures has increased the annual referral capacity to 147,000 persons this year. These measures and others represent a significant step in meeting the considerable challenge of supporting the unemployed.

In a difficult employment climate such as that which we currently face, the importance of training and education is vital for everyone within the workforce. The impact such opportunities can have for those who are out of work and are seeking to rejoin the labour market, cannot be overstated. To assist individuals through the provision of education and training opportunities, I have also almost doubled the number of activation training and work experience places provided by FÁS to over 130,000. This is a substantial increase on the 66,000 places which were available at the end of last year.

Specifically, there are additional training places on short courses available to the unemployed. This year my Department, through FÁS, will deliver approximately 92,000 short course training places to the unemployed, which is a quadrupling of the number of similar courses which were provided last year and reflects the Government’s efforts in increasing relevant supports for the unemployed.

In addition, in the supplementary budget the Government announced its intention to establish a programme that will provide valuable work experience to individuals who are unemployed and who have had limited experience to date. My colleague, the Minister, Deputy Hanafin, and I jointly launched the work placement programme on 2 June. The programme will provide 2,000 individuals who have been unemployed with a six-month work experience placement including graduates.

Since the beginning of 2008 there has been a significant contraction in activity in the construction sector. This contraction has been accompanied by a substantial reduction in the numbers of people employed within that sector. This has had a severe impact on individuals who are currently undertaking an apprenticeship. Unfortunately, at present there are 5,700 redundant apprentices who are seeking to complete their apprenticeships. The Government is fully aware of the difficult situation in which these redundant apprentices find themselves and that is why it is committed to assisting redundant apprentices to gain employment as soon as possible in Ireland or abroad in order that these individuals may complete their apprenticeships.

I have introduced a wide range of measures designed to help alleviate the present situation by enabling 3,800 redundant apprentices to progress their apprenticeships this year. The measures include FÁS putting in place a measure whereby apprentices who are made redundant can progress to the next off-the-job training phase in the education sector. This means that they do not need to do their on-the-job phase and can go directly to the next off-the-job phase.

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

FÁS has also introduced an employer-based redundant apprentice rotation scheme to provide support for employers to provide on-the-job training to 500 redundant apprentices when they have released their employed apprentice to a scheduled phase 4 and phase 6 off-the-job training phase in the institutes of technology. ESB Networks have agreed a programme with FÁS to provide on-the-job training to eligible redundant electrical apprentices at phase 5 and phase 7, and this programme will provide 400 places over a period of 18 months. The institutes of technology are also providing an 11-week certified training programme for 700 redundant apprentices who have completed their phase 4 training but where another training opportunity is not currently available to them.

As was already noted in the FÁS internal audit report INV 137, and confirmed by subsequent investigations by the Comptroller and Auditor General, primary responsibility for the procurement and promotional activity in question lay with corporate affairs section of FÁS. I have already outlined in some detail to the House the changes that have been introduced into procedures within FÁS.

The fact that there were problems in one area in FÁS does not in any way reflect the work of the majority of the staff in FÁS, who are hardworking and committed to their role in supporting those who avail of the training or employment activities of the organisation. I acknowledge the excellent work carried out by them. Their commitment and professionalism are crucial in helping to deal with key labour market challenges currently facing this country.

The record shows that I responded quickly and effectively to the issues relating to FÁS as they presented themselves to me. I have at all times worked to ensure that the FÁS organisation can refocus to address the key challenges of unemployment through its job search, training and employment programmes.

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Billy Kelleher): On a point of information,—

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: There is no such thing.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: —an issue was brought to the floor of the House by Deputy Shortall accusing the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Minister for Finance of breaking the law. That is a serious charge in this House and I would ask the Deputy to withdraw it. We can have a cut and thrust debate inside here in normal discourse, but this is a very serious allegation. I heard it on the record and I want it removed.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: Any serious charge like that should be made by way of substantive motion. I do not want a debate about the matter now. The Minister of State has made his point. If Deputy Shortall wishes to make a brief comment about it, I would ask that it would facilitate the House if that charge was made that it be withdrawn.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: I have made the point inside and outside this House that the decision to grant Mr. Molloy a severance package was not in accordance with the law, and I stand over that claim.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: Deputy Shortall is accusing the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Minister for Finance of breaking the law.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The charge is that an action was outside the law and I think there are precedents for that charge. I call Deputy Clune.

Deputy Deirdre Clune: I wish to share my time with Deputies McCormack and Varadkar.

The motion tabled by Deputy Shortall and the Labour Party outlines many issues surrounding the operations of FÁS, particularly the reports that have been published by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Committee of Public Accounts. These reports have given rise to serious concerns among some but they have also given rise to outright rage among many as they outline the outrageous spending excesses at FÁS by a select few.

FÁS is an agency working on the ground with people who find themselves unemployed and in need of training and education. I agree that there is much good work done by that agency and many of its employees. Those employees are disconcerted and disappointed with the outcome of the deliberations of the Comptroller and Auditor General and of the Committee of Public Accounts.

FÁS is still responsible for spending of €1 billion per annum. It is charged with carrying out an important function on behalf of the State, namely, training those who are unemployed. It is needed now more than ever. There are 430,000 people unemployed and in need of its services, yet FÁS is now under scrutiny in the media and in this House and the Committee of Public Accounts for its total failure to ensure that public moneys were spent appropriately and with due consideration and responsibility. Instead, we have been subject to a litany of excesses — overspending, lack of adherence to procurement guidelines, and failure to account for spending and justify decisions that resulted in excess spending. I recognise that the Comptroller and Auditor General is carrying out further investigations and we heard today about a prosecution in our courts. However, we must remind ourselves that many of the outcomes we have heard so far are the result of an anonymous letter that was sent to the former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Deputy Harney, who passed it to the chairman and the board of FÁS, resulting in the internal audit report INV 137.

I acknowledge that the Tánaiste, who has left the House, has requested a report from the Comptroller and Auditor General. However, the point being made in the motion before the House, with which I agree, is that two other Ministers were also responsible for overseeing the activities of FÁS, namely, the former Ministers for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Deputies Mary Harney and Micheál Martin, at the time these excesses which have now come to light were taking place. Those Ministers and their accountability are also in question.

Last week in the Committee of Public Accounts, the true size of the pension payment to Mr. Molloy was revealed. The actuarial value of the pension is estimated to be €1.2 million, which is outrageous. Ordinary people who have paid into their pensions and are now watching them go down the drain would never in their wildest dreams have hoped to contribute to a pension of that value. However, it appears that a person who decided his position was no longer tenable and volunteered to resign found himself in a position to negotiate or was presented with a golden handshake. We need to get to the bottom of this. The whole episode smacks of certain people looking after one of their own rather than letting a person go because he had failed in his duty to oversee the spending of public money. It would not happen in the private sector and it should not happen in the public sector.

I am disappointed the legislation published today does not include a firm commitment to deal with issues such as this. Guidelines are not good enough; we need legislation to ensure that public officials who have acted inappropriately and failed to live up to the commitment entailed in their employment can be let go or dismissed. This did not happen in the case of

[Deputy Deirdre Clune.]

Mr. Molloy, who was offered a golden handshake. He had offered to resign and it seems he was doing everyone a favour by offering his head on a plate. At that time FÁS was in the eye of the storm. The internal audit report was before the Committee of Public Accounts, and Mr. Molloy had been on the radio that week defending the excesses in the area of foreign travel, which were not in keeping with Department of Finance guidelines. He subsequently admitted the interview was a mistake and, within days, went to the then chairman of the board and offered his resignation. Anyone who has read the transcript of the Committee of Public Accounts from last week will recall the long day described by Peter McLoone. Mr. Molloy came to him before 8 a.m. and it was close to 8 p.m. when the deal was finally struck.

It is extraordinary that there was no concept of the impact this inflated pension payment would have on the public. People are outraged by it. They cannot see why somebody who should have been dismissed and volunteered to resign was entitled to a golden handshake as if he was retiring after a long career in which he had excelled himself, when in fact he had failed to deal with breaches of guidelines, particularly in the corporate affairs unit of FÁS. Throughout the saga that is unfolding we have had an alarming insight into the lack of control and oversight that existed. Public procurement guidelines were ignored on a regular basis. Anybody who has worked with a public body or local authority, as I have, will know that even when buying so much as a lawnmower, tenders must be sought. However, individuals in FÁS gave themselves the freedom to breach these guidelines, to award lucrative contracts without seeking tenders and to ensure in some cases that those in the know were awarded contracts.

There are serious questions with regard to the amount of money spent on advertising. Between 2002 and 2008, €40 million was spent on advertising and related activities, including jobs fairs and activities to promote science. This was at a time when we had full employment. One of the sad outcomes of these excesses was mentioned in the opening statement of the director general of FÁS to the Committee of Public Accounts last week when he stated that advertising spending in FÁS was being reduced by 90% this year pending a strategic review by the organisation of a new communications and marketing strategy. This is a time when FÁS and the service it offers are most needed. Expenditure on foreign travel is to be reduced by 60%, and the science programme, which was mentioned by the Minister in her speech, has been cancelled. This was the reason for much of the foreign travel and——

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: Junkets.

Deputy Deirdre Clune: ——junkets, and contributed to the excesses we have seen. A total of €8.2 million was spent on the science programme, of which €3.5 million was spent on advertising. This is a programme that was aimed purely at primary school students; yet somebody in FÁS deemed it worthwhile to spend €3.5 million on advertising, when a direct marketing programme to these primary school pupils would have been far more appropriate. When we raised this with the current director general and the former chairman of FÁS last week, they had no answer. It is obvious that nobody was overseeing this programme and there was no measure of its value. We now have it from the Minister that it did not have any value. It did not have any clear direction and did not contribute to increasing interest in and uptake of science, as it was intended to do. The opportunities programme has been cancelled for 2009. The chairman of the board, Mr. McLoone, resigned last week as he no longer had the confidence of the Minister. I note that following last week's board meeting, other board members intend to stand down in an orderly fashion.

The concerns of the Committee of Public Accounts have been acknowledged by the Minister. It is hoped all the recommendations of its report will be implemented. We await a report from the current director general of FÁS on how those recommendations have been implemented. As a member of the Committee of Public Accounts I found it most frustrating — the situation seemed farcical at the time — that when the committee requested information from FÁS, it was not available to us in many cases under the Data Protection Acts, yet that information was instantly available to the media under the Freedom of Information Act. That is a direct contradiction and a recommendation in this regard has been included in the Committee of Public Accounts report. This practice undermines the integrity of the committees of this House. I believe the recommendation in this regard will be of value to all committees.

The Tánaiste today published the Labour Services (Amendment) Bill 2009. I am disappointed to note that power to appoint members to a board is retained by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment in conjunction with the Ministers for Education and Science and Social and Family Affairs. Again, these decisions will be taken behind closed doors with no opportunity provided for the public, public representatives or Members of this House to question them and so on.

Two weeks ago, Fine Gael put forward a Private Members' Bill, namely, the Public Appointments Transparency Bill 2008. Deputy Leo Varadkar spoke on the Bill which would have been an important step in ensuring transparency in respect of appointments to public bodies such as FÁS, the HSE or the soon to be established NAMA. There has been enormous growth during the past decade in the number of public bodies in this country. Currently we have approximately 1,000 agencies across national and regional level. Many people on those boards are doing a fine job.

We proposed that any board in receipt of public funds of more than €1 million should be subject to the provisions of the Public Appointments Transparency Bill, that the names of appointees to such boards be put before the Houses and that the chairman would be invited to appear before the relevant committees of these Houses and given an opportunity to set out his or her credentials and ambitions for the job. This was perceived as a witch hunt and it was stated that the private lives and concerns of these individuals would be torn apart in a public fashion. However, that is not the case. The Bill would have provided an opportunity for people to appear before a committee of these Houses and to state publicly their case in regard to how they believed the position to which they would be appointed could be fulfilled. Disappointingly, the Bill was not accepted. The publication today of the Labour Services (Amendment) Bill 2009 provides for more of the same in that appointments will be made behind closed doors, in a private fashion with no opportunity for public representatives to question them.

It is important we ensure there is accountability in future and that guidelines are adhered to. I am amazed that Department of Finance guidelines in regard to foreign travel and procurement were not adhered to. The response to this has been a promise to review the current structure, to talk to individuals, to train people in procurement and how they should behave in an appropriate fashion, all of which should be standard. Anyone dealing with public funds should realise the importance of the task involved. When dealing with public funds, there should be a higher level of accountability than that which would pertain in the private sector. The lack of adherence to procedures in FÁS and the riding roughshod over guidelines has been a shocking revelation to us all. There is more to come. Currently, 22 internal investigations are ongoing at FÁS. The Comptroller and Auditor General is compiling a further report in this regard. It is hoped that following this whole sorry saga we will have in place procedures and structures to ensure accountability at all levels and that those employed in State bodies behave

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in a responsible fashion and remain conscious of the fact that they are dealing with public funds for which they are accountable to the taxpayer through these Houses.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Labour Party motion which states that far too cosy a relationship was allowed to develop between the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the agency it was supposed to be supervising. The motion also condemns the failure of the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and her predecessors, Deputy Micheál Martin and Deputy Mary Harney in not exercising appropriate supervision of the agency to prevent wanton waste of taxpayers' money.

As a member of the Committee of Public Accounts, I have observed and followed closely the scandalous waste of taxpayers' money that took place urged on by the management structure of FÁS with the board, at the very least, turning a blind eye to what was going on. The Tánaiste today published the Labour Services (Amendment) Bill 2009 which proposes to reduce the number of members on the board of FÁS. However, this is a classic case of closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. Not alone has the horse bolted, it must be a couple of miles down the road. While the measures being taken now may be useful, the Tánaiste did not face up to her responsibilities when she presided over what happened at FÁS.

While the management of FÁS flouted procedures and wasted money on travel, unnecessary advertising, junkets for management and board members, the board of FÁS appears to have been asleep on the job and should have resigned a year ago. I am not following the trend of the past month or two in calling for the board of FÁS to resign. At a meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on 4 December 2008 I stated:

I will ask the question rather than the Government. Given that the board has been negligent in this issue, should it not consider its position?

I put that question to the board at a meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on 4 December 2008. I also referred at that meeting to the travel issue and the responsibilities of the board in that regard. I listened carefully this morning to Mr. McLoone's statement. The words were well spoken but the board seemed not to accept any responsibility for any negligence regarding travel. There was no provision for payment of travel expenses and Mr. McLoone said spending on travel was inappropriate but the board did not look at payments.

In the Labour Services Act 1987, it states a member of staff of An Foras Forbatha, a predecessor of FÁS, other than the elected chairman or the staff of the subsidiary, shall be paid out of moneys at the disposal of An Foras Forbatha or the subsidiary as the case may be. Such remuneration and allowances for expenses incurred by him and An Foras Forbatha or the subsidiary, as the case may be, will be paid with the consent of the Minister for Finance — the Minister for Finance had to consent to spending. When that question was put to the Taoiseach, who was then Minister for Finance, in the Dáil, he said the Minister could not be expected to follow up every little detail, that it was the responsibility of the board. Clearly, the board was negligent in looking after its responsibilities.

I also asked Mr. McLoone if he realised when he was appointed chairman of the board that it was the responsibility of the board as set down by the Minister to approve of such payments, and he said "Yes", but the payments were not presented to him or for approval by the board. There was a game of cat and mouse between management and the board at FÁS in not bringing the necessary information to the board and the board was negligent in not seeking that information which was necessary for them to carry out their duties as members of the board.

After the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts last year, Mr. Molloy went on “Today with Pat Kenny” to justify the extraordinary expenditure and waste of taxpayers’ money in FÁS. After that his position became untenable and he offered his resignation to the Minister. Fast forward to the last meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts and we discover that Mr. Molloy eventually resigned after being awarded an extraordinarily generous pension and a lump sum worth more than €1.1 million.

The waters get very muddy here. The impression giving by the Secretary General of the Department, at the last meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts, was that Mr. Molloy had threatened litigation if he did not get the extraordinary deal. This was not clearly spelled out but it was strongly hinted at. That was the news story for the next few days and the media ran with it, that Mr. Molloy had put a gun to the Minister’s head and would not resign unless he got this package. The following Sunday, the Taoiseach stated that Mr. Molloy never threatened legal action.

I do not know what happened. I believe on the morning Mr. Molloy offered his resignation, the embattled Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment consulted the Taoiseach, as would be natural in this case, and I presume the Taoiseach told her to get the best deal possible for Mr. Molloy and they would see how things work out. Once the Tánaiste went with that information to her officials, they were obliged to carry out the request of the Minister in arriving at the best deal. Clearly the officials did not remove any benefits from Mr. Molloy in the deal they eventually worked out.

At the end of the long day of negotiations, after Mr. Molloy had apparently offered his resignation in the morning, the deal was worked out and the Taoiseach had to be informed of it. He was informed and signed off on it, and we are told the Minister for Finance gave his go ahead to the deal. We are then told by the Green Party Ministers that they knew nothing about the deal. It appears that three Cabinet members signed off on the deal. If that is how the Government operates, it is a funny system.

Deputy Mary Coughlan: It is not appropriate to say that if we do not have the facts. That is not factually correct. Deputy McCormack is a member of the Committee of Public Accounts and he would be aware of the facts.

Deputy Róisín Shortall: So did they not sign off on it?

Deputy Mary Coughlan: It was nothing to do with the Taoiseach.

Deputy Pádraic McCormack: I do not know if any other Cabinet members were aware, none of them have admitted they were. I do not know what happens at Cabinet level, perhaps it is a matter of Cabinet confidentiality. The Green Party Ministers, however, have stated clearly they were not aware of this deal. They are aware of it now and seem to accept it as part of the price of staying in Government, they do not seem too concerned about it from what I can see.

We have lately discovered that, on top of the generous settlement given to Mr. Molloy, he also drove off in a car. Is this the same car exposed at the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts, the car that was purchased for a raffle, paid for and never delivered? The committee could not establish where the car paid for out of public funds went or if it is indeed the car Mr. Molloy drove away in. I would like to know, if it is possible at this stage to get a clear answer to anything that has happened at this level.

There was collusion between the chief executive of FÁS and the board of directors, especially as they travelled abroad together at great expense to the State, where they all seemed to have a good time. Most of them had bank cards they could use to charge up extraordinary amounts to FÁS during their deliberations abroad. The science programme they were visiting has been

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cancelled, although I do not know why they were sending FÁS people to it. Was the intention to send them into space? I do not know what they were doing there, except having a good time at taxpayers' expense.

It is extraordinary that at a time when there was practically full employment, we were spending €40 million on advertising and promotion of fairs, unnecessarily promoting FÁS when there was no need to spend such amounts on advertising. FÁS had an annual budget of €1 billion from the taxpayer to run its affairs and it seems that coming to the end of each year, if the budget was not spent, someone invented another advertising campaign to waste another €500,000. Some €600,000 was spent on a television advertisement that never appeared, a criminal waste of taxpayers' money. The FÁS executive, to get another €1 billion, was justifying the expenditure of €1 billion the previous year, no matter how it was wasted.

That amount has now been cut back, following the revelations from the Committee of Public Accounts. I pay tribute to members of the committee from all parties in the way they have teased this out, at times getting this information from board members was like pulling teeth. They diligently stuck to their task. This has given FÁS workers on the ground a bad name. We must acknowledge that they have done great work on community schemes. If they claim expenses, they must produce receipts for everything they buy, be it a spade, shovel or wheelbarrow. If FÁS was run at the top in the same way, we would certainly have a better organisation.

Debate adjourned.

Message from Select Committee.

An Leas-Cheann Comhairle: The Select Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights has concluded its consideration of the Courts and Court Officers Bill 2009 and has made amendments thereto.

Adjournment Debate.

Job Losses.

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd: On Wednesday, 9 September, the vice president of Irish Flavours and Fragrances came to Drogheda to announce the proposed closure of the plant, with the possible loss of up to 95 jobs, effective from 30 September 2010. This was a serious blow to the workforce and the town. We have lost over 2,000 jobs in manufacturing industries in County Louth in recent years. In Drogheda the famous Coca Cola factory closed, something we thought would be in place forever. There is a really serious problem in the town. The unemployment figure in the county stands at 16,562, and over 8,000 in Drogheda. There are about 6,000 unemployed in Dundalk and about 2,300 in Ardee.

Irish Cement announced this week that it is to cease production for a significant period to allow the economy to recover. This will have a serious effect on those who work in that industry. Workers are getting together in IFF. They are fighting this by meeting the company and IDA Ireland. I acknowledge the help the IDA has provided for both the workers and the company. The workers have put together a document encompassing a significant offer to cut their wages and benefits which would deliver savings in excess of €5 million in the next three years. Cost cutting measures already implemented this year will deliver a further €2 million in savings in the next three years. Substantive but less readily identifiable changes to work practices are also being examined. These will yield significant reductions in the cost of running the

Drogheda operation in the coming years. The company is due to respond to this document on Monday, 12 October, but time is running out.

There are 95 people employed at the company in Drogheda, many of whom are in their early to mid-50s and too young to retire but too old to secure new jobs. More worrying is the number of young people in the short service range who may find it difficult to find alternative employment for a significant period. In the absence of any indication from the company that their jobs were in danger, many took on considerable financial burdens such as mortgages and so on in the past few years. They are now very worried about their ability to service these commitments.

Salaries and wages come to about €5.8 million annually, while locally sourced services and supplies bring €4.7 million into the local economy. Therefore, this industry accounts for a figure of €10.5 million locally; therefore, it is very important. On the cost to the State, the estimated cost to the redundancy fund is €1.1 million, the estimated social welfare costs in the first year are €1.85 million, while the total loss to the Exchequer in PAYE and PRSI contributions will be €5.2 million. If the factory closes, the actual cost to the taxpayer will be €8.2 million, something nobody in IFF or Drogheda can accept.

We want constructive dialogue with the Minister and IDA Ireland. We welcome the support the IDA is giving to the workers and the fact that the county manager, the mayor and local community are coming together. There is still time to save the company. It is not closing tomorrow, as the deadline is September 2010. We await the Minister's reply with concern.

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Billy Kelleher): I thank the Deputy for raising this matter on the Adjournment. The Tánaiste sends her apologies. I am sure the Deputy is aware of the circumstances.

I am acutely aware of the consequences of the proposal to close the Irish Flavours and Fragrances facility in Drogheda, County Louth. If implemented, the proposal would result in 103 job losses. IDA Ireland is directly engaged with IFF on the matter and has put a proposal to the company which it hopes it will consider. FÁS has also been in contact with IFF to offer assistance. The aim of both agencies is to explore options with IFF which would avoid or alleviate the threatened redundancies. I have asked the IDA to bring local concerns and the concerns of local representatives to the attention of IFF Corporate and use its best endeavours to minimise the impact of a final decision. The IDA believes the Drogheda plant was highly regarded within the overall group. The proposal to close the plant is based on a corporate desire to centralise all manufacturing of fine fragrance products — the segment in which Drogheda is involved — in one location in Europe.

Aside from the IFF situation, IDA Ireland is actively marketing County Louth as a location for industrial development. This year there was a robust programme of site visits to assess the county for investment, from which it is hoped some significant wins will result. The IDA has two very significant site portfolios in County Louth, with business parks in Dundalk and Drogheda. It has secured planning permission for two biopharma facilities in the Dundalk science and technology park. These will be used to aggressively market the county in what is now one of the most significant sectors globally.

On a broader policy level, the Government has been responding to the economic downturn and taken numerous initiatives which will benefit regions affected by or threatened with job losses. In particular, the Tánaiste and her Ministers of State have been closely involved in promoting measures to improve competitiveness, stabilise industrial employment and output, and strengthen labour market activation policies. Cost competitiveness is a key factor in determining a location for business. It is important, therefore, that we achieve greater cost

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competitiveness in Ireland. For most exporting firms, labour costs account for more than half their input costs. We have recently seen a 7% competitiveness gain in unit labour costs. Although it is a painful adjustment, a reduction in unit labour costs, delivered through pay reform, will strengthen our longer term competitiveness. The European Union estimates that Irish unit labour costs will fall by 4% this year, compared with a 3% increase in the Union on average, translating into a significant improvement in competitiveness.

There has also been downward movement in energy prices. In May this year there was an average 10% drop in electricity prices for residents and small and medium enterprises, while gas prices were reduced by an average of 12%. The CER recently announced that it would hold down prices for large energy users. In early September it announced a 0.4% decrease for small businesses and a more significant 5.5% decrease for medium-sized enterprises from October.

Both the NCB manufacturing and services purchasing managers' indices are showing a sustained period of decline in input costs for businesses in Ireland. The decline in Irish inflation reached -5.9% in the year to July, the sharpest fall since the early 1930s. Property and land prices are also falling, which is an advantage in terms of lower rents or property costs in the attraction of new FDI projects and also for indigenous businesses seeking to set up or expand. The OECD has predicted mild deflation in Ireland for the next two years. This will maintain the current downward pressure on wages and prices.

The National Competitiveness Council published its annual competitiveness report in August. The report states we retain a wide range of competitive strengths. These include a young and well educated workforce, growing levels of research and development activity, a modern internationally trading enterprise base and a long track record as a successful location for overseas investors. However, we must redouble our efforts to ensure the economy becomes more competitive in order that Ireland will be in a position to benefit from a global recovery when it emerges. In fact, there are some indications that the global downturn has reversed. The price of oil has gone up in the past few days and there is now an acknowledgment that the world may have come out of the current downward spiral, particularly those nations in the G20. For example, Australia raised its interest rates today, which is an indication that some economies are reaching a plateau and coming out of the recession. As an open trading economy we are vulnerable to downward trends, but equally there are opportunities in upward trends. Hopefully, we will see these opportunities over the next period. This hope is being lived up to in the increase in exports. I understand the concerns the Deputy raised in the context of the IFF workers. We will urge the IDA to engage with the company to address the issues and see what supports can be brought forward to address the concerns of the Deputy and the workers.

Health Services.

Deputy John Cregan: I wish to share my time with Deputy Dan Neville.

Acting Chairman (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): Is that agreed? Agreed.

Deputy John Cregan: I take this opportunity to raise an important matter for my constituency, namely, the absence of the required medical cover in the rehabilitation unit of St. Ita's community hospital, Newcastle West. This is a fine community hospital that has served the people of west Limerick over many years. St. Ita's covers west Limerick and St. Camillus's covers east Limerick. St. Ita's is a little remote from the main centre of medical attention, Limerick Regional Hospital, and has experienced difficulty with regard to cover over the past number of months. This puts the consultant geriatrician in a very difficult position, because he must now decide what category of patient to place in the fine rehabilitation unit in Newcastle

West. He must be extremely careful because of the risk involved. I understand the families of the patients going there now have to sign a disclaimer. It is not right that this should happen because we lack medical cover and have no extra facility.

The situation is that people are transferred to St. Ita's having been acutely ill in Limerick Regional Hospital. Approximately 350 patients per year are transferred to the acute rehabilitation unit in the Newcastle West hospital and as a result no bed is being blocked in the Limerick Regional Hospital. What reward do we get from the HSE for this? We get no reward or credit but only suffer a lack in medical cover. As a result, the risk is increasing all the time. I appeal to the HSE to try to ensure when allocating resources that we save this unit.

I do not want to use threatening language or frighten people about the future of the unit, but we must stand up and demand the necessary, additional medical resources required. We must stand up and fight for the provision of a basic extra facility, rather than wrap elderly patients in a blanket in the middle of the night, throw them into an ambulance and transfer them 25 miles to Limerick Regional Hospital. That should not happen. Just a small amount of resources would go a long way towards ensuring we can maintain this fantastic service for the elderly people of west Limerick. I appeal to the Minister to intervene with the HSE to try to ensure we arrive at a solution.

We are doing all the right things. I sat on the health board with the Acting Chairman for many years, where we raised the case because we felt we were coming from a low base. We did not have the required level of consultants or staff in our hospital, but we always did the right thing and brought our budget in on time. But for the good graces of the people involved in St. Ita's hospital, the geriatrician David Clynch, the matron, Eileen O'Connor, Sr. Eileen Crowley who heads the rehabilitative unit and all the nursing staff and others there, the unit would not be operating now. Their efforts should be acknowledged and the necessary supports put in place.

Deputy Dan Neville: I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this debate. I fully agree that an excellent service is provided by the acute rehabilitation unit in St. Ita's hospital. This service induces efficiency in the mid-west regional hospital by ensuring the level of beds available for the elderly in that hospital is accommodated by the service from the acute rehabilitation unit of St. Ita's in Newcastle West. This is now under threat. A reduction in the number of senior house officers means a lack of medical facilities which creates a difficulty for the service and for Dr. David Clynch and his support team and for transferring patients to the acute rehabilitation unit.

It is wrong that somebody should have to sign a disclaimer in order to receive this excellent service in Newcastle West. It is also unacceptable that people in the hinterland of Newcastle West, which includes most of my constituency, will now not have the services of the rehabilitation unit available locally. I have personal experience of a member of my family being in that unit and of the excellent service it provided in allowing people return to their communities as a result of rehabilitation without which they would have had to go into long-term care.

The absence of the required medical cover will create a situation in the medium term where this facility will probably be discontinued. This is not acceptable to us. Not providing the cover is false accounting because closing the unit will cost the HSE more in resources than keeping it open. Patient treatment in the mid-west will also cost more. Some 350 patients are transferred to the unit each year. We want to retain this excellent service and call on the Minister and HSE to ensure we do.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: I apologise on behalf of the Minister for Health and Children, Deputy Mary Harney, who is unable to attend. I am taking the debate in her place. I thank Deputies

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Cregan and Neville for raising this issue. It provides me with an opportunity to update the House on this matter and to outline the background to the current situation and the action taken by the Health Service Executive.

As Deputies are aware, Government policy is to support older people to live in dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. Where this is not feasible, the health service supports access to quality long-term residential care, where this is appropriate. The Health Service Executive has operational responsibility for the delivery of health and social services, including facilities such as the rehabilitation unit at St. Ita's community hospital.

St. Ita's hospital was built in 1841 and certain developments have taken place there over the years, including the provision of the rehabilitation unit which opened in 1992. This was as an eight-bed inpatient unit which also provided day hospital services three days a week. The medical needs of the rehabilitation unit were provided for under the leadership of a consultant geriatrician. In 2001, in response to increasing needs, the service was expanded to include 14 acute rehabilitation beds. The outpatient services are provided through a day hospital, the medical clinic and therapy services.

Early in 2008, a number of perceived risks at St. Ita's hospital were raised with the Department, including the question of 24-hour medical cover. On foot of this approach, the Department requested a report from the Health Service Executive on the services provided at St. Ita's. Consequently, an assessment of risks in St. Ita's has been completed and a risk register is being prepared which will incorporate an implementation plan.

The Health Service Executive's national service developments for older people, 2008, identified the need for four consultant-led community geriatrician teams, one team per HSE administrative area. The team for the HSE west is based in Limerick and will incorporate two medical posts, one consultant and one specialist registrar. The medical posts will allow for some additional medical cover to be provided to St. Ita's hospital by the full medical team in the Mid-Western Regional Hospital. The Health Service Executive has advised that interviews for the community consultant geriatrician recently took place. Appointments will take place on a "joint appointment" basis to both the acute and primary, community and continuing care, PCCC, service. It is envisaged that strong clinical links between the hospital and community will continue to be developed and this will enable care to be streamlined to best meet the needs of the individual.

In addition, I understand that detailed discussions have taken place between relevant staff of the Health Service Executive and the hospital with regard to addressing the particular issue of service provision. The capacity of the executive to provide approved levels of services continues to be reviewed in the context of overall resources available. It is incumbent on each local health manager to ensure that services, including rehabilitation services such as at St. Ita's, are delivered within allocated budgets. This includes any decision on prioritising and providing additional rehabilitation cover at this particular location. This requires a stringent ongoing review of the application of the resources.

The Government is committed to the development of comprehensive rehabilitation services across the country. As I have outlined to the House, the Department of Health and Children will continue to work with the Health Service Executive to advance this objective. This includes any decision on prioritising and providing additional rehabilitation cover at this location. It requires a stringent ongoing review of the application of the resources.

The Government is clearly committed to the development of comprehensive rehabilitation services across the country and I have outlined to the House that the Department of Health and Children will continue to work with the HSE to advance this objective.

Hospital Staff.

Deputy Brian O'Shea: There are glaring deficiencies in the provision of dermatology Services in the south east. The appalling situation at present is that one consultant dermatologist is single-handedly providing a service for a population 460,000 people. Comhairle na nOspidéal having consulted the literature relating to dermatology service provision in the UK, North America and Australia published a report in November 2003 recommending that there should be one dermatologist per 100,000 population. The greater Dublin area has the lion's share of consultant dermatologists. The south east which has the largest population outside Dublin remains the only region with only one consultant dermatologist.

Clinics are provided in Waterford Regional Hospital, Wexford General Hospital, South Tipperary General Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital Kilkenny. There are more than 3,500 patients waiting two to three years for a routine hospital appointment in the south east. While it is likely that this list will be somewhat reduced if validated, there are long lists for routine problems and patients are suffering. There is a weekly paediatric dermatology clinic with a current waiting list of six months.

Some general practitioners on the periphery of the region refer their patients to Cork Limerick and Dublin. These centres increasingly refuse to accept referrals from outside their regions which adds to the pressure on the inadequate provision in the south east region. Ever increasing incidents of all forms of skin cancer take up a considerable amount of time at the Department. The Dermatology Department in Waterford is small and inadequate, with one consultant dermatologist, one specialist trainee registrar, a specialist nurse and two nurses, who job share. The Department removes approximately 700 cancers annually. The Department runs a pigmented liaison mole clinic for the early detection of melanoma and provides a mole mapping service.

There is also a multi-disciplinary head and neck skin cancer clinic run in conjunction with the local ophthalmic plastic surgeon and an eye and ear surgeon, all of which generate surgical activity. Waterford is one of the few centres in the 26 counties which provides photodynamic therapy, a non-invasive treatment of superficial skin cancers.

This all amounts to a work load that is way too much for one consultant dermatologist. Added to this is the fact that no suitable locum dermatologist has been available in recent years to provide cover for the annual and study leave of the consultant dermatologist in Waterford.

Skin disease impacts on quality of life, interpersonal relationships and even job prospects. For the past 12 years this situation in Waterford and the south east has been ignored. This appalling situation cannot be allowed to continue and requires immediate and decisive corrective action. I call on the Minister for Health and Children to take urgent action to ensure that there are additional dermatologists and back-up teams appointed forthwith to the south east region within the HSE south, with the appropriate required accommodation.

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Billy Kelleher): I am again taking this item on the Adjournment Debate on behalf of the Minister for Health and Children, Deputy Mary Harney.

The Government is committed to ensuring quality health services, delivered efficiently and effectively. Ensuring patient safety is paramount, so that people can have confidence in the services and that the best possible patient outcomes are achieved.

Dermatology is the medical specialty caring for illness predominately relating to the skin, hair and nails. It is mainly an out-patient/day care activity with a small in-patient requirement. The HSE recognises that dermatology services in the HSE south east region require further development. The proposed development of services is in line with the main principles and key

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recommendations as identified by the Comhairle na nOspidéal report of the Committee on Dermatology Services published in November 2003.

Among the main principles of the Comhairle approach are an equitable and patient centred service regional self-sufficiency and collaboration between primary and secondary care. At present there is one consultant dermatologist working in the south east region. The dermatology service includes in-patient care where required; day cases and out-patient consultations. Outreach clinics are provided in Wexford, Kilkenny and Clonmel. In Waterford Regional Hospital, the dermatology services include a range facilities including out-patient clinics, cryotherapy, minor surgery and nurse-led phototherapy services.

The HSE has identified the provision of a second consultant dermatology post among its priorities for development. This year the Minister allocated funding to the HSE for demographic service pressures, and the Executive decided to prioritise posts in vascular surgery and orthopaedics in the south east. These posts were approved and are now being progressed.

The HSE is faced with difficult choices in delivering its services within the resources available. It will continue to keep the scope for further developments in dermatology services under consideration bearing in mind the funds it has available. In line with the national service plan 2009 and its transformation programme, the HSE will review the current configuration of acute hospital services in the south east. A steering group is developing a plan for hospital reconfiguration.

This plan will seek to deliver optimal and cost effective services that are easily and readily accessible and that are delivered through centres of excellence. All hospitals in the south eastern hospital group are included in the plan for the revised model. The review, which includes a broad-based consultation within the services, is likely to be completed in 2010. Decisions on the services of any individual hospital will be taken following its completion.

It is within the context of this review that any expansion of the dermatology services in the south east will be considered.

Telecommunications Services.

Deputy Tom Sheahan: Will the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Deputy John Gormley say how such blatant inconsistencies can exist in An Bord Pleanála's decision making when it comes to Tetra mast applications on Eircom sites?

An Bord Pleanála is appointed by the Minister, yet is not accountable to anybody. I cannot understand for the life of me why. If it is appointed by a Minister one would expect that it should be accountable to somebody, especially the particular Minister. For example, eight out of eight planning applications that were refused by Kerry County Council were upheld by An Bord Pleanála because, in Kerry a "1 km rule" was introduced, during my time in local government, to the effect that telecommunications masts could not be located within 1 km of a residential area or a hospital or school. Some seven out of eight planning applications that were refused by Cork County Council were overturned by An Bord Pleanála, so there are stark inconsistencies there. How can these statistics be acceptable or justified and why is it that County Cork's amenities and citizens appear to be more worthy of protection than County Kerry's? That is not acceptable.

While nobody denies the needs for such a service as Tetra's, it is the irresponsibility in choosing locations for the masts that I find unacceptable. In the Cork areas An Bord Pleanála cited "proximity to residential buildings, proximity to protected structures, proximity to schools and community properties" as reasons to refuse planning for these masts. This does not seem to be a problem for An Bord Pleanála in some of the Kerry cases, however, particularly as

regards the Annascaul mast site which is merely 30 metres from the nearest permanently occupied residence. The nearest occupied building, which houses a small business, is only 26 metres from the site. There are approximately ten occupied residences, a protected structure within 50 metres of the site. There is another protected structure within 90 m and a further two within 420 m of the site, as well as a school within 570 m. The whole nucleus of the village is based within 800 m of the site, which is in the centre of the village.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's guidelines on telecommunications masts and support structures of 1996 state that only as a last resort, and if all the alternatives are unavailable or unsuitable, should freestanding masts be located in a residential area or beside schools. In the Annascaul case, An Bord Pleanála's senior inspector strongly recommended against granting planning permission on the grounds that all other alternative sites had not been fully investigated. It is clear they have not been fully investigated because the people of the community were contacted recently by Tetra Ireland in order for the people themselves to come up with a more suitable site. That is not their job.

The siting of the mast in Annascaul would be seriously damaging to the surrounding amenities and properties yet the board itself overruled the inspector's findings. 3 Ireland, which is the company contracted by Tetra Ireland to acquire the site, has stated that as a priority it targets the Eircom exchanges first when choosing a site. This in itself proves that these sites are not being chosen as a last resort, as stated in and required by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's 1996 guidelines. These decisions by An Bord Pleanála appear to flout the guidelines set down by the Department and have left small communities like Annascaul to fend for themselves against big businesses like Eircom and Tetra.

The Annascaul community has now entered its first week of a 24-hour protest outside the site and they will not give it up. I suggest that the Minister would get involved and intervene in this case. These people are not going to lie down because, as I have said, Kerry people will not lie down. I call on the Minister to personally intervene in this case before it goes too far.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: As the Deputy is from Kerry and I am a Cork Deputy, I am well aware of the fact Kerry people do not lie down. I wish they would lie down more often in Croke Park, but that does not happen. However, not to trivialise the issue, I understand the Deputy's point and thank him for raising the matter. I apologise on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for being unable to take this debate, which he has asked me to take on his behalf.

Under planning legislation, the decision to grant a planning application, with or without conditions, is a matter for the relevant planning authority in the first instance or An Bord Pleanála on appeal. In making decisions on planning applications, planning authorities and the board must consider the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, having regard to the provisions of the development plan, any submissions or observations received, and relevant ministerial or Government policies, including any guidelines issued by the Department. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's 1996 guidelines on telecommunications antennae and support structures set out a locational hierarchy in regard to the siting of radio masts and advise that free-standing masts should only be located within or in the immediate surrounds of smaller towns or villages as a last resort.

Deputy Tom Sheahan: That is correct.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: However, the guidelines also note that the Government's telecommunications policy aims to place Ireland in the top quartile of OECD economies as regards availability, price and quality of telecommunications services. They also state that planning

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authority development plans should include a policy statement in regard to telecommunications which accepts the importance of a high quality telecommunications service.

I understand that the proposed development in this case consists of the construction of a 15 m support pole to carry three radio aerials for use by the emergency services, namely, Garda, ambulance and fire brigade, together with associated equipment for a new national digital radio service, at Eircom Exchange, Ardrinnane, Annascaul, County Kerry. The Minister has been informed that Kerry County Council refused permission in accordance with section 12.16.11 of the county development plan, which states that telecommunication masts should not be located within 1 km of residential properties, schools, hospitals or any structures where there is human occupancy for residential or daily work purposes. However, he understands that in granting permission on appeal, An Bord Pleanála considered, having regard to the location of the proposed development within the village, its height and the surrounding pattern of development, that the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area, or of property in the vicinity; would not be prejudicial to public health and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The board also attached a condition to the permission that after ten years telecommunications structure and related ancillary structures would be removed unless, prior to the end of the period, planning permission should have been granted for their retention for a further period.

Deputy Tom Sheahan: It is a joke.

Deputy Billy Kelleher: The purpose of this condition was to enable the impact of the development to be re-assessed, having regard to changes in technology and design and to circumstances prevailing in the future.

The Deputy will appreciate that as the Minister has no role in the taking of decisions on planning applications and is statutorily precluded under section 30 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 from exercising any power or control in such cases, it would not be appropriate for him to comment on the decision of An Bord Pleanála, which is the independent statutory planning appeals board.

Deputy Tom Sheahan: The people of Annascaul will not take this lying down.

The Dáil adjourned at 9.10 p.m until 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 7 October 2009.

Written Answers.

The following are questions tabled by Members for written response and the ministerial replies as received on the day from the Departments [unrevised].

Questions Nos. 1 to 16, inclusive, answered orally.

Questions Nos. 17 to 115, inclusive, resubmitted.

Questions Nos. 116 to 122, inclusive, answered orally.

National Drugs Strategy.

123. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has had discussions with the Department of Transport and Marine regarding the introduction of random drug testing under the interim National Drugs Strategy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34121/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): In developing proposals for the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016, my Department consulted widely with all partners, including the Department of Transport. The finalised Strategy includes an action to “implement random road side drug testing as soon as this is technically and legally possible”, with the Department of Transport as lead agency for this action.

I understand that, at this stage, there is no feasible basis yet in Europe for the introduction of a scheme of preliminary roadside testing for drugs. Testing devices are still in the prototype stages. The Medical Bureau of Road Safety, which comes under the remit of the Department of Transport, is keeping abreast of developments in this area. My colleague, Noel Dempsey T.D., Minister for Transport will be guided by the Bureau as to when a roadside test suitable for use here becomes available and can be introduced.

Rural Development.

124. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has discussed the decline of rural services with other Departments; his views on whether recent budgetary decisions will have a negative impact on local community services; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34141/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I can assure the Deputy that, as Minister with responsibility for Rural Development, I continue to have ongoing dialogue with other Ministers and Departments around issues that impact on rural areas.

The Deputy will appreciate that, in the current economic circumstances, the Government is faced with difficult decisions. In recent Budgets we have considered a range of measures to maintain a prudent fiscal outturn for 2009 and to provide the basis for a sustainable approach to the current financial situation. Across Government, our approach has been to do this in as balanced a way as possible.

In relation to the various programme areas in my Department that support rural development, efforts have been made to minimise the effects on frontline services, where possible. This approach will continue in the context of the ongoing financial management of my Department's Vote for the remainder of the year.

While funding for some programmes operated by my Department has been reduced, it is important to note that there will still be significant expenditure this year across a number of schemes. In particular, I should mention the very substantial investment in our rural areas now being made under the LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. This Programme includes investment of €425m, which is 55% co-funded by the EU, towards improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversifying the rural economy.

Security of the Elderly.

125. **Deputy Tom Sheahan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has completed his review of the Community Supports for Older People Scheme; when he plans to reinstate the scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34105/09]

161. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of projects that have been assisted under the community service project scheme; the funding drawn down since its inception; if the budget will be reintroduced; if so, when and the funding allocated towards the renewal of this scheme; the effect this will have on the projects that were with his Department prior to the suspension of the scheme; if these will have first priority in regard to the new funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34204/09]

165. **Deputy Jim O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if, in view of the continuing high level of crimes committed against the elderly, he will take steps to reinstate the scheme of community support for older people which was suspended five months ago; and the terms of any new scheme proposed. [34186/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): I propose to take Questions Nos. 125, 161 and 165 together.

The House will be aware that my Department has been conducting a comprehensive review of the arrangements underpinning the operation of the Scheme of Support for Older People. In line with previous commitments, the review has been completed and a draft report is being prepared.

Pending consideration of the review and the putting in place of revised arrangements for 2010, I have agreed to lift the suspension. Community and voluntary organisations participating in the Scheme in recent years have been notified and have been advised of the conditions attaching to the reopening of the Scheme.

Since my Department took over responsibility for the Scheme in 2002 some 62,000 recipients have benefited from support under the Scheme. Expenditure under the Scheme is estimated to be in excess of €20m for the period 2002-2009. All applications on hand at the time of suspension of the Scheme in April have been dealt with. Some €1.28m has been paid to 214 groups to date in 2009 with 3,695 older people receiving grants for equipment under the Scheme.

Question No. 126 answered with Question No. 121.

Substance Misuse.

127. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the action taken to date to highlight the dangers of the use of cocaine and heroin as a result of recent reports indicating increases in the use of these illicit substances; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34211/09]

141. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the recently published figures on alcohol and drug misuse here; if he is committed to reducing the incidence of substance misuse, particularly amongst young people; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33243/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): I propose to take Questions Nos. 127 and 141 together.

The recent data produced by the Alcohol and Drug Research Unit of the Health Research Board related to the number of people being treated for cocaine and opiate use by various treatment services during the period 2002-2007. Such figures, focusing on treatment data, do not provide accurate estimates of the prevalence of drug use. Indeed, increased treatment numbers are generally to be welcomed.

Our best estimates in regard to prevalence are those found in the two all island Prevalence Surveys undertaken in 2002/2003 and 2006/07, with the next such survey to be undertaken in 2010/2011. Indeed, the Alcohol and Drug Research Unit attribute the increased numbers in cocaine and opiate treatment to a combination of factors, an increase in the number of treatment places, an increase in reporting to the National Drug Treatment Reporting System, as well as increased drug use.

A recent report into young people involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour indicates that many of the incidents involved were alcohol related. Evidence indicates a well recognised link between alcohol consumption among young people and their engagement in the committal of offences. Significant services are available that seek to address the risk factors that influence the early onset of substance use among young people and to promote protective factors, as well as addressing problem alcohol and drug use when they arise.

The further development of prevention measures aimed primarily at those deemed to be most at risk of becoming involved in illegal drug use, and at the younger adult population generally, is a crucial element of the recently published National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016. Such interventions will cover both school and non-school settings, recognising in particular the dangers that arise in the case of early school leavers. Along with this, there will be an increased emphasis on developing awareness among the general population with respect to problem drug and alcohol use.

Last March the Government decided to include alcohol with drugs in a National Substance Misuse Strategy that will be developed by the end of next year. I welcome this and I see it

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facilitating a more coherent approach to the overall problem of substance misuse, particularly among young people.

Question No. 128 answered with Question No. 121.

Stráitéis Fiche Bliain don Ghaeilge.

129. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Brian O'Shea** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cén dul chun cinn atá déanta i leith sainmhínte nua ar cad is Gaeltacht ann; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [34187/09]

131. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cén dul chun cinn atá déanta ar Bhille Údarás na Gaeltachta; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [34189/09]

150. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cathain a dhéanfar aon chinneadh ar theorainneacha na Gaeltachta; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [34188/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Tógfaidh mé Ceisteanna Uimh 129, 131 agus 150 le chéile.

Faoi mar is eol don Teachta, tá obair idir lámha faoi choimirce an Choiste Rialtais don Ghaeilge agus don Ghaeltacht maidir le Straitéis 20 bliain don Ghaeilge a ullmhú. Sa chomhthéacs ginearálta sin, táthar ag déanamh scrúdú ar na saincheisteanna a thagann chun cinn — ceist na Gaeltachta san áireamh — i gcomhthéacs na hanailíse agus na moltaí atá sa Tuarascáil a d'eascair ón Staidéar Teangeolaíoch ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht.

Beidh an Straitéis féin le haontú ag an gCoiste Rialtais don Ghaeilge agus don Ghaeltacht sula gcuirfear os comhair an Rialtais é. Táthar ag súil leis go nglacfar na céimeanna cuí chuige sin go luath.

130. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Brian O'Shea** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cathain a fhoilseofar an Straitéis Fiche Bliain don Ghaeilge. [34212/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Tá dréacht den Straitéis 20 bliain don Ghaeilge á mheas faoi láthair ag mo Roinn féin agus ag Ranna Stát eile a mbeidh sé de fhreagracht orthu í a chur i bhfeidhm. Beidh an Straitéis féin le haontú ag an gCoiste Rialtais don Ghaeilge agus don Ghaeltacht sula gcuirfear os comhair an Rialtais é. Táthar ag súil leis go nglacfar na céimeanna cuí chuige sin go luath.

Question No. 131 answered with Question No. 129.

Dormant Accounts Fund.

132. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the amount of funding provided under the Dormant Account Fund scheme since its inception to date in 2009; the geographical spread of the applications for funding; the number of successful applicants; the number refused funding; if there is a waiting list for funding; if so, the position in relation to providing such funding to these groups; the position regarding the scheme in view of the economic conditions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34205/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The Dormant Accounts Fund Acts provide for an annual transfer by credit institutions and insurance

undertakings of monies in accounts determined to be dormant into the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF). Since its establishment in May 2003 to the end of August 2009, the net transfers to the DAF have totalled some €334.1m.

The value of the Fund at the end of August 2009, net of liabilities, was some €49.1m. This excludes the amount of some €48.6m currently maintained in a Reserve Account to meet reclaims and to cover expenses. The reserve is currently set at 15% of the total moneys received by the Fund and not yet reclaimed.

The geographical spread of the applications received for funding under each round is set out in Table I. Furthermore, the Cabinet approved €1,864,228 for 90 drug related projects, which are regionally based, set out in Table II.

Of the 9,393 applications received to date, 9,246 applications have been assessed with 6,509 or 70% of these recommended for funding. The number of applications not recommended or deemed ineligible for funding to date has amounted to 2,737 or 30% of assessed applications. In addition, the Government agreed to provide €64.4m to support the Rural Social Scheme between the years 2004 and 2008. No specific allocations were made to areas of the State given the national coverage of the programme. The Government approved a further €10m to support an Early Childhood Initiative based in three projects in Tallaght West in Dublin South and Ballymun, Darndale, Moatview and Belcamp on Dublin's Northside.

Following consideration and decision by the Government, all applicants are notified of the outcome of their application. The Deputy will appreciate that the number of approvals under each measure are made having regard to the resources available and the quality of applications received. Given the nature of the application, assessment and approval processes, the issue of waiting lists does not arise.

Table 1: County Breakdown of Applications Received under each Round of Funding

County	Round 1 — 2004/05	Round 2 — 2006	Round 3 — 2007	Round 4 — 2008	Total
Carlow	16	49	44	9	118
Cavan	7	49	75	18	149
Clare	24	98	58	9	189
Cork	181	245	353	119	898
Donegal	57	220	200	25	502
Dublin	560	910	750	533	2,753
Galway	111	223	190	80	604
Kerry	68	162	131	20	381
Kildare	21	84	54	23	182
Kilkenny	31	84	52	12	179
Laois	13	37	48	2	100
Leitrim	27	40	40	6	113
Limerick	57	163	122	76	418
Longford	32	27	28	19	106
Louth	36	65	72	47	220
Mayo	45	154	157	10	366
Meath	5	91	83	28	207
Monaghan	8	76	48	5	137
Offaly	7	42	57	2	108
Roscommon	38	70	45	10	163
Sligo	53	87	58	15	213

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County	Round 1 — 2004/05	Round 2 — 2006	Round 3 — 2007	Round 4 — 2008	Total
Tipperary	54	109	108	43	314
Waterford	60	132	93	20	305
Westmeath	23	66	63	22	174
Wexford	33	102	92	47	274
Wicklow	34	75	94	16	219
UK	1	—	—	—	1
Total all Counties	1,602	3,460	3,115	1,216	9,393

Table 2: Regionally-based Drugs Projects

Dial to Stop Drug Initiative

Task Force	Area	Total Grant
		€
East Coast RDTF	East County Wicklow, Arklow, South Dublin City — Dublin 2, 4, 14, 18	30,000
Midlands RDTF	Longford, Westmeath, Offaly and Laois	30,000
Mid West RDTF	Clare, Limerick and South Tipperary	30,000
North Dublin City & County RDTF	North County Dublin — Ashbourne, Swords, Balbriggan, Donabate	30,000
South East RDTF	Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, South Tipperary	30,000
Southern RDTF	County Cork & County Kerry	30,000
Bray LDTF	Bray Town	30,000
Cork City LDTF	Cork City	30,000
Dun Laoghaire LDTF	Dun Laoghaire	30,000
Finglas Cabra LDTF	Dublin 7, Dublin 11	30,000
Total		300,000

Family Support Initiatives

Task Force	Area	Total Grant
		€
East Coast Area RDTF	Joint Family Support Initiative — Bara Project	45,281
East Coast Area RDTF	Greystones Ecumenical Group	1,000
North Dublin City & County RDTF	Swords Family Support Group	8,400
North Dublin City & County RDTF	CAD/CIC Training programme	29,600
South-Western Area RDTF	Kildare West Wicklow CAT/Abbey project	35,000
South-Western Area RDTF	Cuan Mhuire	19,300
South-Western Area RDTF	Kildare Community Education Partnership	9,400
Midlands RDTF	Ashdale/ Woodlands Grove Residents Association	500
Midlands RDTF	Edenderry Addressing Substance Abuse — EASA	43,540
Midlands RDTF	Harmony Community Development Project	10,000
Midlands RDTF	National Association for Parent Support	4,960
Midlands RDTF	Longford Acorn Project	8,500

Task Force	Area	Total Grant
		€
Midlands RDTF	Midland Regional Youth Service	5,000
Midlands RDTF	Arden View Community & Family Resource Centre	2,500
Mid-West RDTF	Tipp Regional Youth Service	20,000
Mid-West RDTF	Southhill Family Resource Centre	9,550
Mid-West RDTF	Bushypark Treatment Centre	44,920
North-Eastern RDTF	North East Family Support Network	70,000
North-Western RDTF	Letterkenny CDP	10,140
North-Western RDTF	North West Alcohol Forum	30,000
North-Western RDTF	Moville & District Family Resource Centre	9,785
North-Western RDTF	Tubbercurry Family Resource Centre	10,000
North-Western RDTF	Ballymote Family Resource Centre	12,000
North-Western RDTF	Dunfanaghy Community & Family Resource Centre	5,000
Southern RDTF	Listowel Family Resource Centre	10,800
Southern RDTF	Cobh Community Drugs Initiative	7,200
Southern RDTF	Tabor Lodge	67,000
Southern RDTF	Matt Talbot Adolescent Service	44,966
South East RDTF	South East Region Family Support Network	41,748
South East RDTF	Kilkenny Family Support Group	3,680
South East RDTF	Waterford CBDI	3,000
South East RDTF	You are Not Alone Family Support Group	3,355
South East RDTF	Aislinn Family Support	15,000
South East RDTF	Suir Valley CBDI	3,250
Western RDTF	Strengthening Families Programme (SFP)	65,450
Ballyfermot LDTF	Ballyfermot STAR	41,700
Ballyfermot LDTF	Familiscope	30,000
Ballymun LDTF	Star Ballymun	35,000
Ballymun LDTF	Ballymun Youth Action Project	10,000
Blanchardstown LDTF	Blanchardstown LDTF	43,355
Blanchardstown LDTF	Coolmine Therapeutic Community	10,000
Blanchardstown LDTF	Sibling Support Programme	8,000
Canal Communities	Canal Communities Task Force	70,000
Clondalkin LDTF	Families First Team	35,000
Clondalkin LDTF	CUMAS	7,140
Cork City LDTF	Gurrabraher/Churchfield CLDTF Community Project — Parents Support Group	7,680
Cork City LDTF	Cork Gay Community Dev Co. Ltd. — Parents Support Series of Workshops	3,000
Cork City LDTF	Cork City Partnership Ltd	10,200
Cork City LDTF	FADA — Farranree Alcohol & Drug Awareness	1,550
Cork City LDTF	NeCodRA — New Community Drug Awareness Group	3,200
Cork City LDTF	Bridge Recovery Group	9,370
Cork City LDTF	Hillgrove Outreach Project — North Side Family Support Services	8,000
Cork City LDTF	Ballyphehane Action for Youth — Bay Project	7,000
Cork City LDTF	Churchfield Community Trust	7,000
Cork City LDTF	Ballincollig Youth Initiative	8,000
Cork City LDTF	Sunday's Well Life Centre	5,000
Dublin North East LDTF	Dublin North East Family Support Network	51,700

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Task Force	Area	Total Grant
		€
Dublin North East LDTF	Childcare Bureau	6,700
Dublin North East LDTF	Kilbarrack Coast Community Programme	7,200
Dublin 12 LDTF	Addiction Response Crumlin — ARC	10,000
Dublin 12 LDTF	Addiction Response Crumlin — ARC	7,000
Dublin 12 LDTF	D12 Task Force	8,000
Dublin 12 LDTF	D12 Task Force	20,000
Dublin 12 LDTF	Loreto Centre	15,000
Dublin 12 LDTF	Walkinstown Greenhills Resource Centre	10,000
Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown LDTF	DROP — Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Outreach Project	32,108
Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown LDTF	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Community Addiction Team	24,892
Finglas / Cabra LDTF	Millennium Carving	14,300
Finglas / Cabra LDTF	Finglas Addiction Support Team	30,000
Finglas / Cabra LDTF	Fingal Centre	35,000
North Inner City LDTF	Inter Agency Drugs Project	75,000
South Inner City LDTF	Whitefriar/Aungier Area Community Council — WAACC	18,080
South Inner City LDTF	Exchange House Traveller Centre	34,920
South Inner City LDTF	Community Awareness of Drugs — CAD	2,400
South Inner City LDTF	Community Addiction Program — Oliver Bond	8,000
South Inner City LDTF	Coolmine Therapeutic Community	6,600
Tallaght LDTF	SWAN FSO — peer led family support group	35,000
Tallaght LDTF	JADD — Outreach: High Support Families	30,308
Tallaght LDTF	Prisoners Families info line	8,000
Tallaght LDTF	Tallaght Travellers Youth Service	4,000
Total		1,564,228

Job Losses.

133. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the contacts he has had with Fóras na Gaeilge with a view to securing alternative employment for the 10 workers who have lost their jobs with the cessation of the publication of a newspaper (details supplied) in County Galway; the role he had in attempting to save these jobs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [27097/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The position is that the workers in question were employed by a private limited company, which secured a time-bound procurement contract with Foras na Gaeilge for the publication of an Irish language newspaper.

On expiry of that particular contract, I understand that the same company was selected from a new procurement competition and received a significantly increased offer in respect of a 4-year contract to 2013. Following bilateral discussions with Foras na Gaeilge, however, the company decided to decline the offer and consequently a further competition is in train at the present time.

Given these circumstances, the Deputy will appreciate that I have no function in the employment issue he raises.

Decentralisation Programme.

134. **Deputy Paul Connaughton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the discussions he has had with the Department of Finance and the Office of Public Works regarding the proposed decentralisation of his Department to County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34130/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): As the Deputy will be aware, my Department's headquarters are scheduled to relocate to Charlestown, Co Mayo, under the Decentralisation Programme. I can confirm that negotiations are still ongoing between the OPW, the Department of Finance and other relevant authorities in relation to a particular site in Charlestown, which the OPW has identified as being suitable for my Department's headquarters.

The Deputy will also be aware that the Department of Finance was approached by a community development organisation in relation to a property in Kiltimagh, Co Mayo, with turn-key potential as a headquarters building. I am advised that OPW is continuing to examine the property in question to ascertain its suitability. As stated by me in previous replies, I should emphasise that this is a sensible and prudent response to the approach that has been made and implies no decision.

Departmental Expenditure.

135. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has concerns regarding the value for money aspect of Údarás na Gaeltachta; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34137/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I am concerned that all bodies funded from my Department's Vote should deliver value for money (VFM) outputs and outcomes, especially in the present difficult economic environment.

In the case of Údarás na Gaeltachta, the body is required to set out a range of outputs that it will deliver, both in the context of the National Development Plan and my own Department's Annual Output Statement. The outputs achieved by Údarás are reported on annually and those reports are laid before the Oireachtas.

It may be noted that Údarás was a participant with the State's other industrial development agencies in the Inter-Agency Group to Review VFM Indicators. Furthermore, with specific regard to capital expenditure, the organisation is subject to the Department of Finance's Capital Appraisal Guidelines, which require, *inter alia*, that business cases and post-project reviews be carried out in order to ensure VFM.

It should be noted also that the statutory remit of Údarás relates, not only to economic development, but also to a wider framework encompassing the linguistic and cultural development of the Gaeltacht. Clearly, any assessment of the delivery of VFM outcomes for Údarás must have regard to these different facets of the organisation's statutory remit.

Finally, I can confirm that Údarás has been subject to periodic VFM reviews and that its work is kept under active review by my Department.

136. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the extent of the financial cuts imposed by him in 2009; the effect this has had on the respective services previously funded by him; the extent to which he has received correspondence from various community groups negatively affected by such cuts; the degree to which he will offer assistance to community and rural service groups in order to maintain essential

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services in the community and rural sectors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33242/09]

824. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of schemes or activities financially backed by his Department which have been curtailed or suspended arising from budgetary cutbacks to date in 2009; his views on the future of such schemes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34566/09]

826. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of groups, schemes and organisations, previously funded directly or indirectly by his Department and experiencing budgetary restraints; the extent and impact of such cutbacks; the degree to which schemes have been suspended, terminated or otherwise reduced in scale; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34568/09]

827. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of community based projects previously funded by his Department, directly or indirectly and which have been restricted or terminated through budgetary cuts; if action will be taken to identify the most sensitive areas expected to be affected; the action proposed to address the issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34569/09]

828. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the action he will take to address financial deficiencies caused by budgetary cutbacks in the voluntary and rural sectors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34570/09]

829. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the areas in the community and rural sectors most affected by current budgetary cutbacks; the degree to which he has proposals to address the consequent damage to such initiatives; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34571/09]

830. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the contact he has had or proposes to have with the community and voluntary sectors with a view to addressing their concerns arising from various budgetary cutbacks; the extent to which he will directly or indirectly address these issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34572/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I propose to take Questions Nos. 136, 824, 826 to 830, inclusive, together.

As the Deputy will be aware, my Department implements and funds a broad range of measures and programmes covering the areas addressed by the Deputy in his questions. In the context of the current economic climate, my primary concern has been and will continue to be the protection of front line services delivering vital programmes and initiatives, especially those focused on the needs of the most socially deprived communities, whether they be urban or rural. This should minimise negative consequences of funding reductions.

As I outlined in my response to Parliamentary Questions 38, 44 and 135 of the 17th June 2009, which were answered together, the revised 2009 allocation for my Department shows a gross reduction of €47.4m on the initial estimated allocation announced in October 2008. Full details of the reductions at an individual programme level are available in the Revised Estimates Volume 2009, which is available on-line on the website of the Department of Finance (<http://www.finance.gov.ie/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=-1&CatID=13&m=f>).

Against this background, no area is immune to cost cutting measures in the current economic environment. It is in this context that reduced budget allocations have been made to certain measures and programmes. I appreciate that this involves some difficult choices having to be made. I am acutely aware of the concerns of community and rural groups in this regard and it is why I have responded by placing such emphasis on the protection and prioritisation of front line services and support to customers/beneficiaries over administration, overheads and ancillary costs.

Both I, the Minister of State, and our officials are in regular and ongoing contact with the community and voluntary sector on the issues raised by the Deputy and are aware of their concerns. We will do what we can to address those concerns within the broader public policy and budgetary context.

The Deputy will be aware that across Government as a whole, we are taking a number of difficult decisions, but our approach is to do this in as balanced a way as possible. Although funding for some programmes operated by my Department has been curtailed or suspended, I still expect that a sufficient spend will be made in order to ensure continued positive impact across community, rural and voluntary sectors.

If the Deputy has a specific question about a particular programme, scheme, project, group or organisation I will be happy to deal with that.

Question No. 137 answered with Question No. 121.

Small and Medium Enterprises.

138. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if, under the schemes or funding available to him, he has created or is proposing to create initiatives to either protect or promote small and medium enterprises within the areas of his Ministry in which there have been redundancies or job losses in view the economic position; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34209/09]

156. **Deputy Emmet Stagg** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has had meetings with the Department of Finance or Enterprise, Trade and Employment to discuss initiatives to either protect or promote small and medium enterprises within the areas of his Ministry where there have been redundancies or job losses; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34213/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): I propose to take Questions Nos. 138 and 156 together.

As the Deputy will be aware, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment has primary responsibility in relation to the promotion of small and medium enterprises. However, my Department operates a range of initiatives, schemes and programmes that support the growth of business and enterprise. Relevant schemes include the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme (RDP), the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP), the CLÁR programme, the Community Services Programme, and Rural Recreation schemes.

My Department is responsible for the implementation of the LEADER elements of the 2007-2013 RDP. A key objective of the programme focuses on the diversification of the rural economy and specifically provides €48.26m to support micro-enterprises. This funding will complement the supports provided by the County Enterprise Boards and will focus, in particular, on the development of indigenous rural resources in artisan food, forestry, marine, rural/agri-tourism, cultural heritage and community promoted enterprises; the development of rec-

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reational tourism and other complementary tourism supports and environmentally friendly initiatives. Axis 3 and Axis 4 (LEADER) of the RDP commenced in February 2009 and there are currently project commitments totalling €4.8 million registered under the Business Creation and Development measure.

My Department's LDSIP provides for integrated approaches to identify, nurture and support individuals, groups and communities in accessing suitable and sustainable employment and self-employment options. Types of activity supported include: proactive outreach and targeted supports such as complementary education and training, support with work placement, support into self-employment or enterprise, and community enterprise activities.

Enterprise support is a feature of the LDSIP and is differentiated from mainstream enterprise initiatives by its focus on disadvantage and on supporting the individual into self-employment or enterprise through training and education, mentoring, networking and after-care as well as small grants towards start-up.

In addition to the above, I would draw the Deputy's attention to the work of Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Western Development Commission (WDC), which are agencies under the aegis of my Department.

Údarás na Gaeltachta is working to reverse the downward employment trend in the Gaeltacht and effect the transition from a declining manufacturing sector to employment in services, including Irish-language centred employment.

To assist in the current economic climate, an tÚdarás is administering in the Gaeltacht the new Employment Subsidy Scheme and the Enterprise Stabilisation Fund which have been established to address the needs of vulnerable small to medium enterprises.

My Department also operates, in conjunction with the relevant County Enterprise Boards, an Enterprise Scheme for the non-Gaeltacht Islands, the aim of which is to encourage the development of both new and existing micro-enterprises on islands outside the Gaeltacht. The introduction of this scheme, which complements the enterprise supports provided by Údarás na Gaeltachta on Gaeltacht islands, recognises the higher costs and locational disadvantage involved in running an island-based business.

I have allocated some €47m to projects approved under the Community Services Programme. I hope that by the end of 2009, over 450 projects will be operational and employing 2,700 people.

Question No. 139 answered with Question No. 121.

Stráitéis Fiche Bliain don Ghaeilge.

140. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cad iad na scéimeanna teanga agus Gaeltachta atá faoi scrúdú agus á measúnú ina Roinn faoi láthair; agus cén uair a shíleann sé go ndéanfar cinneadh ina leith. [33658/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Beidh a fhios ag an Teachta go bhfuil go leor moltaí a bhaineann le hobair agus scéimeanna mo Roinne sa Tuarascáil a foilsíodh mar thoradh ar an Staidéar Teangeolaíoch ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht. Tá na ceisteanna sin uile faoi bhráid an Choiste Rialtais don Ghaeilge agus don Ghaeltacht ag an bpointe seo i gcomhthéacs na Straitéise 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge. Níl i gceist agam cinneadh a dhéanamh faoi thodhchaí aon scéim de chuid mo Roinne-se go dtí go mbeidh an chéim reatha d'obair an Choiste thart.

Question No. 141 answered with Question No. 127.

Inland Waterways.

142. **Deputy Kathleen Lynch** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has had or proposes to have meetings with Waterways Ireland as to funding or budgetary matters regarding improvements to the canals within their remit to provide better facilities for users of the canals from a tourist as well as local perspective with special emphasis on moorings or marinas, angling or walking facilities or other facility within the remit of the agency in view of the present economic climate; the funding requested; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34203/09]

158. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs when he last held a meeting with the chief executive of Waterways Ireland; the agenda for the meeting; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33469/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I propose to take Questions 142 and 158 together.

I meet with the Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland on a regular basis. At our most recent meeting on 27 July 2009, we discussed progress by the organisation to date in 2009.

As the Deputies will be aware, Waterways Ireland has made considerable progress in recent years. During 2008, the ongoing upgrading of the waterways saw a total of 581 metres of additional moorings completed, with the maintenance programme keeping 95% of all navigable waterways open, as planned, for recreational activity. Maintenance projects included:

- continuance of the dredging programme on the Grand Canal to restore the canal to its navigable depth;
- the completion of dredging on 3,200 metres of the Barrow line between Vicarstown and Courtwood in Co. Laois and on a further 1,300 metres of the Main Line dredged between Plunkett and Derries Bridges adjacent to Pollagh Co. Offaly; and
- the upgrading of stone jetties on the Barrow navigation, with 300 metres of bank protection works and trackway widening between Carlow and Bestfield Lock and the installation of new lock gates.

Achievements this year on the development of the waterways include:

- completion of 79 metres of additional moorings;
- completion of the construction of the final bridge at Lyneen to reconnect the Royal Canal to the Shannon; and
- progress on the restoration of the Ulster Canal with the preliminary stages of the design process well underway.

I also had preliminary discussions with the Chief Executive regarding Waterways Ireland's proposed capital programme and financial provision for 2010. The precise scale of works to be carried out in 2010 to improve services and facilities along the navigation and the associated funding to be made available will be set out in Waterway's Ireland's Business Plan for 2010, which is currently being prepared, and which will be submitted for approval to the North/South Ministerial Council in due course.

Question No. 143 answered with Question No. 121.

Housing Grants.

144. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his proposals to resume the Gaeltacht housing grant scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34216/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The potential for the resumption of the grant scheme under the Housing (Gaeltacht) Acts will be considered in the context of the 20 year Strategy for Irish, which is under consideration at present by the Cabinet Committee on Irish and the Gaeltacht, and also in the context of the financial position prevailing.

Foilseacháin sa Ghaeilge.

145. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cén uair a bheidh nuachtán Gaeilge ar fáil do phobal na Gaeilge arís; agus an féidir leis a gheallúint, anois agus an spriocdháta d’iarratais ar an deontas nua thart, nach gcuirfear aon mhoill ar chinneadh luath a dhéanamh. [33659/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Mar is eol don Teachta, is é Foras na Gaeilge a chuireann an maoiniú ar fáil chun nuachtán seachtainiúil Gaeilge a fhoilsiú. Tuigim ón bhForas gur fógraíodh comórtas nua le gairid agus go bhfuarthas roinnt iarratas faoin spriocdháta den 4 Meán Fómhair 2009. Tá na hiarratais sin á meas faoi láthair agus comhairlítear dom go bhfuil sé i gceist agallaimh a chur ar na hiarrthóirí is fearr, bunaithe ar na hiarratais scríofa. Tá súil ag an bhForas moladh a chur faoi bhráid Bhord na heagraíochta i mí na Samhna.

Tá Foras na Gaeilge tiomanta do nuachtán seachtainiúil Gaeilge a bheith ar fáil do phobal na Gaeilge agus, sna cúinsí sin, tuigtear dom go ndéanfar an cinneadh sa chás seo chomh luath agus is féidir.

Community Development.

146. **Deputy Emmet Stagg** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if all groups operating under the LEADER funding programme are functioning and available for grant applications; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34210/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): As the Deputy is aware, delivery of Axis 3 and Axis 4 (LEADER) of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 commenced in February 2009. I can confirm that all Local Action Groups contracted to deliver the Programme are now fully operational and available to consider grant applications.

Contact details regarding the groups delivering the Programme are available on my Department’s web site at www.pobail.ie.

Question No. 147 answered with Question No. 121.

National Drugs Strategy.

148. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the structure of the new Office of the Minister for Drugs; the number of people it

employs; the person to whom local and regional taskforces are accountable to within this office; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33244/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): The Office of the Minister for Drugs (OMD) was established on 1st September 2009 and it subsumed the functions previously undertaken by the Drugs Strategy Unit of my Department and the National Drugs Strategy Team. Its primary role will be to co-ordinate and oversee the delivery of the new National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016.

Thirteen people are currently working in the OMD. In addition, officers at Assistant Principal level (or equivalent) are being assigned to the OMD on a half-time basis from various statutory organisations. Funding is also provided to support the active participation of the community and voluntary sectors with the Office and protocols in this regard are currently being finalised.

Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces, report to me in relation to implementation of the National Drugs Strategy, as Minister of State with responsibility in that regard. A Drugs Advisory Group has been established to advise me on operational and policy matters relating to the National Drugs Strategy. Liaison Officers from the Drugs Advisory Group have been nominated for each Drugs Task Force. These Liaison Officers will act as a conduit to facilitate communication in both directions between the Drugs Task Forces and the OMD. Furthermore, I am at present half way through a series of meetings with all of the Drugs Task Forces to outline the new arrangements and to encourage their active participation in the shaping of the overall effort to tackle the drugs problem.

149. **Deputy Pat Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of drug task forces in place; the areas covered by same; the reports received by him from each group; the action taken as a result of such reports; the liaison or action taken between himself and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform as a result of such reports; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34206/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): Currently, there are 14 Local and 10 Regional Drugs Task Forces throughout the country. The appendix below sets out details in this regard.

As part of the National Drugs Strategy 2009-16 launched by An Taoiseach last month, new institutional structures have been put in place to support the implementation of the Strategy, including the establishment of the Office of the Minister for Drugs (OMD). One of the key roles of the new Office will be to support the work of the Task Forces.

The Strategy provides that Task Forces will report to the OMD for expenditure and activity relating to their projects twice a year. In addition, they will be required to produce an annual statement, in an agreed format, giving an assessment of the work and outputs of their projects — and their broader strategic and co-ordinating work — in the previous 12 months. I expect to receive the first of such reports and statements early in 2010.

In addition, statutory, community and voluntary representatives will act as liaison persons between the Task Forces and the Office and will be providing regular updates on relevant issues at the Drugs Advisory Group, which I chair. The Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform is represented on this and all the new bodies that are being put in place to drive the implementation of the Strategy.

My Department is in regular contact with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform who will be actively involved in rolling out the new Strategy. I recently met with

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Minister Ahern and his Officials on this matter, the first of the twice yearly meetings under the new Strategy.

Appendix

Local Drugs Task Forces	Regional Drugs Task Forces
Ballyfermot	East Coast (Dun Laoghaire Rathdown and Wicklow)
Ballymun	Midlands (Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath)
Blanchardstown	Mid West (Clare, Limerick and Tipperary NR)
Bray	North Dublin and Area (North Dublin City and Fingal)
Canal Communities	North East (East Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan)
Clondalkin	North West (Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo and West Cavan)
Cork	Southern (Cork and Kerry)
Dublin North East	South East (Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary SR, Waterford and Wexford)
Dublin 12	South West (South Dublin City, South Dublin, Kildare and West Wicklow)
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	Western (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon)
Finglas Cabra	
North Inner City	
South Inner City	
Tallaght	

Question No. 150 answered with Question No. 129.

Community Development.

151. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of applications received for the provision of funding under the CLÁR programme for the past two years; the number received to date in 2009; the amount of funding drawn down in each year; if there is a waiting list; the number of such applications; his plans to upgrade the scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34208/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The CLÁR Programme provides funding and co-funding to Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities to accelerate investment in selected priority developments in areas that have suffered significant depopulation. These investments support physical, economic and social infrastructure across a variety of measures.

Table A below outlines the number of applications received for 2007, 2008 and the number received, to date, in 2009.

It is important to note that for a number of measures, applications are not made directly to my Department. Rather, CLÁR funding is provided on the basis of co-funding/top-up arrangements with other Government Departments and Agencies. In these cases, the numbers in the table reflect the numbers of grants approved, rather than applications made.

Table B below outlines the funding drawn down during 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009.

There is no waiting list for the provision of funding under the CLÁR programme. For those CLÁR measures that remain open for new applications, applications continue to be assessed in my Department. For those CLÁR measures that are not currently open for applications, applicants are informed of the position by my officials.

I will continue to examine the scope for the Programme to provide support for rural infrastructure within the context of the current financial situation and the overall level of such support provided across Government.

Table A: CLÁR applications received during 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009

MEASURE	Applications received 2007	Applications received 2008	Applications received 2009 to date
Coillte Co-funded Roads	9	6	
LIS roads	19	1	
Class II & III roads	24	23	
Bridges	5	7	
CLAR Flashing Amber Safety lights	9	0	
Public Water and Sewerage	8	16	
Group Water	13	18	
Group Sewerage	4	4	
Water Conservation Measure	2	0	
Village Enhancement	11	2	
Bi-lingual Signage	22	50	5
Sports Top Up *	271	0	
Gaeltacht Top-up *	8	24	
Health Measure *	0	1	
Voluntary Ambulance	2	3	1
Three Phase Electricity	152	143	
Community Initiatives	6	1	
Schools Play Facilities	198	55	5
Coastal/Harbours*	27	26	
Total	790	380	

*For these measures, applications are not made directly to the Department. Rather, CLÁR funding is provided on the basis of co-funding/top-up arrangements with other Government Departments and Agencies.

Note: Applications from Local Authorities and other Government Departments under CLAR measures such as the Class 2 & 3 roads and Health are counted as one application, but include multiple projects. For example, the "Health Measure" includes 31 projects, some of which have several elements.

Table B: CLÁR Expenditure 2007-2009 to date

Measure	Expenditure 2007	Expenditure 2008	Expenditure 2009 (to date)
	€	€	€
Flashing Safety Lights	1,510,466.35	280,630.34	4,582.34
Coillte co-funded Roads	491,065.77	456,618.64	
LIS Roads	2,318,104.46	3,000,947.82	
Class 2 & 3 Roads	2,826,863.02	2,869,865.61	
Bridges	116,615.51	94,824.35	
Public Water & Sewerage Schemes	2,782,487.58	3,620,102.22	1,940,039.62
Group Water Schemes	1,426,853.95	5,332,499.20	4,348,332.41
Group Sewerage Schemes		131,937.22	423,467.04
Tax incentive Shannon	594,374.00		
Water Conservation measure		245,533.18	31,416.14

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Measure	Expenditure 2007	Expenditure 2008	Expenditure 2009 (to date)
	€	€	€
Village Enhancement	807,258.49	465,610.78	
LA Housing	233,548.16	365,150.38	61,354.45
Community Initiative	876,875.51	619,394.33	68,293.28
Gaeltacht	423,783.96	542,260.30	216,838.08
Bi-lingual Signage Scheme	20,796.37	38,003.45	27,780.51
Sports Capital Grants Top Up	1,754,642.00	1,672,300.00	984,400.00
Minor Health Projects	117,196.62		
Voluntary Ambulance	241,589.94	535,526.06	2,774.28
School Outdoor Play Facility	1,020,156.18	533,840.02	167,406.62
Fibre Optic	5,342.15	9,294.83	
Wireless internet	16,063.83		8,200.74
Single to Three phase Electricity	1,750,214.03	1,604,161.97	30,000.00
Courthouses Enhancement	50,000.00		
Coastal and Harbour Development	82,500.00	1,471,872.65	876,918.13
Western Rail Corridor	1,862,563.00	283,851.00	
NIRSA CLÁR mapping		4,247.10	4,264.65
Total	21,329,360.88	24,178,471.45	9,191,803.64

National Drugs Strategy.

152. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs further to his announcement of 22 September 2009 regarding the extension of the dial to stop drug dealing scheme, the number of areas in which the scheme is operating; if further extensions are planned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34193/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): As the Deputy will be aware, the Dial-to-Stop Drug Dealing Campaign was officially launched on 30 September 2008. The campaign was rolled out across fifteen Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces areas with funding being provided by my Department, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Dormant Accounts Fund.

As was highlighted during the launch, the confidential number used in the campaign is open for all to use regardless of the area they come from. While active promotion took place only in those Task Force areas that expressed an interest, calls have been received from all over the country, including those areas that did not have a campaign.

I recently decided to extend the campaign due to its on-going success. A decision on any further extensions will be made when the data from the campaign has been evaluated.

Community Development.

153. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the main features of the plan announced by him on 18 September 2009 for the integration of the local development inclusion programme and the community development programmes; if his attention has been drawn to the concerns expressed by persons involved that the integration of these programmes may lead to loss of key services to communities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34194/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): The LDSIP and the CDP are my Departments two main social inclusion/community development programmes. Both have a community development element and both are delivered through separate local delivery structures.

I have already indicated that my strong view is that a single focused programme with a single integrated delivery structure is now needed in order to maximise the impact of these two programmes which serve disadvantaged communities. The Centre for Effective Services is currently preparing proposals for me in this regard, which will draw on good international practice and independent advice. I hope to receive this in the near future with a view to rolling out a new programme early next year.

My overall aim is to ensure that, from 2010, disadvantaged communities will benefit from a more focused programme with clear objectives and simplified and streamlined delivery structures.

Irish Language.

154. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the position in regard to the securing of efficiency savings in respect of An Foras Teanga; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34214/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Following discussions between the two Finance Departments in relation to the North/South Bodies as a group, including An Foras Teanga, it has been agreed that these Bodies should examine the programme objectives set out in their current 2009 Business Plans with a view to delivering them with a more efficient and effective use of resources in the period 2009-2010. Taking the baseline as set out in the 2009 Business Plans in each case, it is proposed that the Bodies will be required to achieve efficiency cash-releasing savings of a minimum of 3% in 2009 and a minimum of 6% in 2010.

The current position in regard to An Foras Teanga is that both Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency have been asked to review their 2009 and 2010 Business Plans and budgets in this light.

Substance Misuse.

155. **Deputy Pat Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he has had consultations with the Department of Health and Children or health organisations such as the World Health Organisation, or his fellow EU Ministers or at EU level in regard to research on the effects of the created drug Cocathlyne on persons who use cocaine and alcohol; if there has been further research results in regard to this drug; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34207/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): I have not had recent consultations with the Department of Health & Children, nor with the other parties referred to by the Deputy, in regard to research on the effects of cocaethylene. However, much is already known about its effects.

The 2007 report of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs entitled “An Overview of Cocaine Use in Ireland II” identified the well established risks associated with cocaethylene, which is a naturally produced by-product when cocaine and alcohol are combined.

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When people mix these substances, the human liver combines them in the system to form cocaethylene and this is more toxic than using either drug alone. Data from the National Drug Treatment Reporting System confirm that cocaine and alcohol are being used together. The combination of the two drugs intensifies euphoric effects, but cocaethylene can cause more serious physical harm, particularly to the cardiovascular system, as well as having the potential to increase the risk of sudden death.

Heightening awareness of the risks associated with the combined use of alcohol and cocaine was a fundamental element of the national cocaine awareness campaign undertaken by the HSE in 2008. Allied to this, Drugs Task Forces, with funding provided by my Department, undertook local campaigns at that time to dovetail with the national campaign.

Furthermore, the recently launched National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 places particular emphasis on prevention. Various prevention and education interventions are planned, focusing on young people, both in the school and the non-school setting, as well as on the overall population. A sustained range of awareness campaigns is envisaged as part of this approach.

Question No. 156 answered with Question No. 138.

Departmental Expenditure.

157. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his proposals to amend the range of areas that come within the scope of the Official Languages Act 2003 as proposed by the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34215/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): At the outset, I wish to clarify for the Deputy that the obligation under section 10 of the Official Languages Act 2003 to publish documents simultaneously in Irish and English applies only to a limited number of key documents published by public bodies, including annual reports and accounts and documents setting out public policy proposals.

In the wider context, my Department will continue to work with Departments and other public bodies to assist them in meeting their obligations under the Act in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

Question No. 158 answered with Question No. 142.

Question No. 159 answered with Question No. 121.

Immigrant Integration Services.

160. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the role of his Department in migrant integration issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33468/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The Minister for Justice Equality and Law reform is responsible for Integration.

Under the terms of a Government decision relating to the arrangements for the functioning of the Office of the Minister for State for Integration, I have mandated the Minister of State to take on the role of providing policy advice on integration to me in respect of relevant programmes in my Department.

Question No. 161 answered with Question No. 125.

National Drugs Strategy.

162. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the main feature of the new National Drugs Strategy 2009 to 2016 launched on 10 September 2009; the additional financial resources which will be allocated to fight drugs during this period; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34192/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): The National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 aims to continue to tackle the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on five pillars, Supply Reduction, Prevention, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Research.

Under the supply reduction pillar there will be renewed emphasis on reducing the volume of illicit drugs, disrupting the activities of organised criminal networks, and targeting income from illicit drug trafficking. The continued roll-out of Local Policing Fora and the inclusion of drugs issues in a more central way in the work of Joint Policing Committees are also envisaged.

Various prevention and education interventions are planned, focusing on young people, both in the school and the non-school setting, as well as on the overall population. A sustained range of awareness campaigns is envisaged as part of this approach.

The new Strategy also envisages the development of a national integrated treatment and rehabilitation service and every effort will be made to encourage drug users to engage with services. Among the initiatives proposed are speedier access to treatment, the achievement of operational synergies between service providers in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and increased opiate substitution, needle exchange, treatment in prisons and detox facilities.

With respect to research, the emphasis will be on ensuring the availability of accurate, timely, relevant and comparable data to inform decisions on initiatives to counteract problem drug use.

I am not in a position to say at this stage what additional financial resources might be allocated to tackle the drugs problem during the period up to 2016. It is clear that resources will be scarce in the coming years and so it is imperative that the optimum use is made of available funding. However, this funding is considerable, with over €275m being available across the different Departments and agencies this year.

Departmental Funding.

163. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the funding allocated under the agencies of his Department to recreational or sporting clubs in each of the past three years to promote youth activities as an alternative to anti-social behaviour and drug misuse; the areas to which this funding was allocated; the use of the funding; if it was for capital or general project purpose; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34202/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I am informed that Údarás na Gaeltachta is the only agency of my Department which has allocated funding for the purposes outlined during the period in question. The following table outlines the information provided to me by an tÚdarás.

[Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív.]

Appendix: Údarás na Gaeltachta

Year	Funding Allocated	Areas to which the funding was allocated	The use of the funding
	€		
2006	150,610	Óige na Gaeltachta Teo — the Gaeltacht Youth Club Organisation	Funding for the organisation and 33 Youth Clubs covering every Gaeltacht County
2007	350,000	Óige na Gaeltachta Teo — the Gaeltacht Youth Club Organisation	Funding for the organisation and 53 Youth Clubs covering every Gaeltacht County, including 2 drop in centres.
2008	291,000	Óige na Gaeltachta Teo — the Gaeltacht Youth Club Organisation	Funding for the organisation and 56 Youth Clubs covering every Gaeltacht County
2009 to Date	230,000	Óige na Gaeltachta Teo — the Gaeltacht Youth Club Organisation	Funding for the organisation and 59 Youth Clubs covering every Gaeltacht County

The majority of this funding was for current expenditure purposes, with a small proportion for equipment.

National Drugs Strategy.

164. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if his attention has been drawn to the recent report produced by an organisation (details supplied), showing that they are catering for 20 new heroin addictions per week and that the abuse of heroin is spreading in many towns here; his views on this report; the additional steps he will take to address this problem and to reduce the demand for heroin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34191/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): I am aware of the report in question and I note that it states that, in 2008, nearly 1,000 new attendees accessed the needle exchange facilities provided by the organisation. However, this figure is in respect of new cases only, and it represents a reduction on the corresponding figure of 1,333 reported by the same organisation for 2007. Overall, the latest report advises that 4,657 individuals attended the needle exchange facilities and this also shows a slight decrease on the 4,705 recorded in the organisation's 2007 report.

Nevertheless, it is, undoubtedly, a matter of concern that 1,000 new cases have come forward in 2008 and there is a need to improve our prevention strategies, as set out in the recently published National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016. At the same time, increasing numbers in treatment is something that we are striving to achieve, with a view to moving them towards a drug-free life.

Overall it is encouraging that injecting opiate users are making the first steps to access treatment services as this will help to reduce the risks of the spread of blood borne viruses, improve the overall health of individuals and is likely to encourage some opiate users, at least, to engage further with treatment and rehabilitation services.

The indications are that the use of heroin has stabilised in the Dublin region. However, heroin has become more widely dispersed around the country — in particular in the major cities

and in Leinster towns. I accept that heroin remains a very significant problem and responding to it remains as a fundamental element of the new Strategy.

Through the implementation of the demand reduction actions under the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation pillars of the new Strategy, I intend that demand for all illicit drugs, including heroin, will be reduced.

Various prevention and education interventions are planned, focusing on young people, both in the school and the non-school setting, as well as on the overall population. A sustained range of awareness campaigns is envisaged as part of this approach. Furthermore, I recently announced the allocation of funding for the continuation of the successful “Dial to Stop Drugs” campaign. The new Strategy also envisages the development of a national integrated treatment and rehabilitation service and every effort will be made to encourage drug users to engage with the services. In this context, the Deputy should note that I recently allocated capital funding of €1.1m towards the fast tracked development of six treatment clinics in Limerick, Cork, Waterford, Enniscorthy, Drogheda and Dundalk. It is expected that some of these clinics will be in operation by the end of the year, with treatment being available in all six locations early in 2010.

I am determined that real progress will be made across the period of the new Strategy, with all sectors working in a co-ordinated and targeted way, to achieve the implementation of the agreed actions.

Question No. 165 answered with Question No. 125.

Departmental Expenditure.

166. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the extent to which the CLÁR and RAPID programmes have been affected in 2009 by budgetary cutbacks; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33241/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): In the current economic environment, the Deputy will be aware that across Government as a whole, we are taking a number of difficult decisions, but our approach is to do this in as balanced a way as possible.

In this context, no area is immune to cost-cutting measures and some level of reduction in budget allocations have been made to certain measures and programmes, including the CLÁR Programme.

Notwithstanding this — and while some of the measures under the CLÁR Programme are not currently open for new applications — a high number of projects continue to be implemented throughout the country. Overall, in 2009, I anticipate a significant level of investment under the Programme — of the order of approx €16m. This will allow it to continue to meet its objective of providing funding and co-funding to Government Departments, State agencies and local authorities to accelerate investment in selected priority developments in areas that have suffered significant depopulation.

With regard to the RAPID Programme, as the Deputy is aware, it aims to ensure that priority attention is given to tackling the spatial concentration of poverty and social exclusion within 51 designated RAPID areas nationally. It is a matter for individual Departments to report on the provision of funding and progress on delivery with respect to projects under their responsibility in the RAPID areas.

[Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív.]

In 2004, I introduced the RAPID Leverage Schemes and under these, my Department tops-up the funds of other Departments and agencies to provide small-scale local projects such as playgrounds, traffic measures, improved health facilities, CCTV and top-up funds for projects promoted by sporting organisations under the Sports Capital Programme. Capital funding of €7.8m was provided to fund the Leverage Schemes in 2008 and I anticipate a spend of a broadly comparable level this year.

As the Deputy is aware, in May 2009 the Government approved the inclusion of five new towns in the RAPID programme: Ballina, Co. Mayo; Dungarvan, Co. Waterford; Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford; Mullingar, Co. Westmeath and Rathkeale, Co. Limerick.

Overall, while funding for some programmes operated by my Department has been reduced, I still expect that a sufficient spend will be made this year in order to continue to support communities throughout the country.

Employment Statistics.

167. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Taoiseach the details for the first quarter of 2009 and the first quarter of 2007 of the persons aged 15 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, and 25 to 29 years showing the number in employment, in the labour force and unemployed; the participation rate in the labour force and the unemployment rate in each respective age category; and the same data for the age group 30-64. [33030/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Pat Carey): The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) is the official source of estimates for the information requested. Details on the number in employment, in the labour force and unemployed; the participation rate in the labour force and the unemployment rate in each requested age category for Quarter 1 2007 and 2009 are contained in the following table.

Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 1 2007

Age group	Number in Employment	Number in Labour Force	Unemployed	Participation Rate	Unemployment Rate
	'000	'000	'000	%	%
15 – 19 years	69.3	79.5	10.2	27.7	12.8
20 – 24 years	244.6	262.3	17.7	75.4	6.7
25 – 29 years	330.7	348.8	18.1	87.0	5.2
30 – 64 years	1,401.60	1,453.40	51.8	75.0	3.6

Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 1 2009

Age group	Number in Employment	Number in Labour Force	Unemployed	Participation Rate	Unemployment Rate
	'000	'000	'000	%	%
15 – 19 years	41.4	55.7	14.3	19.7	25.6
20 – 24 years	182.9	222.6	39.7	70.8	17.8
25 – 29 years	305.2	352.8	47.6	84.6	13.5
30 – 64 years	1,391.80	1,512.60	120.8	74.7	8.0

Data may be subject to future revision.

Data may be subject to sampling or other survey errors, which are greater in respect of smaller values or estimates of change.

Reference period: q1=Jan-Mar, q2=Apr-Jun, q3=Jul-Sep, q4=Oct-Dec.

Source: Quarterly National Household Survey, Central Statistics Office.

Ministerial Travel.

168. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Taoiseach the annual cost to his Department of Ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagements; and the event and the expense for same in each of the past ten years. [33088/09]

The Taoiseach: The following table details the annual cost to my Department of Ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagements for the years 1999 to August 2009.

Year	Taoiseach & Officials from Private Office	Chief Whip & Officials from Private Office	Minister of State for European Affairs & Officials from Private Office
	€	€	€
1999	48,982.95	7,110.42	
2000	201,518.10	25,148.88	
2001	116,075.67	30,246.51	
2002	226,060.35	16,713.69	3,908.11
2003	80,696.43	27,154.61	30,286.71
2004	181,130.20	46,926.45	28,995.04
2005	267,149.77	29,170.46	26,722.42
2006	218,839.64	16,087.43	18,515.30
2007	118,889.84	13,476.28	32,342.54
2008	261,562.32	2,238.24	4,965.79
YTD August 2009	110,230.63	11,660.85	5,184.33

Typically the costs are in respect of the Taoiseach, Private Office Staff, and Security and include the following:

- foreign subsistence,
- hotel costs,
- air fares,
- taxi expenses,
- car hire,
- telecommunication expenses,
- ferry charges,
- road tolls,
- carbon emission charges and
- other receipted expenses.

[The Taoiseach.]

It should be noted that the majority of costs in relation to the Minister of European Affairs are in respect of Private Office staff, as the Minister's expenses are paid by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The table below details overseas travel engagements by the Taoiseach from 1st of January 2008 to end August 2009:

Date	Event
14 – 18 January 2008	Official visit to South Africa and Tanzania
26 – 28 February 2008	Official visit to Slovenia, Austria (including OSCE) and Poland
16 – 18 March 2008	St Patrick's Day visit to Washington
29 April – 2 May 2008	Official trip to Washington and Boston
13 – 14 July 2008	EU Mediterranean Summit, Paris
15 – 18 July 2008	Official visit to New York
24 – 26 September 2008	UN Summit, New York
26 September 2008	BIC meeting, Edinburgh
15 – 16 October 2008	EU Council, Brussels
21 – 26 October 2008	ASEM Summit in China
27 – 28 November 2008	Meet with Heads of State in Finland and Sweden
3 – 4 December 2008	Meet with Heads of State in Luxembourg, Berlin and London
5 December 2008	Meet with UK Prime Minister in London followed by meeting with EU Commissioner in Brussels
11 – 12 December 2008	EU Council, Brussels
11 – 17 January 2009	Official visit to Japan
29 – 30 January 2009	World Economic Forum, Davos
14 – 18 March 2009	St Patrick's day visit to New York and Washington

The table below details overseas engagements attended by the Chief Whip, Mr Pat Carey, T.D. from 1st of January 2008 to end August 2009:

Date	Event
24-26 January 2008	Ministerial conference: ICT for an Inclusive Society, Riga, Latvia
21-22 February 2008	Informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers, Brdo, Slovenia
13-18 March 2008	St Patricks Day Celebrations, Vienna, Austria
29-31 March 2008	British/Irish Council, Edinburgh, Scotland
25-26 September 2008	British/Irish Council, Edinburgh
14-19 March 2009	St Patricks Day Celebrations, Boston, USA
13-18 August 2009	Representing Government at "Milwaukee Irish Fest", Milwaukee, USA

The table below details the events attended by the Minister of State for European Affairs from 1st of January 2008 to end August 2009:

Date	Event
11 – 19 March 2008	St. Patrick's Day, Shanghai
9 – 10 April 2008	Meetings with Comms. McCreevy and Walstrom
2 – 6 July 2008	Quebec 400 Celebrations
12 – 14 July 2008	Informal Council Meeting (Brest) and meeting with Pres. Sarkozy in Paris

Date	Event
9 – 10 Nov 2008	Various meetings re Lisbon (Brussels) Armistice Commemoration, Paris
25 – 26 Nov 2008	Various meetings re Lisbon Treaty, Prague
8 – 9 December 2008	Various meetings re Lisbon Treaty, Riga
26th February 2009	Various meetings re Lisbon Treaty, Brussels
5 – 6 March 2009	CEPS Annual Conference, Brussels
18th May 2009	GAERC
26 – 28 June 2009	OSCE Conference, Corfu
9 – 10 July	Croatia Summit 2009

It is not practicable to provide all of the details of the events attended over the last ten years, however I would be happy to provide details in relation to any specific queries the Deputy may have.

Question No. 169 answered with Question No. 4.

Departmental Reports.

170. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Taoiseach the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33906/09]

The Taoiseach: My Department commissioned 5 experts' and consultants' reports during 2008. The following table details the reports and their cost.

Report Name	Cost
	€
2008 Irish Civil Service Customer Satisfaction Survey	69,817.00
Knowledge Management Report -To carry out initial analysis of knowledge management and produce Report and plan.	2,268.75
Evaluate and present a report on virtualisation options for eCabinet System	726.00
Review of the Economic Regulatory Environment	408,375.00
Value for Money Review of National Economic and Social Development Office — External Evaluation Report	3,375.90

Departmental Staff.

171. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Taoiseach the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33957/09]

172. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Taoiseach the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33972/09]

The Taoiseach: The information requested is set out beneath:

[The Taoiseach.]

Department of the Taoiseach

Year	Early Retirements		Terminations of Contracts		Resignations	
	Number	*Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost
		€		€		
2006	1	—	2	171,509.32	2	Nil
2007	0	—	5	278,293.00	2	Nil
2008	2	—	5	518,643.00	1	Nil
2009	2	—	1	35,849.02	Nil	Nil

Central Statistics Office (CSO)

Year	Early Retirements		Terminations of Contracts		Resignations	
	Number	*Cost	Number	Cost	Number	Cost
		€		€		
2006	4	—	0	Nil	12	Nil
2007	9	—	1	Nil	25	Nil
2008	7	—	0	Nil	9	Nil
2009	8	—	0	Nil	1	Nil

*No cost arises for my Department because payments relating to lump sum and pensions are paid by the Office of the Paymaster General.

The figures relate to early retirements, terminations of contract or resignations of permanent staff of the CSO. Short-term temporary appointments of field staff to collect survey information have not been included. There were no costs arising from termination of contract or resignations in respect of temporary field officer posts.

National Economic and Social Development Office (NESDO)

In NESDO the contract for one member of staff terminated. However, there was no cost involved in not renewing the contract. There were no early retirements or resignations in the years concerned.

Departmental Contracts.

173. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Taoiseach if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34320/09]

The Taoiseach: In 2008 my Department entered into a contract, which includes Ministers at this Department, with Vodafone Ireland Limited under the mobile telecommunications framework.

Departmental Staff.

174. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Taoiseach the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34347/09]

The Taoiseach: All Civil Servants retiring from my Department are entitled to an annual pension and lump sum, in accordance with the relevant legislation and conditions of service.

Since 2006, there have been two occasions when discretionary arrangements were made in accordance with comparable terms applied previously in similar circumstances, and were so approved by the Department of Finance. In both cases, the position vacated was that of Special Adviser.

In the Central Statistics Office the terms applicable to completion of his contract were applied on the retirement of the Director General.

175. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Taoiseach the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34362/09]

The Taoiseach: No member of staff from my Department has been dismissed over the past five years for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract.

Earnings Statistics.

176. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Taoiseach the details of the quarterly data on hourly wage rates, hours worked and average earnings since the first quarter of 2007 in respect of each category of employment for which the Central Statistics Office collects information. [34575/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Pat Carey): Quarterly statistics on earnings, employment and hours worked are compiled by the Central Statistics Office from the following sources:

- The Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) which will ultimately replace the other CSO short-term earnings surveys;
- The survey on earnings in Distribution and Business Services;
- The survey on earnings and hours in the Construction Sector; and
- The survey on earnings in the Public Sector.

Statistics from the EHECS survey are given in Table 1.

Table 1 — Employment, Average weekly paid hours and average earnings in the industrial and financial sectors

		2007Q1	2007Q2	2007Q3	2007Q4	2008Q1	2008Q2	2008Q3	2008Q4	2009Q1*
Industry (B-E)	Employees (Number)	237,700	238,200	240,000	237,800	231,100	232,600	226,900	221,400	215,40
	Weekly Paid Hours (Hours)	38.1	38.5	37.9	38.3	37.5	38.5	38.4	38.1	36.6
	Average Hourly Earnings (Euro)	19.51	19.56	19.25	20.34	20.82	20.35	20.26	21.44	22.05
Financial and insurance activities (K)	Employees (Number)	79,300	80,700	81,000	81,700	83,200	86,000	84,900	84,300	84,300
	Weekly Paid Hours (Hours)	34.0	34.0	34.0	34.1	33.8	34.0	33.8	33.8	33.2
	Average Hourly Earnings (Euro)	31.82	31.86	26.42	28.96	34.17	32.96	27.98	30.18	30.37

*Provisional.

Table 2 — Average Weekly Earnings in Distribution and Business Services (€)

	2007Q1	2007Q2	2007Q3	2007Q4	2008Q1	2008Q2	2008Q3	2008Q4
Motor trades (50)	631.90	635.26	637.22	647.21	650.76	633.35	629.62	631.25
Wholesale trade (51)	713.83	715.97	722.55	717.72	724.68	736.73	733.88	748.24
Retail trade (52)	714.86	735.69	746.07	771.87	778.15	754.63	757.53	789.45
Hotels and restaurants (55)	430.00	444.38	448.84	461.93	447.17	458.35	474.17	481.83
Land transport (60)	705.99	720.35	715.60	705.21	757.48	743.47	724.86	745.70
Post and telecommunications (64)	888.41	906.54	910.96	..	976.95	919.94	926.14	..
Other business activities (74)	714.40	727.73	732.95	728.98	736.61	721.19	703.15	733.87
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles, personal and household goods (50-52)	701.35	714.38	721.09	733.72	739.65	727.86	728.02	750.73
Water and air transport, supporting transport and travel agent activities (61-63)	811.96	816.33	809.85	..	822.85	855.66	823.04	..
Real estate, renting of machinery and equipment (70-71)	835.35	859.70	862.69	867.60	854.39	844.05	838.53	885.52
Computing activities, research and development (72-73)	762.55	767.14	766.36	774.35	798.49	815.61	817.56	850.30
Distribution and business services (50-64, 70-74)	695.31	708.56	708.56	726.63	727.01	719.43	714.34	748.81

Table 3 — Average hourly earnings and average weekly hours in the Construction Sector

	2007Q1	2007Q2	2007Q3	2007Q4	2008Q1	2008Q2	2008Q3	2008Q4
Average Earnings per Hour	18.25	18.46	18.44	18.77	19.03	18.93	18.97	19.20
Average Hours Worked per Week	43.0	43.3	44.4	45.2	43.6	43.0	43.2	42.8

Table 4 — Employment in the Public Sector (000's)

	2007Q1	2007Q2	2007Q3	2007Q4	2008Q1	2008Q2	2008Q3	2008Q4	2009Q1
Civil Service	37.3	38.0	38.4	37.9	38.6	39.5	39.3	38.8	38.7
Defence	11.2	11.1	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.3	11.3	11.1
An Garda Síochána	12.8	13.3	13.4	13.7	13.8	14.0	14.2	14.3	14.4
Education	97.7	97.0	93.5	100.9	101.4	101.6	97.9	105.0	104.1
Regional Bodies	38.1	40.0	40.1	38.8	39.0	41.2	40.4	38.5	37.8
Semi-State Companies	53.0	53.3	53.0	52.8	52.8	53.8	53.9	53.3	52.3
Public Sector (excluding Health)	251.7	254.0	251.1	256.6	258.0	262.6	258.2	262.3	259.5
Health	110.4	111.6	112.8	111.5	110.3	110.5	110.8	111.0	111.8
Public Sector (including Health)	362.1	365.6	363.9	368.1	368.3	373.1	369.1	373.3	371.2

Table 5 — Public Sector average weekly earnings

	2007Q1	2007Q2	2007Q3	2007Q4	2008Q1	2008Q2	2008Q3	2008Q4	2009Q1
Civil Service	870.81	870.83	879.58	889.8	912.35	889.82	921.24	940.84	941.09
Defence	740.88	741.82	778.14	807.18	788.18	799.65	820.12	825.84	828.79
An Garda Síochána	1,209.20	1,248.26	1,104.22	1,262.10	1,226.16	1,247.74	1,196.19	1,158.88	1,177.54
Education	900.87	931.32	930.16	921.63	932.28	944.97	944.49	964.15	969.36
Regional Bodies	814.52	813.92	811.36	830.41	832.64	838.55	815.58	864.45	869.1
Semi-State Companies	992.3	1,007.55	999.23	1,033.54	1,044.40	1,036.55	1,047.07	1,072.40	1,085.75
Public Sector (excluding Health)	908.32	926.64	918.31	936.56	941.01	942.81	945.18	966.65	973.04

177. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Taoiseach the details of the quarterly data on earnings and hours worked in different public service categories in each quarter since 2007, distinguishing basic pay from overtime and allowances. [34576/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (Deputy Pat Carey): The current quarterly earnings survey on the public sector collects data on weekly earnings but does not distinguish basic pay and overtime. This survey will be replaced shortly by the new quarterly Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS), which will be extended to all sectors. It will provide more detail on the components of earnings and it will be possible to distinguish regular, overtime and irregular earnings.

Public Sector Average Weekly Earnings (€)

	2007Q1	2007Q2	2007Q3	2007Q4	2008Q1	2008Q2	2008Q3	2008Q4	2009Q1
Public Sector (excluding Health)	908.32	926.64	918.31	936.56	941.01	942.81	945.18	966.65	973.04
Civil Service	870.81	870.83	879.58	889.8	912.35	889.82	921.24	940.84	941.09
Administrative Civil Servants	852.56	850.91	862.98	874.96	893.66	873.55	905.1	923.23	920.35
Industrial Civil Servants	687.1	693.94	694.61	688.36	792.74	708.18	727.16	743.32	747.09
Others in the Public Sector	394.6	442.92	400.49	454.02	467.89	469.93	483.29	513.11	523.05
Prison Officers	1,179.85	1,222.53	1,193.50	1,162.79	1,172.33	1,184.57	1,209.70	1,219.39	1,252.09
Defence	740.88	741.82	778.14	807.18	788.18	799.65	820.12	825.84	828.79
An Garda Síochána	1,209.20	1,248.26	1,104.22	1,262.10	1,226.16	1,247.74	1,196.19	1,158.88	1,177.54
Education	900.87	931.32	930.16	921.63	932.28	944.97	944.49	964.15	969.36
Primary education	859.11	873.59	867.21	861.3	878.2	880.52	883.24	906.7	907.28
Secondary education (excl. VECs & ITs)	1,041.04	1,068.73	1,024.49	1,048.76	1,073.95	1,078.05	1,064.73	1,097.10	1,103.04
Third level education (excl. VECs & ITs)	978.18	1,035.56	1,055.97	1,010.53	1,035.62	1,035.15	1,079.46	1,108.55	1,095.36
VECs and ITs	809.4	851.44	869.22	855.32	840.3	886.04	860.48	860.31	882.83
Regional Bodies	814.52	813.92	811.36	830.41	832.64	838.55	815.58	864.45	869.1
Local Authorities	811.57	810.5	807.96	826.97	828.71	834.56	810.27	859.92	864.63
Non-Local Authority Regional Bodies	912.89	929.87	926.95	949.99	973.19	988.52	1,007.04	1,038.81	1,038.38
Semi-State Companies	992.3	1,007.55	999.23	1,033.54	1,044.40	1,036.55	1,047.07	1,072.40	1,085.75
Commercial Semi-State Companies	1,003.55	1,023.17	1,008.02	1,052.71	1,069.06	1,050.40	1,060.45	1,086.94	1,097.73
Non-Commercial Semi-State Companies	949.18	947.69	958.65	964.75	975.07	997.11	1,009.07	1,031.13	1,051.71

178. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Taoiseach if the Central Statistics Office collects information on bonuses and overtime or other allowances payable in private sector employments; and if they can distinguish movements in the categories since the first quarter of 2007. [34577/09]

The Taoiseach: The quarterly Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) is a new quarterly survey which is being phased in to replace all other existing CSO short-term earnings inquiries. It provides more detail on the components of earnings and labour costs, including separate information on regular pay, overtime and irregular earnings.

The survey was rolled out to the Industrial and Financial sectors from Q4 2005 onwards and was extended to other sectors in Q1 2008. The next EHECS quarterly publication (for Q2 2009) will be extended to provide economy-wide coverage of earnings and labour cost data. The current data for the Industrial and Financial sectors (up to Q1 2009) is set out below:

Hourly earnings by NACE Principal Activity (€)

NACE sector	Earnings	2007Q1	2007Q2	2007Q3	2007Q4	2008Q1	2008Q2	2008Q3	2008Q4	2009Q1*
Industry (B-E)	Regular	17.24	17.61	17.6	18.13	18.15	18.21	18.4	19.08	19.63
	Overtime	1.16	1.22	1.19	1.21	1.12	1.18	1.12	1.09	0.91
	Irregular	1.1	0.73	0.46	0.99	1.55	0.96	0.74	1.28	1.51
	Total	19.51	19.56	19.25	20.34	20.82	20.35	20.26	21.44	22.05
Financial and insurance activities (K)	Regular	24.58	24.88	24.67	25.58	25.72	26.6	26.33	26.95	27.25
	Overtime	0.55	0.6	0.47	0.5	0.45	0.46	0.39	0.44	0.32
	Irregular	6.68	6.39	1.28	2.88	8	5.9	1.25	2.8	2.79
	Total	31.82	31.86	26.42	28.96	34.17	32.96	27.98	30.18	30.37

*Provisional.

EU Support Schemes.

179. **Deputy Chris Andrews** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the European Union support schemes (details supplied) that are currently being accessed by Irish financial institutions; and the reason they may not be currently accessed here. [32949/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The decision of any eligible Irish undertaking, including financial institutions, to make an application under any particular EU scheme would be a commercial matter for the institution involved. Applications are between the undertaking involved and the relevant EU institution providing support. The Irish Authorities would not necessarily be made aware of individual applications made to EU support schemes which allow for direct applications.

Irish banks have benefited from the European Investment Banks (EIB) loans for SMEs. In 2009, the EIB made €300m available to Bank of Ireland, Allied Irish Banks and Ulster Bank for onward lending to SMEs carrying out investment projects. This was additional to €50m previously made available to Bank Of Scotland Ireland through its UK parent.

The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013 (CIP) contains a financial instrument, the SME Guarantee Facility that aims to improve the financial environment for SMEs by facilitating their access to debt and equity finance, through financial intermediaries. The SME Guarantee Facility is operated by the European Investment Fund (EIF) on behalf of the European Commission. Irish financial intermediaries are free to make contact directly with the EIF concerning participation in the facility. I am aware that some have done so. My Department has informed the Irish Bankers' Federation of the facility, the operation and the scope of the arrangement and has made itself available to any bank interested in pursuing the possibility of securing funding under the SME Guarantee in terms of facilitating contacts with relevant officials in the European Investment Fund (EIF) and/or the European Commission, for further advice and assistance.

The Enterprise and Industry Grants Work Programme is an annual listing of the various programmes run by the European Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry and grant programmes, including for example the CIP, linked to it. The CIP Information Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) aims to stimulate innovation and competitiveness and accelerate the development of a sustainable, competitive, innovative and inclusive information society. It supports activities to accelerate innovation and implementation of ICT based services and systems through the wider uptake and best use of ICT and the exploitation of digital content by citizens, governments and businesses. As such it is not a mechanism for providing funding to the financial institutions. The Community Enterprise Centre (CEC) Scheme, administered by Enterprise Ireland, is not financially supported by EU funds and was never designed to be accessible by financial institutions. The IDABC Programme (Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens) is primarily to encourage interoperability around eGovernment programmes in the Member States. It would not be relevant to financial institutions.

The Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises (JEREMIE) launched in 2005 is an initiative of the European Commission together with the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund in order to promote increased access to finance for the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the regions of the EU.

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

When Ireland's ERDF Structural Programmes 2007-13 were being developed, my Department in consultation with representatives of the Department of Finance, Enterprise Ireland, the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly and Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly had a number of discussions with representatives from the EIB on this issue. As part of these discussions the JEREMIE programme was examined in the context of the existing arrangements in place to assist SMEs in accessing appropriate financial support. Having reflected on the matter fully and given the nature and structure of the JEREMIE programme, particularly in terms of the scale of operations that would be required to secure EIF participation, it was not considered suited to our Structural Funds programmes.

While, participation by the financial institutions in any EU programme is a commercial decision for the institution concerned, nevertheless I would urge financial institutions to make use of EU funding opportunities where these are appropriate to the institution and of benefit to Irish businesses. For its part, the State will continue to consider participation in appropriate programmes.

Departmental Programmes.

180. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she will make a statement on the future of the jobs initiative scheme. [33194/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Job Initiative Programme (JI) which was launched in July 1996 continues to provide 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. The programme is sponsored by voluntary organisations and public bodies involved in not-for-profit activities.

Following changes introduced on 10 November 2004 by Minister Micheál Martin no new entrants have been admitted onto the Job Initiative Schemes. However, contracts for existing participants are renewed allowing them the option to continue until they are 65 years of age.

The 2009 budget for the Job Initiative is €39m and there are currently 1,444 participants with this number decreasing annually due to retirement and other reasons.

Prompt Payment System.

181. **Deputy Chris Andrews** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she will set up a reporting function for small and medium enterprises to report Departments that do not comply with the newly introduced payment period of 15 days; when a decision to include State agencies in this payment period will be announced; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33038/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): As on and from 15 June last all Government Departments are required to pay suppliers and contractors within 15 days of receipt of a valid invoice. Responsibility for implementing the terms of the Government Decision rests with each individual Department. Suppliers pursuing payments should contact the relevant Departmental section with which the contract was arranged.

The Secretary General of my Department wrote to all Government Departments on 26th May, asking them to take the necessary steps to implement this commitment and to ensure that Department line staff and Finance Units are made aware of the need to prioritise payments to suppliers to meet the 15 day deadline.

The Government Decision of 19 May included a requirement for Departments to report quarterly to my Department on their performance in meeting these requirements. These reports are to be submitted by the 15th day of the month following the end of the quarter. The first such reports are due by 15 October 2009. Departments are also required to include information on the implementation of the measures in their subsequent Annual Reports.

As a result of the measures Departments are required to give greater priority to making timely payments and to ensure that suppliers themselves are aware of how they can assist the process by meeting the requirements of Departments in relation to the submission of invoices.

The application of the requirement to other State areas is under review.

In light of the above arrangements, I anticipate that compliance with the new procedures, should improve overall cash flow to suppliers, including in particular for small and medium enterprises, through earlier payments by Government Departments.

Middle East Peace Process.

182. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if his attention has been drawn to a non-paper forwarded by the UK Government to the European Commission in 2009 in relation to customs checks on goods from illegal Israeli settlements; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33057/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): Day to day import controls and related verification procedures in respect of imports from illegal Israeli settlements are undertaken by the Customs authorities and my Department is not involved in these procedures.

183. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment her views on whether it is acceptable that, due to unclear labelling, consumers here are not always able to distinguish if goods produced in the West Bank have been produced in an illegal Israeli settlement or in a Palestinian controlled area; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33059/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): As I advised in a previous reply on this matter to the House, insofar as consumer protection considerations are concerned, the Consumer Protection Act 2007 includes specific provisions in relation to the provision of information to consumers in the course of commercial transactions. Specifically the Act provides that the provision of false information in relation to the geographical or commercial origin of a product and where that information would be likely to cause the average consumer to make a transactional decision that the average consumer would not otherwise make, that such a practice is a misleading commercial practice. Traders who engage in misleading commercial practices commit an offence and are liable on conviction on indictment or on summary conviction, as the case may be, to the fines and penalties provided for under the Act.

Evidence of traders engaging in misleading commercial practices should be brought to the attention of the National Consumer Agency, which is the body responsible for the enforcement of the Consumer Protection Act 2007.

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

As regards issues relating to the West Bank and settlements within the West Bank, such issues essentially involve foreign policy considerations which are the responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Ministerial Travel.

184. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the annual cost to her Department of Ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagements; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33081/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The information available to me to respond to the Deputy's question is limited by the level at which details are recorded on my Department's financial systems. There have also been changes to my Department's systems over the last ten years which further limits the level of detail available.

It is not feasible, therefore, to provide details of the cost of each individual Ministerial overseas travel engagement for the last ten years. However, the table below provides, as far as the information is available, the total identifiable cost related to foreign travel undertaken by all Ministers and Ministers of State at my Department for each year since 2002. The figures include costs related to accompanying staff of the relevant Minister or Minister of State's office.

Where Ministerial foreign travel was organised by an agency of the Department, certain costs related to the Minister's delegation were borne directly by the relevant agency.

Table 1 — Total cost related to foreign travel undertaken by Ministers and Ministers of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment 2002-2009

Year	Total Cost
	€
2002	98,088.24
2003	118,094.29
2004	258,058.58
2005	250,292.20
2006	233,818.60
2007	146,980.61
2008	184,369.39
2009 (to date)	43,907.26

Redundancy Payments.

185. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she will respond to a query regarding the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin. [33110/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): It is not clear from the Deputy's question the nature of the query which is with my Department.

My Department administers the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) in relation to Redundancy payments on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. In respect of Redundancy, there are two types of payment made from the SIF — rebates to those employers who have

paid statutory redundancy to eligible employees, and statutory lump sums to employees whose employers are insolvent and/or in receivership/liquidation and are unable to pay.

I am advised by my Department that there are no records in existence of a claim for redundancy payment in respect of the individual in question.

186. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of employers in County Mayo waiting for their employers redundancy rebate; the length of time each application is taking to process in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33127/09]

187. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of companies in each county waiting for their employers redundancy rebate and the length of time each application is taking to process in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33128/09]

189. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of businesses in Cork City and County waiting on redundancy payments from her Department; the length of time they have been waiting; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33182/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): I propose to take Questions Nos.186, 187 and 189 together.

The Redundancy Payments Section of my Department is in receipt of an unprecedented level of claims for redundancy payment that are giving rise to very significant delays in the processing of those payments for both companies and individuals. Currently, the average time it takes to process rebate applications from employers filed online is 7 months while claims submitted by post are taking 8 months. The Department is currently processing rebate claims submitted online from March '09 and claims filed manually from February '09.

To put it in perspective, at end September 2009, the number of Redundancy claims paid by my Department relating to applications received in 2009 and earlier years, amounted to 32,127. This equates to payments of around €206.5 million, both to employers and, in some cases, directly to employees. This means the Department is issuing an average of around €5.7 million per week in redundancy payments. The backlog of applications awaiting payment at end September '09 stands at 43,250. Of this total, an estimated 10,500 claims are the subject of requests for further information.

Unfortunately, I am unable to provide the Deputy with the specific information he has requested as the Department does not collate those statistics on a county basis. I am sure the Deputy will appreciate that at this time, my focus and that of my Department is on ensuring that the redundancy payments are expedited as quickly as possible.

Naturally, the Tánaiste and I share concerns about current processing times which individuals and employers continue to experience and further initiatives, including that of additional resourcing measures, have been implemented in order to improve the turnaround in the processing of redundancy payments.

Departmental Programmes.

188. **Deputy Dinny McGinley** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if her attention has been drawn to the projects operated under the FÁS job initiative programme, if she will ensure that the programme will continue to engage in the work it has been doing, particularly for long term unemployed people; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33181/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Job Initiative Programme (JI) which was launched in July 1996 continues to provide 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. The programme is sponsored by voluntary organisations and public bodies involved in not-for-profit activities.

Following changes introduced on 10 November 2004 by Minister Micheál Martin no new entrants have been admitted onto the Job Initiative Schemes. However, contracts for existing participants are renewed allowing them the option to continue until they are 65 years of age.

The 2009 budget for the Job Initiative is €39m and there are currently 1,444 participants with this number decreasing annually due to retirement and other reasons.

Question No. 189 answered with Question No. 186.

FÁS Training Programmes.

190. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment number of people in Cork City and County who have received an offer of training from FÁS in the past three months under the National Employment Action Plan; the number waiting in Cork City and County for an offer of this training; the total number of places on offer in Cork City and County; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33183/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The National Employment Action Plan Preventive Strategy (NEAP) involves a systematic referral of certain cohorts of registered unemployed persons by the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) to FÁS for assistance.

Department of Social & Family Affairs National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) referrals to FÁS Employment Services, Cork, in the third quarter of 2009 totalled, approximately 2,700 clients, with approximately 2,000 attending interview. Of these, approximately 1,000 expressed an interest in availing of training.

At the end of September 2009, FÁS in Cork has approximately, 710 NEAP clients awaiting training, the majority of which will be offered places on FÁS programmes over the next four months.

During the third quarter of 2009, 1,354 NEAP clients received an offer of training. A breakdown of these is provided in the following table:

Month 2009	Full Time Training	Evening/Saturday Morning Courses (estimate)	Technical Employment Support Grant Funded Training
July	293	106	22
August	211	208	12
September	256	220	26
Total	760	534	60
Overall Total			1,354

Departmental Agencies.

191. **Deputy John Deasy** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the location of the six unoccupied Industrial Development Authority units in Waterford that are being leased; the persons from whom they are being leased; the history of occupancy of these properties; the cost to date of leasing each of these properties; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33257/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The management of IDA Ireland’s industrial property portfolio is a day-to-day operational matter for the Agency, as part of the statutory responsibility assigned to it by the Oireachtas.

The location of the 6 units in the Waterford Industrial Estate on which the Agency has long term lease agreements, and which are currently available for use, is set out in the attached tabular statement.

For reasons of confidentiality and commercial sensitivity it is not possible to release details of persons from whom these properties are being leased.

These leases, which are 35-year leases, were entered into in the 1980s and in the time available it has not been possible to provide a history of the occupancy nor the cost to date of leasing each of these properties. I have asked the Agency to forward this information to the Deputy in due course.

Table showing the location of the 6 IDA leased properties in Waterford Industrial Estate which are available for leasing

LOCATION
Waterford Ind Est, Johnstown Centre
Unit 1
Unit 2
Unit 3
Unit 4
Unit 5
Unit 6

FÁS Training Programmes.

192. **Deputy Beverley Flynn** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the private training providers contracted by FÁS to give hairdressing and related training courses in the Mayo, Sligo and Galway areas in the past five years; and the regularity with which the contract for these courses has been put out to tender. [33290/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): This is a day-to-day matter for FÁS.

In the FÁS North West Region, between 5th December 2005 and 24th July 2009, six Hairdressing Courses were conducted by Contracted Trainers, Muintearas, in Sligo. Thirty-two requests for Tender were issued and seven Tenders were returned. Contracts were awarded to the lowest tender.

In the FÁS West Region, two Hairdressing Courses were organised under Contracted Training — both contracts were awarded to the Connaught College of Hairdressing, Forster Street, Galway and both programmes were run in Galway City. The first contract ran from December

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2004 to June 2005. There was only one suitable trainer on the National Register of Trainers and one tender was requested. The second ran from July 2005 to January 2006. Two requests for Tender were issued, as by then the NRT listed two suitable trainers. Two tenders were returned. Contracts were awarded to the lowest tender.

Under the CDP Programme (STB), one programme was tendered in late 2006 to commence in 2007. It was awarded to the Connaught College of Hairdressing. Four requests for tender were issued, as by then the NRT listed four suitable trainers. Two tenders were returned. Contracts were awarded to the lowest tender.

Employment Support Services.

193. **Deputy Beverley Flynn** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the funding or assistance available to an unemployed person who wishes to take part on a training course which is only given by a private provider. [33291/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Technical Employment Service Grant provides FÁS Employment Service Officers (ESOs) with a flexible fund to provide a tailored response to meet the needs of specific client groups. This support is provided as part of the jobseeker's Action Plan, which is agreed between FÁS and the client as a means of entering/re-entering the labour market. This funding is available to those who are experiencing major barriers to progression from unemployment to the workforce and where this need cannot be met by FÁS directly or by any other state provider within a reasonable timeframe or at a location convenient to the jobseeker. A budget of €1,270 (in exceptional circumstances, up to €2,500) per client can be made available for this purpose.

From January to August 2009, 7,418 clients have availed of TESSG funding for a variety of interventions. The total budget in 2008 was €2.5m which increased in 2009 to €6.5m.

Redundancy Payments.

194. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the position regarding a statutory redundancy application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33336/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): My Department administers the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) in relation to redundancy matters on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. There are two types of payment made from the SIF — rebates to those employers who have paid statutory redundancy to eligible employees and, statutory lump sums to employees whose employers are insolvent and/or in receivership/liquidation.

The Redundancy Payments Section of my Department received a statutory lump sum application for the individual concerned in June 2009, claiming an inability to pay on behalf of the employer. When an employer claims inability to pay, the onus is on the employer to provide sufficient proof to substantiate the claim. In this case the company has now gone into liquidation and the statutory lump sum entitlement will be paid to eligible employees from the Social Insurance Fund. The Department will then seek to recover 40% of the lump sum paid from the liquidator. My Department is currently awaiting the submission of documentation

from the liquidator. Once this is received, and if it is in order, the claim will be processed for payment.

EU Directives.

195. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment her plans in respect of the Services Directive, Directive 2006/123/EC; if she will bring it before Dáil Éireann in legislative form, thereby allowing a full parliamentary debate on the implications of the directive; if she will move it by way of statutory instrument; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33455/09]

196. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the implications of the Services Directive, Directive 2006/123/EC for Irish businesses in view of the fact that Ireland was the tenth largest exporter of services in the world in 2007; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33456/09]

197. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the implications of the Services Directive, Directive 2006/123/EC for the competitiveness of Irish businesses in relation to other EU Member States with a lower cost base; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33457/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 195 to 197, inclusive, together.

As I informed the House in reply to a previous Question on 22 September last (No.32397), I propose to bring the Services Directive, 2006/123/EC, into effect by way of statutory instrument, under the European Communities Act 1972. This is the approach used for the majority of EU Directives and, in this case, will facilitate the transposition of the Directive by the due date, 28 December next.

As I stated on that occasion, the negotiation process leading to the adoption of this Directive was lengthy and complex and involved extensive consultation with all key national stakeholders. The draft Directive was the subject of debates in the Dail on 25th and 26th of January 2006 and in the Seanad (on employment issues) on 25th January 2006.

Work on the transposition of the Directive is well advanced and my Department has continued to consult widely. The Directive is unusual in that the transposition process involves a great deal of administrative work as well as legal drafting. The legal aspect of the transposition process will mainly involve ensuring that the provisions of the Directive are reflected in the transposing instrument. Overall, this work is detailed and technical and involves a great deal of co-operation with other Departments (which has been ongoing since the Directive was first proposed in 2004). The transposing legislation will faithfully reflect what was agreed in 2006 as set out in the Directive.

Ireland supports the Directive, as adopted, as a good basis for the creation of a single market in services that will benefit both Irish service providers and Irish consumers. The Directive will open up European markets to Irish service providers. Potential growth sectors include private education, intellectual property, international sales and marketing, supply chain management, and professional and consultancy services. The Directive will also benefit Irish recipients of services, including business consumers.

Irish firms exporting services will gain easier access to the markets of other EU Member States where they currently face non-tariff barriers. This is the export penetration effect of the Directive. On the other hand, Irish firms supplying services to consumers here will face greater

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competition from firms in other Member States. This is the import penetration effect and will create challenges for Irish firms on cost and competitiveness grounds. Taken together, the export and import penetration effects will have a positive effect on the Irish economy, including consumers, but not necessarily for every service provider.

The overall effect of the creation of a single market for services will be to enhance Ireland's competitiveness. It will also enhance the EU's competitiveness by creating the necessary economies of scale for European service providers, who are facing an increasingly globalised economy, to challenge service providers in world markets.

Forfás estimated in 2008 that gross value added in services to the Irish economy could increase by €540 million per annum as a result of the Services Directive. Net employment in the services sector would increase by over 4,000. Average real wages in the service economy were expected to increase by €60 million per annum. The value of Irish services exports was projected to rise by between €10 billion and €14 billion per annum. Those projections are currently being re-examined in the light of the economic downturn and revised projections will be published when the legislation comes into force.

Hazardous Substances Regulations.

198. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if guidelines or regulations have been issued by her Department relating to the control of unattended petrol dispensing outlets; the authority or agency responsible for such regulations; if such sites are inspected or approved by the agency or a local authority; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33556/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): No guidelines have been issued by my Department relating to the control of unattended petrol dispensing outlets nor does my Department issue guidelines on such matters.

There are Regulations in existence which relate to petrol stations. These are the Dangerous Substances (Retail and Private Petroleum Stores) Regulations 1979, S.I. 311/1979. Under these regulations, the dispensing of petrol must be constantly supervised and controlled by an authorized person, located at the petrol station.

The only situation where petrol could be dispensed in the absence of such an authorized person is under the conditions attached to the licence granted to the operator of a petrol station. In practice, the general responsibility for the licensing of petrol stations, including the conditions attaching to licences, rests with the Local Authorities.

Health and Safety Authority inspectors have power to inspect petrol stations under the Dangerous Substances Acts as do authorised servants and officers of local authorities. The Health and Safety Authority includes a small number of petrol stations in its inspection programme each year. However, it primarily carries out those inspections in the context of its workplace health and safety remit under the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005 — its remit and powers under the 2005 Act are considerably wider than those under the Dangerous Substances Acts. Essentially, the Authority addresses the inspection of (manned) petrol stations in the same way that it addresses any other workplace, largely from a risk assessment and safety management perspective with a focus primarily on employees.

I understand that, in recent times, the issue of unmanned petrol stations and the conditions that might be expected to apply to their operation has been considered by officers from a number of fire authorities, the Health and Safety Authority and the National Directorate for

Fire and Emergency Management which operates under the aegis of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Persons interested in establishing an unattended, petrol-dispensing outlet, should apply for a licence to the relevant local (fire) authority responsible for the place in which it is to be situated.

Redundancy Payments.

199. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of employees issued with RP9 forms by employers in the construction industry; the length of time it takes to process same; if this method of temporary lay offs is used by industries other than construction; if her attention has been drawn to the fact that once laid off temporary, the employee, when issued with the RP9 form must wait four weeks and then make a claim for redundancy payment, but which period causes the employee to lose their right to statutory notice or payment in lieu of notice; if she will take steps to remedy this situation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33563/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The RP9 form is merely a form of notice between the employer and employee where the issue of temporary lay off occurs. It is not a form that is submitted to the Department for any statutory purpose. There is no obligation on the employer or employee to use the RP9 form for this purpose and Notice may be given orally without the use of the RP9.

In general, a layoff situation exists when an employer suspends an employee's employment because there is no work available, when the employer expects the cessation of work to be temporary and when the employer notifies the employee to this effect. While layoff situations are commonly experienced in the construction sector, there is no legislative exclusion in relation to the use of periods of layoff for other sectors.

An employee who has been laid off or kept on short time or a mixture of both either for four consecutive weeks or for a broken series of six weeks where all six weeks occur within a 13 week period, may, if he so wishes, claim a redundancy payment. The Redundancy Payment claim would be conditional on the employer not issuing a counter claim by offering 13 weeks continual employment, starting within four weeks of the date of receipt of the employees' claim for redundancy.

If the employee chooses not to accept the offer of continual employment, he/she is deemed to have voluntarily left the employment and the question of minimum notice payments does not arise. Depending on the circumstances of the case, he/she may qualify for a redundancy payment, which would be a matter, in the first instance for the employer but could, if necessary, be submitted to the Employment Appeals Tribunal for adjudication. The employee does not have to claim statutory redundancy as soon as he has been laid off or kept on short time but could submit this at a later time if he so chooses.

200. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she will assist with expediting redundancy payments in respect of a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33648/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Redundancy Payments Section of my Department received an application for a statutory redundancy lump sum payment on the 1st of July, 2009 in respect of the above applicant. The company for whom the employee in question worked is in liquidation and I understand that the application is currently being processed by my Department and that payment is expected to issue to the individual in the next few weeks.

201. **Deputy Mary Wallace** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the consideration being given to making an application under the European Globalisation Fund in respect of a company (details supplied) similar to that which was announced for another company. [33666/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): My Department is currently preparing an application seeking co-financing support from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in relation to workers made redundant at SR Technics. This is being done in consultation with the relevant statutory bodies such as FÁS, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, the Department of Education and Science, the Higher Education Authority and relevant vocational and third level education institutions. On finalisation of this process, I intend to submit the EGF application to the European Commission later this month.

Community Employment Schemes.

202. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of community employment schemes operating in Dublin 6w; the number of people who are participating in each of these schemes; the funding allocated to each scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33715/09]

203. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of community employment schemes currently operating in Dublin 8; the number of people who are participating in each of these schemes; the funding allocated to each scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33716/09]

204. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of community employment schemes currently operating in Dublin 10; the number of people who are participating in each of these schemes; the funding allocated to each scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33717/09]

205. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment number of community employment schemes currently operating in Dublin 12; the number of people who are participating in each of these schemes; the funding allocated to each scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33718/09]

206. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of community employment schemes currently operating in Dublin 20; the number of people who are participating in each of these schemes; the funding allocated to each scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33719/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): I propose to take Questions Nos. 202 to 206, inclusive, together.

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. CE helps unemployed people to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return to a work routine and to assist them to enhance/develop both their technical and personal skills.

I am advised that there are currently 6,100 Community Employment Scheme participants in the Dublin area. A budget of €99m has been provided for this purpose for 2009.

The detailed information requested by the Deputy will take some time to collate and will be provided at a later date.

Departmental Programmes.

207. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment her plans to implement the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditures proposals on cutbacks in the community sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33763/09]

221. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she has made a decision on the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes proposals relating to eligibility for community employment schemes; if she will take into consideration that the proposed change will lead to the closure of the special status drug community employment programmes which provide services to just less than 1,000 recovering drug users. [34183/09]

235. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she will ensure that a recommendation of a proposal contained in the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes Report regarding the future of 46 voluntary and community programmes will not be implemented; if her attention has been drawn to the importance of the operation of the community employment schemes in these areas and ensure that they continue as heretofore; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34557/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 207, 221 and 235 together.

The Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes Report has no recommendations to alter the eligibility criteria for participating on the mainstream Community Employment (CE) programme nor on the special status drug CE programmes. It does, however, recommend the removal of the dual-entitlement to certain social welfare payments while participating on CE. The McCarthy Report will inform the 2010 Estimates process which is not yet complete.

The recommendations in the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes Report with regard to the 46 voluntary and community programmes refer to programmes under the aegis of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Departmental Agencies.

208. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the average salary of all staff employed by FÁS, broken down by grades for each year from 1997 to 2008; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33828/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The average salary per grade grouping provided to me by FÁS is set out in the table in respect of the years 1998 to 2008. The figures are not available at individual grade level as it is not possible to extract this retrospectively from the computer payroll system. For the same reason figures in respect of 1997 can not be provided at this stage.

For ease of comparison the figures for all years are expressed in euro.

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

Average Salary by Grade Grouping 1998-2008 (expressed in euro)

Grouping/Avg. Salary	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Management (Gr 1-7)	45,967	48,001	48,978	54,170	58,729	61,075	68,405	70,845	75,478	79,820	81,414
Operational (Grades 8-10)	31,021	31,973	32,526	36,193	38,501	40,013	44,436	46,216	48,779	51,516	52,048
Clerical (Grade 11)	18,691	18,857	19,309	21,707	23,327	24,191	26,548	27,891	29,030	30,938	31,126
Operatives (Grades 13-15)	15,303	15,404	15,427	17,383	18,681	19,483	21,591	24,065	25,146	26,940	27,571
Overall Average Salary	29,076	29,954	30,394	34,228	35,714	37,151	41,486	43,047	45,196	47,775	48,294

Figures for 1997 not readily available.

Nutraceutical Sector.

209. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the investment she is making in the nutraceutical sector; the percentage of gross domestic product attributed to this sector; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33834/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan):

There is no universal definition of nutraceuticals as a sector and therefore, it is difficult to define the level of investment in the sector and the percentage of Gross Domestic Product attributed to it. The nutraceuticals market is frequently defined as encompassing functional foods, vitamins, minerals and supplements and it is evident that it can offer lucrative opportunities to the indigenous food industry. Currently, Irish manufacturing capability is largely confined to a small number of large dairy companies and SMEs in the ingredient and beverage sectors. These companies have successfully launched products such as fortified milk drinks, probiotic yoghurts, cholesterol lowering spreads, energy drinks and functional waters.

Enterprise Ireland is actively involved in supporting this sector and has prioritised it for development. For example, in July 2008, I announced a €19.5m investment (funded by Enterprise Ireland) towards Food for Health Ireland (FHI). FHI is a unique partnership between four of Ireland's major dairy processing companies and four public research organisations. The industry-led research agenda will focus its efforts over a five-year period on maximising the health potential of bioactives derived from milk. In general, the nutraceutical sector is supported through existing EI grant funding mechanisms and EI has supported large-scale strategic investments in research and development for key players in the sector. Other supports to this sector include capital grants and support towards strategic Human Research Development programmes.

Competition Authority.

210. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if her attention has been drawn to the Competition Authority by a leading economic consultancy (details supplied) for wasting resources and being inadequately prepared in relation to a recent prosecution by the Competition Authority which was dismissed in the Circuit Court in Mayo in July 2009; the steps she is taking to ensure that the Authority is both efficient and effective; the measures she is taking to address the criticisms levelled at the Authority; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33836/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The Competition Authority is the statutory body responsible for the enforcement of competition law in the State. Section 29 (3) of the Competition Act 2002 provides that the Competition

Authority is independent in the performance of its functions. Under section 30 (1)(b) of that Act, the Competition Authority is responsible for investigating any breach of the Act. As investigations and enforcement matters generally are part of the day-to-day operational work of the Authority I have no direct function in the matter.

That being said, I understand that the case the Deputy refers to, is one which was heard in the Central Criminal Court sitting in Galway earlier this year. The case was prosecuted by the Director of Public Prosecutions following a referral of a file from the Authority. The Court decided, after hearing the prosecution case, that there was sufficient evidence presented in Court to warrant putting the evidence before the jury for it to consider and on which to reach a decision. The jury duly considered the evidence and acquitted the defendants on all charges.

FÁS Training Programmes.

211. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the service which is provided by the FÁS services to a business department at Rossa Avenue, Cork in regard to support, funding and assistance to individuals, groups and companies seeking training and certification in the cleaning industry in the Cork region; the budget allocation and number trained in 2008 and to date in 2009; if this service will be provided in 2010; the minimum standard which is set for personnel working in the cleaning industry; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33845/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): FÁS South West Region provided training to 267 persons employed in the cleaning industry in 2008 at a total cost of €195,160 under the Competency Development Programme. This training was provided in three different courses as outlined below:

- Food Premises Cleaning Certificate Stage 1: 31 people.
- Cleaning Operatives Proficiency Certificate Stage 1: 213 people.
- Cleaning Operatives Proficiency Certificate Stage 2: 23 people.

All of these courses were 100% funded by FÁS.

To be eligible to participate in any of the above programmes, participants were required to have 2 years experience working in the cleaning industry. The courses were certified by the British Institute of Cleaning Science.

The Cleaning Operators Proficiency Certificate Scheme is intended to set an objective standard of competence assessment for operators in the cleaning industry. The certificate is recognised as best practice throughout the cleaning industry in Europe. No such training was provided in 2009.

Visa Applications.

212. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the position of a visa in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33876/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Employment Permits Section informs me that it has no record of a valid application in this case.

Departmental Reports.

213. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of experts' and consultants' reports her Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33899/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): My Department commissioned twenty-one experts' or consultants' reports in 2008. Details in relation to these reports are set out in the following table:

	Title of Report Commissioned	Name of Consultant or Expert	Cost
1	Report of an assessment of a named company's restructuring plan.	KPMG	€ 273,460
2	Report and Recommendations from the Consultation Process with Staff in the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment	Institute of Public Administration (IPA)	18,000
3	Evaluation Report on Department's Website	IQ Content Ltd	41,261
4	Evaluation of Discover Science and Engineering (DSE) Programme	CIRCA Consultants, SIA Group and International Panel of Experts	105,082*
5	Productive Sector Operational Programme (PSOP) Managing Authority Lookback Audit (Parts 1 & 2)	Contract-auditline (CAL)	38,130
6	Conduct an Equality survey under the ESF Co-Funded EQUAL Community Initiative	Social and Market Research	23,850
7	Audit of DAWN project under the ESF Co-Funded EQUAL Community Initiative	Ernst and Young	25,090
8	Review and Assessment of the ESF Co-Funded EQUAL Community Initiative	PA Consulting	61,595
9	Evaluation of Ireland's membership of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL)	CIRCA Consultants	51,183†

*Shared equally between D/ETE and Forfás.

†Shared jointly by DETE & Forfás.

	Title of Report Commissioned	Name of Consultant or Expert	Cost
			€
10	Measuring Administrative Burdens in Company Law, Employment Law and Health & Safety Law	EPS Consulting	58,249
11	Prioritising Health & Safety Information Obligations	Scannell Solutions	4,538
12	Prioritising Health & Safety Information Obligations; additional review	Scannell Solutions	605
13	Prioritising Information Obligations in Company Law	Arthur Cox	2,226
14	Listing of Information Obligations in Employment Law	UCD School of Law	4,650
15	Listing of Information Obligations in Company Law	NUI Galway	5,102
16	Listing of Information Obligations in Health & Safety Law	University of Limerick	4,616
17	Provision of Statistical Analysis for the High Level Group on Business Regulation Report	Experian Ireland Ltd	182
18	Three Standard Cost Model measurements for the High Level Group on Business Regulation	Tom Ferris	5,707
19	Report of the Advisory Group on Media Mergers	As part of its work the Advisory Group commissioned Price Waterhouse Coopers and Emily Gibson BL to carry out specific studies in relation to the Group's terms of reference	33,732
20	Companies Registration Office Business Process Engineering Review	Grant Thornton	71,874
21	Companies Registration Office XBRL Feasibility Study	Bizmeasures Ltd.	31,683

Redundancy Payments.

214. **Deputy Noel Ahern** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment when a person (details supplied) will receive the revenue refund due to them on the redundancy payment they made to their employee several months ago. [33918/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): From the records held by my Department in relation to Redundancy payments, I am advised that a rebate payment in respect of the individual named and employed by the company issued in August 2009. The one aspect which does not match our records is the PPS number quoted by the Deputy for the individual concerned.

Departmental Staff.

215. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the cost to her Department and each agency under the aegis of her Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33950/09]

216. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of persons in her Department and each agency under the aegis of her Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33965/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 215 and 216 together.

The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the table below.

Agency	Year	Resignation	Cost	Termination of Contract	Cost	Early Retirements	Cost to Department
					€		€
Enterprise, Trade & Employment	2006	17	0	0	0	6	369,215.39
	2007	13	0	*4	0	5	551,090.21
	2008	15	0	*9	**84,864.92	6	450,639.38
	2009	2	0	*12	**83,057.99	15	514,316.03
FÁS	2006	15	0	0	0	26	1,811,313.31
	2007	9	0	0	0	29	2,134,249.13
	2008	5	0	0	0	29	2,806,793.62
	2009	1	0	33	117,310.80	50	2,992,627.64
Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority	2006	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	1	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	0	0	0	0
Competition Authority	2006	2	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	9	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	3	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	3	0	0	0	0	0
National Consumer Agency	2006	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2007	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	0	0	0	0

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

Agency	Year	Resignation	Cost	Termination of Contract	Cost	Early Retirements	Cost to Department
					€		€
Personal Injuries Assessment Board	2006	2	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	12	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	7	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	0	0	1	10,872.97
Science Foundation Ireland	2006	7	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	10	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	3	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enterprise Ireland	2006	39	0	0	0	50	4,878,000
	2007	19	0	0	0	46	2,966,000
	2008	28	0	0	0	6	323,000
	2009	30	0	1	4,298	3	9,233
IDA Ireland	2006	6	0	0	0	0	
	2007	7	0	0	0	***1	58,457
	2008	9	0	0	0	0	
	2009	3	0	0	0	0	
Shannon Development	2006	1	0	0	0	4	555,215
	2007	1	0	0	0	3	579,815
	2008	0	0	0	0	3	987,044
	2009	0	0	0	0	2	0
Forfás	2006	9	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	12	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	6	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	9	0	0	0	0	0
National Standards Authority of Ireland	2006	5	0	0	0	1	32,179
	2007	7	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	5	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	0	0	0	0	5	42,477
Intertrade Ireland	2006	2	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	1	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	2	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	2	0	0	0	0	0
County Enterprise Board's	2006	6	0	1	11,000	0	0
	2007	7	0	0	0	0	0
	2008	4	0	0	0	0	0
	2009	3	0	2	6,120	2	0

*Numbers refer to Ministerial private office staff appointments, i.e. posts of Personal Assistant, Personal Secretary, Special Adviser and Civilian Driver employed under contract. These contracts terminate not later than the date on which the office holder who made the appointment ceases to hold the office by reference to which he or she is an office holder (i.e. ceases to hold the office of Minister of the Government or Minister of State).

**The figure of 84,864.92 in 2008 reflects the total amount of severance payments made to two ministerial appointees while the figure of 83,057.99 reflects the total amount of severance payments to seven ministerial appointees in 2009.

***For ill health early retirement in 2007 Pension of 19,486 p.a is payable and a lump sum of 58,457 has been paid in 2007, however as its ill health retirement, the cost of this is borne by the IDA pension fund and not by the IDA/DETE.

Redundancy Payments.

217. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of people currently awaiting statutory redundancy payments as noti-

fied to the National Employment Rights Authority; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34029/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Redundancy Payments Section of my Department is in receipt of an unprecedented level of claims for redundancy payment that are giving rise to very significant delays in the processing of those payments for both companies and individuals. Currently, the average time it takes to process rebate applications from employers filed online is 7 months while claims submitted by post are taking 8 months. The Department is currently processing rebate claims submitted online from March '09 and claims filed manually from February '09.

To put it in perspective, at end September 2009, the number of Redundancy claims paid by my Department relating to applications received in 2009 and earlier years, amounted to 32,127. This equates to payments of around €206.5 million, both to employers and, in some cases, directly to employees. This means the Department is issuing an average of around €5.7 million per week in redundancy payments. The backlog of applications awaiting payment at end September '09 stands at 43,250. Of this total, an estimated 10,500 claims are the subject of requests for further information.

Naturally, the Tánaiste and I share concerns about current processing times which individuals and employers continue to experience and further initiatives, including that of additional resourcing measures, have been implemented in order to improve the turnaround in the processing of redundancy payments.

218. **Deputy Edward O'Keeffe** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the position regarding a claim for redundancy payment by a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [34093/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): I have to advise the Deputy that my understanding, based on the records available in the Redundancy Payments Section of my Department is that there is no record of a claim for a redundancy payment in relation to the individual in question.

Departmental Agencies.

219. **Deputy John Deasy** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the cost and location of each property rented by the Industrial Development Authority in each county in each of the past five years; and the properties which are being used by the IDA and which are held for potential investors. [34094/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The management of IDA Ireland's industrial property portfolio is day-to-day operational matters for the agency as part of the statutory responsibility assigned to it by the Oireachtas and not a matter in which I have a function.

I understand from IDA that the Agency's building portfolio currently consists of 139 units, of which 65 are owned by IDA and 74 are leased from private landlords (known as Private Finance).

Of these properties, 72 are leased and 38 are available for marketing. There are 25 properties under process of open market sale or transfer to Local Authority, while 4 are currently under lease negotiations.

The annual net cost, after deduction of rental income, to IDA of leasing these buildings is in the region of €4million per annum.

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

In the time available it has not been possible to give details of the location and status of each property in each of the past five years, but the attached tabular statement shows the location and status on a county by county basis of each of the 139 properties mentioned.

Table showing the location on a county by county basis of IDA's Current Building Portfolio Building Units

Region	IDA Owned/IDA Leased	Status	Total
DUBLIN	IDA Owned	Occupied	3
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	21
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	5
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	10
Total			39
KILDARE	IDA Owned	Occupied	0
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	1
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	5
Total			6
WICKLOW	IDA Owned	Occupied	0
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	1
	Leased	Occupied	6
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
Total			7
OFFALY	IDA Owned	Occupied	1
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	0
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
Total			1

Region	IDA Owned/IDA Leased	Status	Total
ROSCOMMON	IDA Owned	Occupied	1
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	3
	Leased	Reserved	1
	Leased	Available	0
Total			5
WESTMEATH	IDA Owned	Occupied	0
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	3
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	1
Total			4
LOUTH	IDA Owned	Occupied	1
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	0
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
Total			1
MONAGHAN	IDA Owned	Occupied	1
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	0
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
Total			1
DONEGAL	IDA Owned	Occupied	8
	IDA Owned	Reserved	3
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	4
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
Total			15

[Deputy Mary Coughlan.]

Region	IDA Owned/IDA Leased	Status	Total
SLIGO	IDA Owned	Occupied	0
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	1
	IDA Owned	Available	1
	Leased	Occupied	0
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
	Total		
KILKENNY	IDA Owned	Occupied	1
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	0
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
	Total		
WATERFORD	IDA Owned	Occupied	4
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	1
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	0
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	6
	Total		
WEXFORD	IDA Owned	Occupied	1
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	2
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	1
	Total		
CORK	IDA Owned	Occupied	3
	IDA Owned	Reserved	
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	
	IDA Owned	Available	1
	Leased	Occupied	11
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	4
	Total		

Region	IDA Owned/IDA Leased	Status	Total
KERRY	IDA Owned	Occupied	5
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	0
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
Total			5
GALWAY	IDA Owned	Occupied	4
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	2
	IDA Owned	Available	0
	Leased	Occupied	2
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	7
Total			15
MAYO	IDA Owned	Occupied	1
	IDA Owned	Reserved	0
	IDA Owned	Sale in Progress	0
	IDA Owned	Available	1
	Leased	Occupied	1
	Leased	Reserved	0
	Leased	Available	0
Total			3

Redundancy Payments.

220. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will receive their redundancy rebate payment in view of the fact that the delay is causing hardship. [34173/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Redundancy Section of my Department has on record a notification of redundancy (RP 50) which was received on-line (electronically) on the 14th of July, 2009 from the company concerned. Claims submitted online because of their nature tend to have a faster processing time compared to applications by post and I would urge all future applicants to avail of the on-line Redundancy Payments facility of my Department. All claims are processed strictly in order of date of receipt in fairness to all claimants.

The Redundancy Payments Section of my Department is in receipt of an unprecedented level of claims for redundancy payment that are giving rise to very significant delays in the processing of those payments for both companies and individuals. Currently, the average time it takes to process rebate applications from employers filed online is 7 months while claims submitted by post are taking 8 months. The Department is currently processing rebate claims submitted online from March '09 and claims filed manually from February '09.

[Deputy Dara Calleary.]

Naturally, the Tánaiste and I share concerns about current processing times which individuals and employers continue to experience and further initiatives, including that of additional resourcing measures, have been implemented in order to improve the turnaround in the processing of redundancy payments.

Question No. 221 answered with Question No. 207.

Departmental Contracts.

222. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34314/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): My Department availed of the Department of Finance Framework Agreement in respect of the provision of mobile phone services. Vodafone was awarded the contract after a competitive tendering process which evaluated tenders on a range of criteria including best value for money and which took into account the Department's mobile phone usage pattern. The current contract was awarded in August 2008, the duration of which will be in keeping fully with the terms of the Department of Finance Framework Agreement.

Importation Policy.

223. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment further to Parliamentary Question No. 215 of 16 September 2009, the reason the €41 million worth of imports from Israel did not qualify for preferential duty; and if she can give assurances that the reason was not due to the fact that these goods were the produce of Israeli settlements. [34325/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The basis for assessing whether import duties apply, and the extent to which they might be applicable to imports, is a matter for the Revenue Commissioners.

Departmental Staff.

224. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of occasions on which her Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34340/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): In one case an application was made in 2007 for the payment of a severance gratuity in respect of a CEO whose contract was not being renewed. The proposed gratuity was not sanctioned by the Department of Finance and therefore was not paid.

In 2008 the Department of Finance sanctioned the following severance terms to the former Director General of FÁS under and in accordance with Section 6(3) of the Labour Services Act 1987:

Superannuation benefits (Pension and Lump Sum) based on 40 years service, including added notional service, payable with effect from 26 November 2008, and an ex-gratia payment, equivalent to 6 months salary, amounting to €111,243.50.

225. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from her Department in each of the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34355/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): Three Civil Servants were dismissed from my Department in the last five years for misconduct, poor performance or failure to fulfil the terms of their contract. All three were dismissed during 2009.

Redundancy Payments.

226. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment when payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [34425/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): I am advised that a redundancy payment claim for the individual named was submitted to the Redundancy Payments Section of my Department in early September 2009 and is currently awaiting processing.

The Redundancy Payments Section of my Department is in receipt of an unprecedented level of claims for redundancy payment that are giving rise to very significant delays in the processing of those payments for both companies and individuals. Currently, the average time it takes to process rebate applications from employers filed online is 7 months while claims submitted by post are taking 8 months. In respect of lumpsum payments paid directly to employees in instances where the employers are unable to pay the statutory redundancy entitlements, the current processing time, assuming all of the necessary supporting documentation is filed, is between 6-8 weeks.

Naturally, the Tánaiste and I share concerns about current processing times which individuals and employers continue to experience and further initiatives, including that of additional resourcing measures, have been implemented in order to improve the turnaround in the processing of redundancy payments.

Work Permits.

227. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if a work authorisation granted to a non-EU citizen which is valid until November 2010 could be used up to that date should that person be made redundant due to the economic situation; if they can transfer to another employer in those circumstances; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34456/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The position is that holders of Working Visas or Work Authorisations are allowed to change their employers within the same skills category as specified on their original Visa or Authorisation.

However, if the non-EEA national is made redundant, then they have a period of 6 months from the date of their redundancy to source another employer. In the event that they are unable to source another employer within that timeframe then they should contact the Immigration Authorities of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to establish their immigration status beyond that period.

228. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the number of work permits issued under the graduate employment scheme. [34464/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): The Employment Permits Section informs me that a total of 13 new permits have been issued to non-EEA nationals under the Graduate Scheme from the 1st July 2009.

Industrial Properties.

229. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the status of a building (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34468/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The management of IDA Ireland's industrial property portfolio, including the development of business parks, is day-to-day operational matters for the agency as part of the statutory responsibility assigned to it by the Oireachtas and not matters in which I have a function.

I understand from IDA that, although the Agency has received planning permission for an advanced technology unit on the Fermoy Business and Technology Park, it has been decided, in view of the current budgetary situation, to postpone delivery of all such new units for the time being.

230. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment the status of a site (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34469/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The management of IDA Ireland's industrial property portfolio is a day-to-day operational matter for the Agency, as part of the statutory responsibility assigned to it by the Oireachtas.

I am informed by IDA Ireland that this site is not in their ownership.

Work Placement Programme.

231. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment her views on expanding the terms of the work placement programme to enable persons on jobseeker's benefit to avail of the scheme. [34483/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): The aim of the Work Placement Programme is to provide valuable work experience for 6 months to 2,000 unemployed individuals. Participants on the programme will retain their existing social welfare entitlements for the duration of their placement.

It was agreed that the target cohort of this programme would be those who have been unemployed for a period of 6 months and in receipt of job seekers allowance. This would allow a person on the Live Register to explore their options particularly job search options before a commitment was entered into by the State to pay welfare for 6 months work experience

The programme is limited to those in receipt of job seekers allowance. However, a person receiving job seekers benefit may at any stage opt for jobseekers allowance and, provided they qualify, can avail of the programme.

It is my intention that the programme and its criteria will be reviewed and evaluated in the near future.

FÁS Training Programmes.

232. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34508/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Dara Calleary): At present FÁS does not provide training courses for unemployed persons to become dog handlers. Should a demand emerge in the future, the feasibility of allocating resources to the provision of such a training course would be examined.

Pension Provisions.

233. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if the pension top up and discretionary payments made to a person (details supplied) were made under the terms of the Labour Services Act 1987 or the Superannuation Act 1963; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34550/09]

234. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment if she will explain the way the pension top up and discretionary payment made to a person (details supplied) can be in accordance with Section 4 of the Labour Services Act 1987; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34551/09]

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Deputy Mary Coughlan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 233 and 234 together.

The severance arrangements granted to the former Director General of FÁS was granted under and in accordance with Section 6(3) of the Labour Services Act 1987. The Labour Services Act provides that terms and conditions, including those in relation to remuneration and superannuation, of the office of the Director General, may be determined by the Minister with the consent of the Minister of Finance.

Question No. 235 answered with Question No. 207.

Middle East Peace Process.

236. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Minister for Finance the number of checks made on imported Israeli goods in 2008 to verify that the goods were not from an illegal settlement. [33058/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that, in the course of 2008, a total of 12 imports from Israel (where a preferential rate of duty was claimed) were referred, in accordance with the relevant EU rules, to the Israeli customs authorities for verification of the entitlement to the preferential rate of duty. The verification process in such cases is set out in the EU rules and would include a check by the Israeli customs authorities to verify that the goods were not from an illegal settlement.

Preferential Trade Agreements.

237. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Minister for Finance the list of illegal settlement postcodes drawn up by the EU to ensure that Member States do not offer preferential trade agreements to produce originating in these postcodes. [33060/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that, while a list as described by the Deputy does exist, it is regarded by the European Commission as confidential. In the circumstances, therefore, it is not considered possible to provide

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this list to the Deputy. However, the Deputy may wish to make an application to the European Commission directly, seeking access to the list in question.

Departmental Expenditure.

238. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Finance further to Parliamentary Question No. 96 of 22 September 2009, his plans to undertake a review and renegotiation of rental payments to achieve value for money in view of his plans to rationalise the district veterinary offices; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33670/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh): Arising from the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's decision to reorganise its local network of offices, the Commissioners of Public Works are liaising with the Department to ensure that the optimum outcome in terms of value for money is achieved in respect of each location where the Department plans to increase services, and in respect of each location where the Department plans to cease providing services.

Bank Transfers.

239. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to the difficulties and charges faced by businesses paying suppliers and contractors based outside the single euro payments area, particularly the UK, by bank transfer; if his further attention has been drawn to the fact that such charges impose a financial burden on businesses, particularly small businesses and that such charges are often flat rate charges, resulting in small transactions to be relatively costly; if he has proposals to help alleviate this problem; if he has taken the opportunity to raise this matter at EU level or directly with her counterparts in the UK; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34025/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): This is not an issue that has been raised by the relevant stakeholders to my Department. I assume the Deputy is referring to payments made in sterling when referring to transactions being made to suppliers and contractors based in the United Kingdom, which is outside of the eurozone.

Transaction charges for retail cross border credit transfers in euro within the EU must be charged at the same rate as the equivalent domestic transaction. This obligation flows from the Cross-Border Payments Regulation (Regulation 2560/2001(EC)) adopted by the EU on 19 December 2001 which established the principle that charges levied by an institution in respect of certain cross-border payments in euro will be the same as the charges levied by the same institution for corresponding domestic payments. Non-eurozone Member States were entitled to opt in to the provisions of the Regulation. However, I understand that the United Kingdom has chosen not to do so. Therefore payments made in sterling to or from the United Kingdom are not subject to the Regulation. Non-eurozone Member States may opt to implement the Regulation fully at any stage; however this is a matter for the relevant Member States.

With regard to the regulation of bank charges in the State, there are basically two categories of charges applied by the banks — interest-related banking charges and non-interest-related banking charges and fees.

Interest-related charges are determined by the banks themselves on the basis of market considerations and neither the Minister for Finance nor the Financial Regulator have any statutory role in this matter. In setting the level of such charge for a borrower, a bank would have regard to a variety of factors such as the prevailing rate set by the European Central

Bank, the customer's credit history, the risk perceived to attach to the loan and the cost of funds to the bank.

The regulation of non-interest-related charges, such as cross border banking charges, is vested in the Financial Regulator under the Consumer Credit Act 1995 and credit institutions are obliged to seek the prior approval of the Regulator before any increase in such charges above the previously approved level. In fact, Ireland is the only EU country with statutory control on such fee increases.

The Financial Regulator assesses each charging proposal against the criteria set down in the Act and either approves the charge at the notified level, approves it at a lower level or rejects the proposal. The criteria set out in the Act are:

- the promotion of fair competition;
- statement of commercial justification;
- a credit institution passing any costs on to its customers; and
- the effect on customers of any proposal to impose or change any charge in relation to the provision of such service.

By way of concluding, it is a matter for individual businesses to actively 'shop around' to secure the best value for money in the costs associated with cross border banking charges.

Illegal Cigarette Trade.

240. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether the Exchequer lost €500 million due to the illegal cigarette trade in 2008; his further views on whether Customs are sufficiently staffed to address this problem; if he will increase the number employed by Customs; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that retailers here lose €500 million per annum due to this problem; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34528/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners, who are responsible for the collection of tobacco products tax and tackling the illicit trade in cigarettes and tobacco products, that there is no internationally recognised method for determining the amount of tax lost as a result of the illicit trade in cigarettes. However, the Commissioners have previously given a tentative estimate that approximately 20% of cigarettes consumed in Ireland in 2008 were untaxed. The tax involved would amount to approximately €380m. It should be noted however that, in addition to illicit cigarettes, this estimate also includes legal cross-border shopping purchases brought into the State for personal consumption.

As regards the question of staffing resources available to Revenue's Customs Service to combat cigarette smuggling, enforcement staff are deployed at all key ports and airports for the purpose of detection, interception and seizure of smuggled goods including contraband cigarettes. Staff numbers at these locations are subject to continuous review and these officers are frequently augmented by additional staff from other areas where the need arises for specific operational reasons. In addition, enforcement officers carry out checks at inland premises including retail outlets, markets, warehouses etc. for contraband cigarettes that may have evaded detection at the point of importation.

Enforcement action undertaken by Customs in 2008 resulted in 10,191 seizures of cigarettes totalling in excess of 135m cigarettes, while up to the end of August 2009, Customs have made 7164 seizures of cigarettes amounting to 61m cigarettes.

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On the question of a possible increase in the number of Customs enforcement officers, as the Deputy is aware, this issue needs to be viewed in the context of the current restriction on recruitment in the public service. However, the number of Revenue staff deployed in particular areas has always been and will continue to be decided on the basis of business needs and risk assessment. The Commissioners also believe that improved strategies, tactics, detection techniques and training are equally if not more important than increases in the number of officers. These include more effective profiling, improved intelligence gathering, continued co-operation with the legitimate tobacco industry and the better use of scanning technology. All these matters are under continuous review as part of an ongoing assessment of Revenue's ability to deal with the increasing threat to excise duties. In this regard, a new tobacco tax stamp with added security features was recently introduced and a second container scanner is due to be delivered by the end of November.

Finally, I am aware of various reports in the media on the impact of the illicit cigarette trade on legitimate retailers. It is inevitable that retailers do suffer some loss in trade as a result of smuggling. The Commissioners therefore hope to increase the current level of detection through the deployment of improved strategies and tactics etc, as referred to above.

Commission on Taxation Report.

241. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the proposals contained in the taxation commission's report with regard to charities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34098/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The Commission on Taxation have made a number of recommendations in relation to the tax treatment of charities and other approved bodies, as well as in relation to tax relief for donations to such bodies.

The Government will consider these recommendations along with all of the other recommendations from the Commission on Taxation in the context of preparations for Budget and Finance Bill 2010.

Tax Yield.

242. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing tax relief on service charges in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [34691/09]

305. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing capital allowances for childcare facilities in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33776/09]

306. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the income tax exemption for childcare service providers in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33777/09]

307. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the exemption of employer-

provided childcare from the benefit-in-kind charge in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33778/09]

308. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing mortgage interest relief for all outside the first time buyer category in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33779/09]

309. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing income tax relief for rent paid for private rented accommodation in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33780/09]

310. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing income tax relief for service charges in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33781/09]

311. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing rent a room relief in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33782/09]

312. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing capital gains tax and stamp duty exemptions on the disposal of sites to a child in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33783/09]

313. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing tax relief for nursing home expenses in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33784/09]

314. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing tax relief for long-term care policies in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33785/09]

315. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the incapacitated child tax credit in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33786/09]

316. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the dependent relative tax credit in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33787/09]

317. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the entitlement to capital gains tax relief on the disposal of a principal private residence occupied by a dependent relative in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33788/09]

318. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the blind person's tax credit in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33789/09]

319. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the scheme of accelerated capital allowances for palliative care units in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33790/09]

320. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by limiting the scheme for payment of tax by means of donation of heritage items to 50% of the value of the item donated in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33791/09]

321. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by limiting the scheme for payment of tax by means of donation of heritage property to 50% of the value of the property donated in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33792/09]

322. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by limiting the capital gains tax exemption on works of art loaned for public display to the gain accruing in the period for which the work of art has been so loaned in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33793/09]

323. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing income tax relief for expenditure on heritage buildings and gardens in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33794/09]

324. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the benefit in kind exemption on employer provided art objects in a heritage building or garden in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33795/09]

325. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by standard rating tax relief on individual charitable donations at both the current €250 threshold and at a lower threshold of €100 in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33796/09]

326. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by limiting the annual value of individual and corporate charitable donations which may attract tax relief to €500,000, €250,000, €200,000, €150,000 and €100,000 in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33797/09]

327. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by limiting the annual value of individual and corporate donations to sports bodies which may attract tax relief to €500,000, €250,000,

€200,000, €150,000 and €100,000 in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33798/09]

328. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the capital gains tax exemption in respect of philanthropic and sports bodies when development land is disposed of in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33799/09]

329. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the tax exemption for patent royalties in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33800/09]

330. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing stock relief for farming businesses in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33801/09]

331. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the accelerated allowance for capital expenditure on farm buildings for when it expires in 2010 in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33802/09]

332. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the tax relief for the purchase of milk quota in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33803/09]

333. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the tax exemption for payments to an organisation (details supplied) and payments made to its members in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33804/09]

334. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the mid-Shannon corridor scheme beyond its current expiry date in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33805/09]

335. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the investment allowance for machinery and plant and for exploration expenditure in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33806/09]

336. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by modifying the tax treatment of venture fund managers in order that when the investment return on a carried interest represents income, it should be taxed at the appropriate marginal rate and when the investment return on a carried interest is a capital gain, it should be subject to capital gains tax at the normal rate of 25% in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33808/09]

337. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by limiting capital gains tax relief for family transfers to assets up to €3 million in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33809/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 242 and 305 to 337, inclusive, together.

I am informed that, where available, costings of the various recommendations made by the Commission have been provided in their report. The estimates are generally to be found adjacent to the specific recommendation concerned. In the case of tax expenditures they are presented in a tabular form at the beginning of each relevant section of Part 8 of the Report. I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that they provided extensive technical assistance and support to the Commission in the preparation of these costings. In a number of cases no costing has been provided because there was no data available upon which a reasonable estimate could be based. I am similarly not in a position to provide the Deputy with those costs.

Architectural Heritage.

243. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Finance if the Office of Public Works will consider developing a building (details supplied) as a tourist attraction; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that workhouses form an integral part of our history and would be an important tourist attraction, particularly for those with Irish ancestry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33002/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh): The property referred to by the Deputy is in private ownership.

The Commissioners of Public Works have no plans to acquire it at the present time.

Tax Code.

244. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to reduce the complexity of the taxation and relief system here in order to reduce the ability of those with access to the best advice from reducing their tax burden while low and middle income workers cannot avail of these breaks; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33005/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): In recent years many legislative, administrative and technological initiatives have been implemented to improve and simplify the manner in which taxes and duties are administered. Making it as easy as possible for all customers to fulfil their obligations and claim their entitlements is a key objective and is a cornerstone of Revenue's strategy of maximising voluntary compliance.

Initiatives of particular benefit to Pay as You Earn (PAYE) and self-employed are as follows:

- PAYE Taxpayer Simplification Initiatives. A number of approaches have been taken in recent years specifically aimed at making PAYE customers aware of their tax credit and relief entitlements and making it easier to claim them.
- On-line facilities are now available to PAYE customers. Once registered, the self-service facilities enable PAYE customers to manage their tax affairs in a quick, free and secure manner and at a time that suits them best.
- Other self-service options available include text messaging and touch-tone telephone.

- Revenue also issued a new PAYE Guide for Employees with 2009 Tax Credit Certificates. The guide, written in simple language, explains the mechanisms of the PAYE system, explains tax credits and reliefs, encourages customers to apply for them and promotes PAYE Anytime.
- Revenue has been making considerable efforts to automate tax credit and relief entitlements. Developments in this area include the automatic granting of age credits, the introduction of DIRT exempt accounts for over 65s and the issue of automatic refunds for tuition fees and non-reimbursed amounts for prescribed drugs.
- Mortgage interest relief is provided at source through financial institutions under arrangements which were put in place with effect from 1 January 2002, that is the TRS system. This means that the mortgage holders get the benefit of the relief directly from their mortgage providers in the form of reduced monthly repayments which take account of the tax relief. In addition, health insurance relief is also provided at source by way of reduced payments.
- Tax relief on contributions to occupational pension schemes for PAYE earners is provided on a “net pay” basis. This means that employee pensions contributions are deducted from gross pay by employers before income tax and levies are calculated.

Simplification Initiatives for Self-Employed Taxpayers

- Registration thresholds for VAT have been increased in recent years to reduce the administrative burden on smaller businesses.
- Revenue reduced the frequency of tax returns and payments required from smaller businesses during 2006 and 2007. It regularly reviews the liability of cases and transfers customers to the less frequent filing programme where eligibility criteria are met. Accordingly simplified arrangements were extended to include newly eligible customers from 1 January 2009. Over 90,000 businesses currently benefit from less frequent PAYE/PRSI and VAT filing obligations.
- With a view to making tax compliance easier for small businesses, Revenue carried out a detailed review of self-assessed returns and identified taxpayers to whom the shorter Form 11E is more appropriate. As a result the 2008 Form 11E issued to 125,000 customers who file paper returns as opposed to 21,000 in 2007. Revenue will continue to review self-assessed returns with the intention of issuing a shorter form to as many categories of customers as possible.
- A new system of accounting for VAT on construction services came into effect from 1 September 2008. The effect of the reverse charge mechanism is that it simplifies the operation of VAT in the sector and there are cash flow benefits to principals.
- A new Guide to VAT was also published in July 2008 and updated by Addendum to include the Finance Act (No. 2) 2008 changes. There are over fifty VAT Information leaflets available in support of the Guide.
- Revenue’s On-line Service (ROS) offers business and individuals a quick, secure and cost effective method to manage their tax affairs on-line and the number of customers using it continues to increase. Revenue has a number of incentives to encourage customers to avail of ROS.

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- Revenue's website (*www.revenue.ie*) was redesigned and launched in December 2008 following wide-ranging consultation and was aimed at delivering improvements in quality and timeliness, information and services.
- In June 2009, Revenue launched its new National Excise Licence Office which reduces the administrative burden associated with Excise Licence obligations.

Work will continue in this area with the aim of reducing any remaining complexity in the taxation and relief system, both as it pertains to the individual taxpayer and small businesses.

Banking Sector Regulation.

245. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance if he will make a statement on his assertion in a newspaper (details supplied) on 13 September 2009 that Irish banks have not been able to attract private investment for toxic assets and that we cannot wait forever; the way he knows same; the process which enables him to know same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33014/09]

246. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance if he has access to information which shows that banks have been prepared to negotiate with potential investors over the course of the past 12 to 18 months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33015/09]

248. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide evidence of banks having negotiated with potential investors; if he will substantiate his statement in a newspaper (details supplied) on 13 September 2009 that banks have not been able to attract private investment; if he will clarify whether he has evidence of approaches made to Irish banks by international investors or bidders in the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33017/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 245, 246 and 248 together.

I have, as have my officials, on many occasions discussed the issue of private investment in the banks with the senior executives of the covered institutions. I have also had some discussions with representatives of potential investors and I understand that some covered institutions have also engaged in such discussions. For example, AIB has indicated that it has received interest from a third party with a potential interest in taking a minority stake in the bank and that it will continue to explore strategic options including potential investments in the bank. Bank of Ireland has also stated that it believes that, in the event that additional capital is required, it could be generated internally and/or through access to the capital markets. To date, none of these discussions have resulted in any detailed investment proposal. However, the Deputy will appreciate that much of this information is received in confidence and is market sensitive and is a matter in the first instance for the banks themselves.

As the Deputy is aware, I have consistently stated that there is an onus on the banks covered by the bank guarantee scheme to attract private investors. In my recent speech moving the Second Stage of the NAMA Bill, I made it clear that the Government expects institutions to explore all available options for raising additional capital. The removal of the toxic assets from the balance sheets of the banks will go some way to reducing any risk which private investors may perceive in investing capital in the banks. If sufficient capital cannot be raised independently, the Government remains committed to providing the covered institutions with an appropriate level of capital to continue to meet their requirements.

This is to ensure that the banks remain sufficiently capitalised to enable them to lend into the economy.

Private Sector Investments.

247. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether international investors would be prudent to invest in commercial property here and development land in view of the fact that prices of same have dropped by more than 50% since 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33016/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): As Minister for Finance I welcome international investment into Ireland and we are all aware of the essential role discharged by international investment in supporting the Irish economy.

As Minister, I am not in a position to provide investment advice to investors in relation to the Irish property market or any other market.

Question No. 248 answered with Question No. 245.

Tax Code.

249. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Finance the logic behind the tax on life insurance and assurance policies introduced recently; and his views on removing it or removing it for those policies which are compulsory for mortgages. [33072/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): In Supplementary Budget 2009, I introduced a life insurance levy at a rate of 1% on premiums. This measure is one small part of this Government's concerted effort to raise the revenue necessary to help address the serious recent decline in the public finances.

All taxes and potential taxation measures are constantly reviewed in the context of the Budget and Finance Bill. As the Deputy is aware, it is not customary for the Minister of Finance to comment on specific tax and expenditure changes in advance of the Budget.

Ministerial Travel.

250. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Finance the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33083/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): In the time available, it has not been possible to provide the information requested by the Deputy. Every effort is being made to collate the information and I will reply directly to the Deputy when this process is completed.

Tax Code.

251. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Finance if he will reduce the excise duty charged per bottle of wine and particularly on wine sold in restaurants or hotels and consumed with meals in view of the crisis in the hospitality industry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33098/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I would draw to the Deputy attention to the fact that before Budget 2009, excise duty on wine remained unchanged since the Budget of 1994. The growth in the consumption of wine has been strong over the last ten years particularly

[Deputy Brian Lenihan.]

relative to other alcohol products. It should also be noted the excise on wine remains considerably lower than excise on spirits.

The alcohol products tax content of a bottle of wine was 30.6% of the retail price in 1994 and following Budget 2009 is now 25.7%. Under EU legislation, Member States must levy the same excise duty on all still wine products and the same excise duty on all sparkling wine products. It is therefore not possible to differentiate excise duty on wine according to where it is sold or consumed.

Banking Sector Regulation.

252. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the action he will take regarding credit unions with regard to a new approach to financial regulation in view of the request that regulation be developed in the context of revisions of the Credit Union Act 1997 rather than in the context of regulatory failures connected to the property market. [33107/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The Credit Union Act 1997 has served credit unions well providing stability and legal certainty during a period of substantial growth and development of the movement. The need for some modernisation of the legislative and regulatory framework for credit unions has become evident over time and there is consensus among all stakeholders that the current legislative framework needs reform. While some preparatory work has already been done in this regard there is however no clear consensus at this stage on the future shape of the reformed legislative framework for credit unions. I have asked the Chair of the Financial Regulator to initiate a review of credit unions which it is hoped will make an important contribution to identifying the appropriate way forward.

253. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the restriction on loans of more than five years duration within the credit unions is restricting the ability of unions to restructure loans for persons experiencing financial difficulty; and his proposals to relax this restriction. [33108/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): A core objective of the legislative and regulatory framework for Credit Unions in Ireland is to ensure the safety and soundness of credit unions. This requires prudent lending and investment decisions by Boards of credit unions to safeguard members' savings. The restrictions contained in Section 35 of the Credit Union Act 1997, as amended, are an important asset and liability tool for credit unions as the funding of credit unions is predominantly provided on a short term basis in the form of on-demand savings and consequently the limits on longer term-term lending are necessary.

I am aware that credit unions are seeking to facilitate revised repayment instalments for credit union members currently experiencing difficulty in meeting loan repayments due to unfavourable changes in their financial circumstances but that these endeavours, in certain circumstances, run up against the current Section 35 limits on longer-term lending for some credit unions. Subject to the over-arching considerations that the financial position of a credit union, the security of members' savings and accurate reporting of the financial status of a credit union is maintained, it should be possible to explore all reasonable steps to allow a member, in carefully monitored and controlled circumstances, to re-schedule their repayments to a level which is affordable to them. Of course, each credit union must fully and properly recognise arrears situations where they exist, and where members are in difficulty the process of facilitat-

ing them must be transparent to board members and regulators so that a credit union is never in doubt as to its own position.

My Department has, at my request, reactivated the Group, representative of stakeholders, the Regulatory Authority and my Department, which successfully reviewed the Section 35 lending limits in 2006. The mandate for this Group is to find a solution to this issue. My officials have consulted with the relevant stakeholders and have received proposals from them on how we might best proceed. This work is being brought forward with a view to reaching agreement on this issue as soon as possible.

Court Accommodation.

254. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Finance the position regarding the proposed extension to Waterford Courthouse; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[33124/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh): The provision of Court accommodation is, in the first instance, a matter for the Courts Service.

The Commissioners of Public Works, acting on behalf of the Courts Service, have appointed an Architect to this project. Consultations have already taken place with local Court users, and it is expected that plans will be prepared by the end of this year. This will enable further consultations to take place with the Courts staff, Judiciary and local Court users, with a view to finalising a brief of requirements. Tender documentation will then be prepared.

Road Network.

255. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the reason for the proposed closure of the Castleknock gates of the Phoenix Park for up to two months; the work which is to be carried out; the estimated cost of these works; the reason this work was not completed during the summer 2009 off-peak period; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33191/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh): The closure of Castleknock Gate from Monday 28 September for a period of a maximum of nine weeks is necessitated by essential works that are required to be carried out at the Mountjoy Cross junction in the Phoenix Park. These works consist of a permanent roundabout to replace the current temporary structure, new drainage works to prevent a recurrence of flooding on the Main Road, laying of a new network of gas pipes and the repair of the Castleknock Gates, damaged by a heavy goods vehicle. The estimated cost of the works at the roundabout is €192,000 ex VAT.

The works are part of a very much larger scheme for the complete refurbishment of Chesterfield Avenue, submitted to Dublin City Council for planning permission and subsequently rejected by An Bord Pleanála, primarily because of the bus lane element of the plan.

The works at the Mountjoy roundabout to create a permanent structure for the safety of all users and to alleviate the flooding difficulties that continue to occur at this junction were planned to be carried out as part of the overall Chesterfield Avenue scheme. However, once the planning situation had been clarified, there was a narrow window of opportunity to complete the roundabout works, which are permitted under planning laws, before Garda restrictions on roadworks come into effect at the end of November as part of Operation Freeflow. As soon as the planning permission was rejected, a tendering process was undertaken and a contract placed. This enabled the urgent works at this dangerous junction to be carried out

[Deputy Martin Mansergh.]

separately to the overall Chesterfield Avenue scheme, which will now have to go through the planning process again.

It is anticipated that, if a decision to carry out the works had not been taken at this time, it would be 2011 at the earliest before another opportunity would have presented itself to enable the OPW to carry out the necessary works.

Tax Code.

256. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to sporting clubs, which were granted tax exemption status and which are abusing the conditions under which the exemption was granted by using interest on a capital sum derived from the disposal of assets to defray day-to-day expenditure and thereby subsidise members' annual subscriptions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33195/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Section 235 of the Taxes Consolidation Act (TCA) 1997 gives an income tax exemption to sporting bodies, which have been approved by Revenue on the basis that the body has been established for, and exists for the sole purpose of promoting athletic or amateur games or sports. The exemption extends to the amount of the income of the approved body as has been, or will be, applied to the sole purpose mentioned.

Sections 610 and Schedule 15, Paragraph 37, TCA 1997 gives a capital gains tax exemption in respect of chargeable gains accruing to sporting bodies to the extent that the income of the sporting body is exempt from income tax or corporation tax as the case may be. Where a sporting body realises a capital sum from the disposal of an asset, the exemption applies only to the extent that the proceeds are applied for the sole purpose of promoting athletic or amateur games or sports.

The administration of tax exemptions for Sports Bodies is a matter for the Revenue Commissioners. It is understood that the detailed application of funds has to be considered by the Revenue Commissioners specifically, and in context, in each individual case, to determine whether any implications arise for the tax exemption or the body's approval by Revenue. It has been confirmed by Revenue that bodies granted sporting tax exemption are subject to periodic risk-focused review towards ensuring that the terms of the exemption continue to be fulfilled. All relevant matters, including adherence to any "use of income" clauses attached to the exemption, are considered in the context of such reviews.

If the Deputy has specific information in regard to abuse of the tax exemption conditions by any sporting body, then such information should be provided to the Revenue Commissioners for consideration and further investigation, as necessary.

Tax Yield.

257. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of revenue raised to date from the airport travel tax announced in budget 2009; the amount expected to be raised in a full year; if an assessment has been carried out of the expected impact on air passenger traffic; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33197/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the air travel tax arising from travel undertaken in any month is payable by the 23rd of the following month. The yields from the air travel tax received in the period from May to

September 2009, in respect of travel undertaken during the months April to August 2009 are as follows:

Month	€m
May	9.6
June	11.5
July	11.9
August	12.5
September	12.4
Total	57.9

It should be recognised that visitors will only be subject to the tax on their return air journey. The additional €10 or €2 in the context of a much larger purchasing decision involving total travel and accommodation costs should have an extremely limited effect on tourist numbers. I appreciate the airline industry continues to go through a difficult period. However, this difficult trading period arises primarily from weak world economic activity.

It should be noted that at present the decline in air travel is an international phenomenon and as a result aviation services are contracting on a global basis. Indeed the decline in the number of people travelling is also evident in those countries where there is no air travel tax in place.

The estimated yield from the air travel tax is €85m in 2009 and €125m in a full year.

We currently face significant financial challenges and the air travel tax is an important revenue raising measure. I tried to be as fair as possible in looking at areas for additional tax revenues. It is also worth noting that fuel used by commercial airlines is completely exempt from tax, so it's a sector that already has considerable preferential treatment.

Departmental Staff.

258. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for Finance the number of people who have availed of the early retirement scheme as announced by him in 2009 in tabular form; the sectors of the public service from which they come; and the level of position they held. [33198/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table.

In summary, the information reported to my Department by the end of September indicates that some 992 civil servants had applied for the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) and that 811 of these had been approved. These Civil Service numbers are based on returns from all Departments and Offices. (The Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism provided an overall number).

In the wider public service, some 347 public servants had applied and 130 of these had been approved. However, it should be noted that information from the Education Sector will not be available until the end of October and from the Local Authorities until November. Also, processing of applications under the ISER has been suspended in the Health Sector as a result of a direction by IMPACT and some other health unions to their members not to cooperate with redeployment. As the closing date for the Scheme has been extended to 16th October next, and the monitoring process is continuing, additional information is expected to become available in due course.

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
Department of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries																
	Department Applications			1	3	5		16	10	5	21				21	82
	Approved			0	3	2		10	6	4	12				14	51
Department of Arts, Sports & Tourism																
	Civil Servants Applications															4
	Approved															2
Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources																
	Civil Servants Applications			1		4			1						3	9
	Approved			1		4			1						1	7
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs																
	Civil Servants Applications			1	1	4		2	1	1						10
	Approved			1	1	4		2	1	1						10
Department of Defence																
	Department Applications					2		1	6	2						11
	Approved					2		1	6	2						11
Department of Education & Science																
	Civil Servants Applications			1	4	3		5	7	2					11	33
	Approved			0	3	2		0	4	1					2	12

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment																
	Department Applications			2	6	11		11	9	2						41
	Approved			2	4	8		8	8	1						31
Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government																
	Civil Servants Applications			1	7	11		5	3	2	4				14	47
	Approved			1	6	10		4	3	2	4				9	39
Department of Finance																
	Department Applications			1	6	14		7		2	1					31
	Approved			1	5	12		6		2	0					26
	OPW Applications					10		5	1	1	1				9	27
	Approved					9		5	1	1	1				9	26
	Valuation Office Applications							1								1
	Approved							1								1
	Office of the Ombudsman Applications															0
	Approved															0

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
	CPSA Applications Approved					2 2										2 2
	PAS Applications Approved							1 1	1 1							2 2
	Revenue Applications Approved				16 16	73 73		110 110	82 82	9 9	26 26				6 6	322 322
	State Laboratory Applications Approved														1 1	1 1
	C&AG Applications Approved														9 9	9 9
Department of Foreign Affairs																
	Department Applications Approved				2 2	3 3	1 1	3 3	3 3	1 1	4 3					17 16
Department of Health & Children																
	Department Applications Approved				7 7	10 10		2 2	2 2	1 1	3 3					25 25

Questions—

6 OCTOBER 2009.

Written Answers

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform																
	Department Applications				6	11		7	6		3				18	51
	Department Applications Approved				6	11		7	6		2				18	50
	Irish Prison Service Applications				2	1										3
	Irish Prison Service Applications Approved				2	1										3
	Courts Service Applications				4	10		12	3	1	2					32
	Courts Service Applications Approved				3	6		7	2	1	1					20
	Property Registration Authority Applications				2			3	2		1				17	25
	Property Registration Authority Applications Approved				0			3	2		1				13	19
	Garda Civilians Applications					4		5	1	7	10					27
	Garda Civilians Applications Approved					2		3	1	4	6					16
	Legal Aid Board Applications					1										1
	Legal Aid Board Applications Approved					1										1
Department of Social & Family Affairs																
	Civil Servants Applications				8	20		46	26	18	9					127
	Civil Servants Applications Approved				2	14		27	13	13	6					75

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
Department of the Taoiseach																
	Department Applications Approved				1 0	1 1		1 0								3 1
	CSSO Applications Approved							2 2							3 2	5 4
	OAG Applications Approved							1 1							1 1	2 2
	DPP Applications Approved														2 0	2 0
	CSO Applications Approved				1 1		2 2	1 1	1 1		1 1				3 2	9 8
Department of Transport																
	Department Applications Approved			2 1	8 7	9 6		7 3	5 3	1 1	1 1				2 1	35 23
Total by Grade																
	Applications	0	0	12	83	206	2	253	170	55	87	0	0	0	120	992
	Approved	0	0	9	67	180	2	206	146	44	67	0	0	0	88	811

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement							Total
Department of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	Public Servants						
	BIM Applications Approved	EO Higher 1 1					1 1
	Sea Fisheries Protection Authority Applications Approved	Sea Fisheries Officer 1 1				1	1
	Teagasc Applications Approved	Head of Directorate 2 2	Admin 2 2	Other 17 17			21 21
Department of Arts, Sports & Tourism	Public Servants						
	National Library of Ireland Applications Approved	SO 1 1	HEO 1 1	Ass. Keeper 1 1		3	3 3
	Fáilte Ireland Applications Approved	Level 2c 1 1	Level 3 1 1	Level 5 1 1			3 3
Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources	Public Servants						
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	Public Servants Western Development Commission Applications Approved	APH 1 1					1 1

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement							Total
	Udaras na Gaeltachta	1	2	4	Bainisteoir	LPF	
	Applications	1	2	1	1	1	6
	Approved	1	2	1	1	1	6
Department of Defence	Public Servants						
	Civil Employees	BFW/Trade Foreman					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1
Department of Education & Science	Public Servants						
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	Public Servants						
	Health & Safety Authority	Inspector I					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1				1	
	Competition Authority	Case Officer					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1
	FAS	6	7	8	9	10	
	Applications	7	5	21	3	2	
	Approved	4	3	17	3	2	
		11	13				49
		9	2				40
		9	2				
	Shannon Development	E1	E3A	E4	E5		
	Applications	2	2	1	1		6
	Approved	2	2	1	1		6

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement							Total
	PIAB Applications Approved	AP 1 1				1	1
	Forfás Applications Approved	D 1 0	E 1 0	F 1 0	1 1 0		4 0
	Enterprise Ireland Applications Approved	B 1 1	C 3 3	D 1 1	E 1 1	F 2 2	
	Science Foundation Ireland Applications Approved	PSO 1 1 Director 1 1	SSO 1 1	SPSO 1 1			11 11
	NSAI Applications Approved	E 1 1	EO 1 1	SSO 1 1		3	3
	IDA Ireland Applications Approved	E 2 2	F 1 1	I 1 1			4 4
Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Public Servants						
	An Bord Pleanála Applications Approved	SEO 1 1				1	1
	DDDA Applications Approved	PO 1 1					1 1

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement							Total
	RPII	Principal Scientific Officer					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	0					0
Department of Finance	Public Servants						
Department of Foreign Affairs	Public Servants						
Department of Health & Children	Public Servants						
	HSE						
	Applications	113					113
	Approved	15					15
	Voluntary Sector						
	Applications	109					109
	Approved	5					5
Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform	Public Servants						
Department of Social & Family Affairs	Public Servants						
Department of the Taoiseach	Public Servants						
Department of Transport	Public Servants						
	Road Safety Authority	HEO	EO	CO			
	Applications	1	2	1			4
	Approved	1	2	0		3	
	National Roads Authority	E2F					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1
TOTAL							TOTAL
	Applications						347
	Approved						130

259. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for Finance the number of people who have availed of the career break scheme as announced by him in 2009 in tabular form; the sections of the public service they are from; and the level of position they held. [33199/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table.

In summary, the information reported to my Department by the end of September indicates that some 608 civil servants had applied for the Special Incentive Career Break Scheme and that 519 of these had been approved. These Civil Service numbers are based on returns from all Departments and Offices.

In the wider public service, some 428 public servants had applied and 104 of these had been approved. However, it should be noted that information from the Education Sector will not be available until the end of October and from the Local Authorities until November. Processing of applications under the Special Incentive Career Break Scheme has been suspended in the health sector as a result of a direction by IMPACT and some other health unions to their members not to cooperate with redeployment. As information is still being updated in respect of some areas of the public service, the above figures may be revised in due course.

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
Department of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries																
	Department Applications							5	11	1	28				11	56
	Approved							4	11	1	27				7	50
Department of Arts, Sports & Tourism																
	Civil Servants Applications															0
	Approved															0
Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources																
	Civil Servants Applications					1			2	1	2				1	7
	Approved					1			2	1	2				1	7
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs																
	Civil Servants Applications					1					3					4
	Approved					1					3					4
	Charitable Donations & Bequests Applications							1								1
	Approved							1								1
Department of Defence																
	Department Applications							1	3		4					8
	Approved							1	3		4					8

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
Department of Education & Science																
	Department Applications Approved						2 2	3 3	11 11	1 1	5 5					22 22
	NCSE Applications Approved								1 1							1 1
	SEC Applications Approved														1 1	1 1
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment																
	Department Applications Approved					1 1	2 2	2 2	4 4	1 1	19 19					29 29
Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government																
	Civil Servants Applications Approved					4 4		4 4	10 10	2 2	5 5				18 14	43 39
Department of Finance																
	Department Applications Approved					1 1	2 2	1 1			4 3					8 7

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme

	S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
OPW Applications										3				15	18
Approved										3				11	14
Valuation Office Applications								1							1
Approved								1							1
Office of the Ombudsman Applications														1	1
Approved														1	1
CPSA Applications								1							1
Approved								1							1
PAS Applications								2	1						3
Approved								2	1						3
Revenue Applications					1	1	6	33	4	58		1			104
Approved					1	1	6	32	4	57		1			102

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
	State Laboratory Applications Approved														1	1
	C&AG Applications Approved										1					1
Department of Foreign Affairs																
	Department Applications Approved				1	1	3		3	1	12				1	22
					1	1	3		3	1	12				1	22
Department of Health & Children																
	Department Applications Approved					1		5	4		3					13
						0		5	3		3					11
Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform																
	Department Applications Approved					1	1	7	12	1	24				12	58
						1	1	6	12	1	22				8	51
	Irish Prison Service Applications Approved															0
																0
	Courts Service Applications Approved					1			4		8					13
						0			4		5					9

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total	
Department of Social & Family Affairs	Property Registration Authority																
	Applications							1	4	1	4				1	11	
	Approved							1	4	1	3				0	9	
	Garda Civilians																
	Applications							3		3	21					27	
	Approved							1		2	13					16	
	Legal Aid Board																
	Applications							1	4			5				6	16
	Approved							1	3			3				2	9
	Irish Youth Justice																
	Applications								1	1							2
	Approved								1	1							2
Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission																	
Applications						1		2	4							7	
Approved						1		2	4							7	
Department of Social & Family Affairs																	
Civil Servants	Applications					1		5	9	3	43		2			63	
	Approved					1		4	8	2	36		0			51	

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme

		S/Gen	D/Gen	A/Sec	PO	AP	AO	HEO	EO	SO	CO	HSO	SVO	SA	Other	Total
Department of the Taoiseach																
	Department Applications Approved					2 2	2 2		2 1							6 5
	CSSO Applications Approved							3 0							2 0	5 0
	OAG Applications Approved														2 0	2 0
	DPP Applications Approved							1 0			4 1				4 0	9 1
	CSO Applications Approved								5 3	2 2	13 11				7 3	27 19
Department of Transport																
	Department Applications Approved					2 2	2 2		6 4		6 6				1 0	17 14
Total by Grade																
	Applications	0	0	0	1	19	15	52	137	22	275	0	3	0	84	608
	Approved	0	0	0	1	17	15	43	128	20	244	0	1	0	50	519

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme							Total
Department of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	Public Servants						
	Teagasc	Admin	Other				
	Applications	1	4				5
	Approved	1	4				5
Department of Arts, Sports & Tourism	Public Servants						
	National Museum of Ireland	Attendant	Education Assistant	Technical Assistant			
	Applications	1	1	1			3
	Approved	0	0	0			0
	Fáilte Ireland	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	
	Applications	3	1	2	1	2	9
	Approved	1	1	1	1	1	5
	Arts Council	EA					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	0					0
	IMMA	Technical					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1
Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources	Public Servants						
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	Public Servants						
Department of Defence	Public Servants						
		Craftsman					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme							Total
Department of Education & Science	Public Servants						
	HEA Applications Approved	EO 3 3	CO 1 1				4 4
	VEC Applications Approved	CO 1 1	CO G3 2 2	III 4 2	IV 4 3	VI 1 1	
		VII 3 1	Admin Assist 1 1	Liaison Officer 1 1			17 12
	FETAC Applications Approved	3 1 1	4 1 0	5 2 2			4 3
	NQAI Applications Approved	VII 1 1					1 1
	NEWB Applications Approved	EWO 1 0					1 0
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	Public Servants						
	NSAI Applications Approved	SSO 2 2	C 1 1				3 3

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme							Total
Health & Safety Authority	Inspector III	Inspector II	HEO	EO	CO		
Applications	2	1	1	1	2	7	
Approved	2	1	1	1	2	7	
Competition Authority	Case Officer						
Applications	4					4	
Approved	4					4	
FAS	8	9	10	11			
Applications	1	2	1	16		20	
Approved	1	2	1	16		20	
Shannon Development	E3A						
Applications	1					1	
Approved	1					1	
Science Foundation Ireland	B						
Applications	1					1	
Approved	0					0	
Forfás	B	C	D				
Applications	2	2	2			6	
Approved	0	0	0			0	
IDA Ireland	C	D	E	E			
Applications	1	1	2	1		5	
Approved	0	0	0	1		1	

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme							Total
Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Public Servants						
	An Bord Pleanála	SEO	EO	AA	Planning Inspector		
	Applications	1	1	2	1		5
	Approved	1	1	2	0		4
	LGCSB	VII					
	Applications	2					2
	Approved	0					0
Department of Finance	Public Servants						
Department of Foreign Affairs	Public Servants						
Department of Health & Children	Public Servants						
	HSE						
	Applications	196					196
	Approved	26					26
	Voluntary Sector						
	Applications	110					110
	Approved	0					0
	Health Research Board	Support	Research II				
	Applications	1	1				2
	Approved	0	0				0
	National Cancer Screening Service	Clerical IV	Sen. Radio.				
	Applications	2	1				3
	Approved	0	0				0
	National Council for Nursing and Midwifery	Grade IV					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1

Special Incentive Career Break Scheme							Total
Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform	Public Servants						
	Legal Aid Board	Sol. I	Sol. III				
	Applications	1	3				4
	Approved	0	1				1
Department of Social & Family Affairs	Public Servants						
	Citizens Information Board	HEO	Grade IV				
	Applications	1	2				3
	Approved	0	2				2
	Family Support Agency	EO					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1
Department of the Taoiseach	Public Servants						
Department of Transport	Public Servants						
	Road Safety Authority	CO					
	Applications	2					2
	Approved	0					0
	Commission for Taxi Regulation	EO					
	Applications	1					1
	Approved	1					1
	DTO	Exe. Trans. Planner	Sen. Exe. Trans. Planner	Sen. S.O.			
	Applications	2	1	1			4
	Approved	0	0	0			0
TOTAL							
	Applications						428
	Approved						104

Proposed Legislation.

260. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the value of debt service payments made in the past 12 months on the €77 billion which it is proposed will be purchased; the value of interest, of repayments of capital, of roll-up interest; and if he will provide the information in respect of the loan values being transferred from each of the respective banks. [33232/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Information provided by me during the Second Stage debate on the Bill included the fact that, of the total portfolio value of €77 billion, €9 billion accounted for rolled up interest. I also indicated that, based on information provided by the relevant institutions, about 40% of the assets were cash-flow producing.

It is expected that the securities issued to purchase assets from the participating institutions will be linked to six-month Euribor. Based on information provided by the institutions it is expected that the cash-flow outlined above will be sufficient to cover NAMA's obligations including interest payments.

The detailed figures that the Deputy has requested will not be available until a loan by loan assessment has been completed.

Departmental Staff.

261. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the impact to date in 2009 of the embargo on public service recruitment on public service numbers; the number of persons who have left the public service by retirement or otherwise; and the number of positions where replacement was permitted. [33233/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): At the end of March 2009, the Government introduced a moratorium on public service recruitment and promotion. I allowed for certain exceptions in the Education and Health Sectors for the filling of certain key posts as well as the Local Authorities for requests that related to fire, health and safety, Interreg and beach wardens for whom a more general sanction was given.

Based on the information returned to my Department, the number of persons in the public service has decreased by 1,385 between end-March and end-June of this year. It should be noted that this does not include the numbers employed in the Non-Commercial Agencies as officials are currently collecting this information.

With regard to applications for exemptions under the moratorium, the information available indicates that, to date, the Department of Finance has received approximately 1,237 written applications for the filling of specific posts comprehended by the moratorium, of which the filling of 502 has been sanctioned. Civil Service full-time posts accounted for 328 applications and sanction was conveyed in 158 cases. The main areas of exemption were the prison service, educational psychologists and social welfare staff. Applications for the filling of Public Service posts accounted for some 909 posts and sanction was conveyed in 344 cases. The main areas of exemption were in the Department Education and Science (renewal of secondment of teachers to Education Services) and the Department of Health and Children (mental health nurses).

Banking Sector Regulation.

262. **Deputy Frank Feighan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will investigate the clearing time of five working days being operated by banks for cheques lodged; if there is irregularity involved with regard to customers credit; the person who allowed this change in regulation; and the action he will take in relation to same. [33264/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am not aware of any irregularities regarding the clearing time for cheques in Ireland. I should explain that the clearing system in Ireland is governed by private arrangements between the participating institutions, operating under the aegis of the Irish Payment Services Organisation (IPSO). The clearing cycle for a cheque should in normal circumstances take no more than three business days, with cheques that are unpaid generally being returned within 5 working days. This might occur where there are insufficient funds in the payer's bank account. Presentation of a cheque by a payee to his or her bank occurs on Day 1 of the clearing cycle. The payee will commence receiving interest from Day 2, which is the same day settlement takes place between the payee's bank and the drawer's bank at the Central Bank. The drawer's bank account is debited on Day 2 or Day 3 of the cycle. The clearing cycle may be quicker (in some cases instantaneous) if a cheque is both drawn on and collected on the same bank.

There is also provision for special presentation of a cheque for immediate payment, which is only available in the Dublin area for cheques up to a value of €625,000 and where the payee presents the cheque before 3 p.m. in the nominated branch of the bank.

This timeframe is also dependent on the bank or financial institution being a member of the Irish Paper Clearing Company (IPCC) Ltd. The IPCC is responsible for the clearing and settlement of all paper payment instruments in Ireland. Any bank or financial institution outside of this framework may have a longer cheque clearance cycle. A list of members is available directly from IPSO at www.ipso.ie.

As to when any particular bank will permit a customer to draw against lodged cheques, this is an individual bank decision based on its own risk management and credit control arrangements. I would expect that all banks would inform their customers of the relevant terms and conditions. If the Deputy wishes to provide me with further information on this matter, I can arrange for enquiries to be made.

I think it is also important to point out that this question also highlights the disadvantages of the continued high usage of cheques as a method of payment within the commercial sector in Ireland.

It might be noted that electronic payment transactions have the potential to achieve significant savings for individual businesses; in particular electronic payments processing and invoice presentation can realise significant administrative cost savings, improved efficiency and improvements in the quality of customer service. This has the potential to benefit not just businesses but also their customers.

Government policy is to promote the increased use of electronic payments throughout our economy. In promoting this policy objective, I have reduced stamp duty on combined ATM cards from €10 to €5 in Budget 2009, building upon changes in the previous year's Budget. I also increased stamp duty on cheques, from 30 cent to 50 cent per cheque, to further disincentivise cheque usage.

I have recently made regulations (S.I. 383 of 2009) to transpose the EU Payment Services Directive (Directive 2007/64/EC), which, inter alia, establishes rules on the maximum time for the execution of both paper-initiated and electronic payments. These regulations will take effect from 1 November 2009.

I have also previously indicated the need to establish new governance arrangements to further promote the development of electronic payments in our economy, and I am currently making preparations for the establishment of a task force comprising key representatives of the main stakeholders to direct the preparation and implementation of a national payments implementation plan over a two year period.

263. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the members of the committee monitoring lending to business; the new requirements imposed on banks to report on lending trends in a way that will facilitate evaluation of the credit squeeze; if the commitments made by each financial institution to date in 2009 have been delivered; and if he will publish in each case a tabular statement of the lending variables which are being monitored and identify the ones in respect of which commitments have been made. [33308/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): In the context of the recapitalisation, AIB and Bank of Ireland made specific commitments on lending. I am pleased to say that the measures taken to date by the recapitalised banks, including those relating to lending, are outlined in the supplementary booklet on NAMA. I would direct the Deputy to Section 4 of that booklet.

The Credit Supply Clearing Group under the aegis of the Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment has responsibility for identifying specific patterns of events or cases where the flow of credit to viable businesses appears to be blocked and to seek to identify credit supply solutions. This group includes members from the following organisations; Department of Finance, Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment, Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism, ISME, SFA, IFA, Chambers Ireland, IBF, AIB, Anglo Irish Bank, Bank of Ireland, Bank of Scotland (Ireland), National Irish Bank, Ulster Bank, Forfás, Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Irish Hoteliers Federation and Fáilte Ireland.

I published the independent review of credit availability conducted by Mazars on 10 July 2009. A follow on report to look at the situation since then is in the process of being undertaken by my Department and other stakeholders. As with the original report, both the supply and demand sides will be covered. I expect that the demand side survey will commence this week.

National Monuments.

264. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance further to Question No. 168 of 7 July 2009 and previous related questions, the extent to which the outstanding and contentious issues have been addressed or resolved arising from his visit to Rathcoffey Castle, County Kildare, earlier in 2009 and his discussions with the various interested parties; if any resolution put forward is expected to have current or retrospective effect; if the issue of ongoing litigation has been addressed in this context; if it is intended or expected to achieve public access on specific or agreed days or weekends throughout the year; the degree to which he has had discussions with all the interested parties with a view to reaching an amicable settlement; if he has the power to make an order to resolve the issues in a fashion satisfactory to all involved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33309/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh): The Gate House at Rathcoffey Castle was placed in the guardianship of the State in 1941. Guardianship, as defined in the National Monuments Acts, confers on the Commissioners of Public Works the responsibility for the maintenance of the structure only and does not affect the owner's property rights relating to the property. The guardianship deed did not include provision for a public access route.

Earlier this year, I visited Rathcoffey Castle, and met with local interest groups concerning their desire to access the property. I also met with the landowner who was prepared, in conjunction with the Office of Public Works, to facilitate public access under strict conditions on agreed dates that would not impinge on his farming operation. As a result, the Office of Public Works co-ordinated and advertised an open date for 24 September 2009. It is intended to hold similar arrangements into the future.

Financial Services Regulation.

265. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance his views on giving the Financial Services Ombudsman the discretion to name institutions which have a bad record of handling consumer complaints. [33320/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The Financial Services Ombudsman has requested the power to name institutions where it is in the public interest to do so.

My officials are reviewing the issue and have sought legal advice. This advice will help to better inform the deliberations to formulate a policy decision on the issue.

266. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance his views on giving the Financial Services Ombudsman the ability to make class rulings rather than having to hear each individual complaint separately. [33321/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The role and functions of the Financial Services Ombudsman (FSO) in dealing with consumer complaints complements that of the Financial Regulator in protecting the interests of consumers of financial services as a whole. During the passage of the FSO legislation through the Oireachtas in 2004 it was stated, on behalf of the Minister for Finance, that the Ombudsman's remit essentially is to deal with individual complaints from customers of financial institutions and it is the responsibility of the Consumer Director in the Financial Regulator to deal with general issues relating to the protection of consumers.

The relevant legislation provides for co-operation between the Financial Services Ombudsman and the Financial Regulator on general issues relating to the protection of consumers. A Memorandum of Understanding has been concluded between the Financial Services Ombudsman and the Financial Regulator to ensure the efficient and effective handling of complaints. An issue drawing attention to a general breach affecting consumers can be referred by the Financial Services Ombudsman to the Financial Regulator. Such issues can then be examined by the Financial Regulator to consider if there are any suspected breaches of the relevant regulatory requirements including the Consumer Protection Code. The Financial Regulator can, as part of its administrative sanctions regime, seek to mediate or take regulatory action in relation to a firm including an order to make refunds to a firm's customers where appropriate.

I have asked the FSO and the Financial Regulator to review their current co-operation arrangements to ensure that these work smoothly where a finding of the FSO in an individual case may have implications for a broader group of customers of a financial services firm. The Ombudsman and the Financial Regulator have responded in a joint submission to the Department that the Memorandum of Understanding is operating as intended and that co-operation between both offices is highly satisfactory and allows issues to evolve. They have also advised that where a pricing error occurs after the 1 July 2007 the provider is required under the Consumer Protection Code to speedily, efficiently and fairly correct such an error.

The Deputy may be aware that a High Court judgment in October 2007 confirmed that the Financial Services Ombudsman's power of direction, except in relation to a change in general practice, may only relate to an individual claimant and does not extend to payment of compensation for other consumers in relation to similar conduct of the financial service provider.

Legal advice received from the Office of the Attorney General highlighted difficulties in ensuring due process is afforded in introducing a retrospective element to FSO's decisions extending beyond individual claimants.

On the basis of this advice I do not propose to pursue this matter further.

Pension Provisions.

267. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Finance his proposals to assist former employees of a company (details supplied) in regard to the difficulties they have encountered with their pension fund; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33323/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Section 22 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2009 provides that I, as Minister for Finance may, after consultation with the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, make a Pensions Insolvency Payments Scheme (PIPS).

PIPS is a cost-neutral Exchequer scheme offering payments in cases where a defined benefit pension scheme is winding up in deficit and the sponsoring employer becomes insolvent — the “double insolvency” criterion. Within the constraint set by the statutory requirement that it be cost-neutral, PIPS will provide trustees with the opportunity to purchase pensions at a discounted rate as a special support for pensioners in the absence of a solvent employer.

Work on the scheme is well advanced and it is my intention to bring forward the necessary regulations giving effect to PIPS shortly. Once that has been done, it is open to the trustees of any pension scheme that meets the criteria to apply.

Departmental Expenditure.

268. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Finance the steps being taken to ensure the start up of infrastructure capital projects to a value of €6.5 billion in the year 2010; the preliminary work undertaken to date in 2009 and expected to be undertaken prior to the 31 December 2009; the projects concerned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33420/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Following on from my Supplementary Budget last April, every Department was allocated a capital envelope for the period 2009-2013. The aggregate allocation for 2010 amounts to €6.621 billion, or about 4.7% of GNP, which is a considerable commitment to capital investment in times of constrained resources. Each Department was also given approval to enter into contractual commitments amounting to €20 billion over the period up to the end of 2013. This financial framework, which is subject to normal budgetary review at each budget, will give Departments a basis to plan and progress those projects which make the greatest economic return, improve national competitiveness and protect and sustain employment. The relevant Departments are responsible for the management of capital investment within the limits of this overall investment framework.

Tax Code.

269. **Deputy Seán Fleming** asked the Minister for Finance the position regarding tax payable when a person donates land to a registered charity; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33425/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the taxation treatment applying to donations of land to a charity is as follows.

Section 611 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 provides relief from Capital Gains Tax (CGT) involving the donation of an asset by a taxpayer to a charity. The donation must be a bone fide donation and not a commercial transaction at arm's length. In such circumstances, the transaction is treated as giving rise to neither a gain nor a loss for CGT purposes.

Section 82 of the Stamp Duties Consolidation Act 1999 provides for relief from stamp duty on the conveyance, transfer or lease of land made, or agreed to be made, for charitable pur-

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poses to a body of persons established for charitable purposes only or to the trustees of a trust so established.

Section 76 of the Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) Consolidation Act 2003 provides that a gift which is taken for charitable purposes is exempt from CAT to the extent that it has been or will be applied for such purposes.

I am further advised by Revenue that income tax relief for donations to charities under Section 848A of the TCA 1997 only applies where the donation takes the form of money or designated securities; it does not apply to a donation of land.

270. **Deputy Seán Fleming** asked the Minister for Finance the position regarding farmers receiving VAT back on the cost of installing wind turbines on their farms; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33442/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the question of whether farmers are entitled to claim credit for, or a repayment of, VAT charged to them on the installation of wind turbines on their farms depends on whether or not the farmer is registered for VAT.

Farmers who are registered for VAT are accountable persons for VAT in respect of all their taxable activities, whether those activities consist solely of farming or both farming and other activities such as the generation of electricity for provision to the national grid. As accountable persons for VAT, they would be entitled to claim input credit for VAT charged on the installation of a wind turbine for use in their taxable activities.

In so far as farmers who are not registered for VAT are concerned, they are not in the normal course entitled to credit for, or repayment of, VAT incurred by them on their business inputs. However, farmers not registered for VAT are entitled to a flat-rate addition of 5.2% on supplies of livestock to a VAT registered person in the state subject to the farmer issuing a flat-rate invoice in the appropriate form. In addition, the Value-Added Tax (Refund of Tax) (No 25) Order, 1993 does provide for refunds to unregistered farmers for tax borne on the “construction, extension, alteration or reconstruction of any building or structure which is designed for use solely or mainly for the purposes of a farming business”. However, while the installation of a wind turbine may be the construction of a structure, such a structure is not “designed for use solely or mainly for the purposes of a farming business”. It is designed rather to generate electricity for wherever required. Consequently, the installation of wind turbines does not come within the scope of the refund order.

Tax Clearance Certificates.

271. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Finance when a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath who has applied for a tax clearance certificate will receive same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33447/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the named person (details supplied) was issued with a Tax Clearance Certificate on 16 September 2009 having brought his tax affairs up to date on 15 September 2009 when he filed his 2008 tax return.

Telecommunications Services.

272. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will respond to a query (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33464/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Following an EU procurement exercise conducted by my Department, a mobile phone framework agreement was established to provide non-commercial public sector bodies with a simple way to procure mobile voice and data services at competitive rates from a list of qualified vendors. This framework commenced in February 2008.

The framework agreement is intended to maximise volume discounts and provide for reductions in administrative and transaction costs for providers and public sector purchasers.

My Department ran a competition under the framework for its own mobile voice and data services in May 2008 and selected O2 as the most economically advantageous response. My own mobile phone service is included in this contract. The contract will be tendered again before the end of 2009.

I have been informed by the Office of Public Works that Minister Martin Mansergh's mobile phone contract is with Vodafone.

Departmental Staff.

273. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will respond to a query (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33465/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Currently 10 employees of the Department of Finance are exempt from paying income levy in accordance with the relevant provisions.

Tax Code.

274. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Finance further to Question No. 94 of 9 June 2009, if he will clarify if payments made prior to the change in the 7 April 2009 supplementary budget regarding the pension levy, the term exempt means that contributions made under the €15,000 threshold are eligible for refund; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33470/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I introduced the changes in the pension related deduction announced in the Supplementary Budget of 7 April 2009 to ameliorate the impact of the deduction on lower paid public servants. These changes, including the introduction of the €15,000 threshold, took effect from 1 May 2009 and were not backdated. Therefore, no exemption threshold would apply during the period from 1 March 2009, when the deduction first took effect, to 30 April 2009 and no refund would arise in respect of that period as a result of the changes in rates and bands.

Financial Services Regulation.

275. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to promote independent and impartial financial advice by banning commission for money managers in order to prevent product providers from offering commission in order to secure sales and banning advisers from recommending products that automatically pay commissions, as has been done by the Financial Services Authority in the UK; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33475/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): It is understood that the Financial Services Authority in the UK is currently engaged in a consultation process on the matters the Deputy refers to. As such, the outcome of this process is yet to be determined.

There are currently no plans to proscribe the use of commissions by financial intermediaries in Ireland as it is considered that the existing legislative protections in place for the consumer

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sufficiently empowers the Financial Regulator and the Financial Services Ombudsman to investigate and, if necessary, sanction any misbehaviour in relation to mis-selling of financial products or the provision of financial advice which does not serve the best interests of the customer.

The Financial Regulator Consumer Protection Code, which came into effect in August 2006, is a legally enforceable statutory code which is applicable to all entities which the Financial Regulator regulates.

Under the General Principles of the Consumer Protection Code (the Code), all regulated firms are required to: act honestly, fairly and professionally in the best interests of the customer; make full disclosure of all relevant material information, including all charges, in a way that seeks to inform the customer; and seek to avoid conflicts of interest.

The disclosure of sales remuneration in relation to certain life assurance products is required by the Life Assurance (Provision of Information) Regulations 2001. These Regulations cover life assurance products, personal pension plans and life assurance investment and savings products.

The sale of investment products is covered by the Regulations which transposed the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID) into Irish law. Under these Regulations firms are required to ensure that there is clear and prior disclosure to its clients detailing the existence, nature and amount of the commission.

Tax Code.

276. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Finance the reason the salmon hardship fund payments are subject to taxation as in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33477/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The position is that payments from the hardship fund have two identifiable component parts. One component part is taxable; the other is not. The part of the payment which relates to the 2006 licence fee is not liable to tax. I understand that when making payments Bord Iascaigh Mhara identified the amount of the payment relating to the 2006 licence fee so that this could be excluded from income tax returns.

The taxable component is that part of the payment related to catch. This part of the payment is based on the verifiable catch for each licence holder and the average net income per salmon for the 5 years 2001 to 2005 i.e. €23 per salmon. This element is an income replacement figure and is taxable on recipients as income of the year of receipt.

I am also advised that to facilitate recipients who wished to spread the taxable amount over three tax years, eligible applicants could opt under the scheme to receive their payment in one sum or alternatively to have it paid in equal amounts over a three-year period (2007 to 2009).

Consultancy Contracts.

277. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance further to Question No. 128 of 22 September 2009, the financial and budgetary implications of contracts concluded by the National Treasury Management Agency with companies (details supplied) in respect of advisory services; the expected cost of each of these contracts for 2009 and 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33478/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): As the Deputy will be aware, in the setting up of NAMA, the NTMA issued a number of tenders in May 2009 through the procurement website www.etenders.gov.ie to procure banking/financial advisory and legal advisors. Arthur

Cox was awarded the legal mandate and HSBC were awarded the banking\advisory mandate. In July 2009, the NTMA issued a tender to procure general banking advisors in relation to the whole financial system through the procurement website www.etenders.gov.ie and Rothschilds were awarded this mandate to 30 June 2010. All contracts were issued under my direction.

It is the policy of the NTMA not to publicly disclose the value of individual contracts awarded. However, for 2009, the costs in total are expected to be €1.3m and in 2010 the costs are expected to be of a similar amount.

Pension Provisions.

278. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance if he has received the report of a pension appeal conducted by the Department of Transport and Marine in respect of the impaired pension of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9; and if he will grant a pension uplift to them. [33495/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The appellant is a former employee of the Dublin Harbour Police under the Department of Transport. That Department submitted the papers on this appeal to my Department in August. A number of outstanding queries have been raised with the Department of Transport and on receipt of their response, I will determine this appeal without delay.

Tax Yield.

279. **Deputy Joe Behan** asked the Minister for Finance the number of members of the Judiciary who have opted to pay the public sector pension levy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33497/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009 does not apply to the Judiciary for constitutional reasons. I have no function in relation to the matter but the Revenue Commissioners have published the available information.

Financial Services Regulation.

280. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the rights of people with endowment mortgages who may face a shortfall on the amount of money promised at the outset by the originating institution; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33499/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): As the Deputy will be aware, an endowment mortgage is a mortgage where only the interest is paid to the lender during the life of the loan. Simultaneously, payments are made into a life insurance policy which is designed to cover the cost of repaying the principal loan amount by the end of the loan term. The majority of these policies are investment based and as a result they are exposed to risks that may deliver positive, negative or neutral returns over any given period. This element of risk makes it impossible to state with certainty what the final value of the policy will be at maturity. Forecasting future values means that assumptions of future returns are made.

The popularity of endowment mortgages was at the highest during the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the time, there were a number of advantages associated with these products, such as the availability of mortgage interest relief and tax relief. Another perceived advantage was the possibility that a surplus sum could accrue to the customer at the end of the loan term.

While a voluntary code did exist in Ireland in relation to the sale of endowment mortgages, there was no comprehensive statutory code in place in Ireland covering the sale of these prod-

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ucts at the time they were sold. When the risks associated with the product were highlighted in Ireland in the 1990s, specific provisions were incorporated into the Consumer Credit Act, 1995 which requires warnings to the effect that the proceeds of a policy may not be sufficient to repay a mortgage. Endowment mortgage savings plans must, under the provisions of the Consumer Credit Act 1995, be reviewed by the life company at least every five years to check if the plan is on track to repay the mortgage and the consumer has to be sent a statement on this at the five yearly intervals.

The sale of endowment mortgages is now covered by the provisions of the Financial Regulator's Consumer Protection Code, particularly in terms of knowing the consumer and the suitability of the recommended product. Borrowers that are of the opinion that they been mis-sold endowment mortgages, should, in the first instance make a formal complaint to their provider. If, having exercised the provider's formal complaints process, the consumer is still not satisfied, he or she can refer the matter to the Financial Services Ombudsman for consideration in accordance with his statutory remit.

Banking Sector Regulation.

281. **Deputy Edward O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Finance the public interest directors who have been appointed to banks (details supplied); the amount of salary paid to each of the directors to date; the expenses paid to each director to date; the mileage, subsistence and overnight expenses paid to each director to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33503/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I have an arms-length relationship with each of the institutions and salary and other expenses are matters for the individual institutions. As is the norm, individual director's fees will be outlined in the annual accounts of each of the institutions.

I can however comment on directors' fees in general. CIROC made a series of recommendations on executive remuneration including on directors' fees. On foot of these recommendations, the non-executive directors' fees of the covered institutions were reduced considerably.

Tax Collection.

282. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Finance when a tax refund will issue in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33507/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I have been advised by the Revenue Commissioners that they are in correspondence with the person concerning the matter and are awaiting proof from him that tax was being deducted from the relevant payments made to him in 2006 and 2007.

Question No. 283 withdrawn.

Employment Status.

284. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Finance the reason the Revenue Commissioners have changed the status of persons who carry out translation services from self employed non PAYE workers to PAYE workers in view of the uncertainty of workload and

the fact that each person is a subcontractor in their own right; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33512/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The position is that the question of whether an individual providing translation services — or any other services — is engaged under either a contract of service (i.e. an employee) or a contract for service (i.e. self-employed) is a question of fact and of general law. Regardless of how the parties to an engagement may describe themselves, all the relevant factors (including written, oral and implied details) that bear on the relationship between the parties must be examined, given their proper weight and a decision made on their overall effect.

To provide some clarity as to whether an individual is employed or self-employed, the Employment Status Group (set up under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness) published a *Code of Practice for determining Employment or Self-employment status of Individuals*. As the Deputy may be aware, under *Towards 2016 — The Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement*, a commitment was given to the Social Partners that the regulatory bodies (i.e. the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA)) would be active in the area of correctly establishing the status — employed or self-employed — of individuals. Arising from this, the *Code of Practice* was re-launched by the Social Partners in December 2007 and re-issued to all employers in early 2008.

In addition, I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that cases come to their attention wherein individuals have been incorrectly classified (either by the individuals or by the person engaging those individuals) as self-employed in relation to a particular engagement. If, on an examination of the facts and circumstances and having regard for the *Code of Practice* referred to above, Revenue find that individuals are, in fact, employees rather than self-employed contractors, Revenue will notify the person engaging those individuals to register for, and operate, the PAYE system on payments made to those individuals.

Depending on the facts and circumstances of a case, an individual may be a full time employee, a part-time employee, a temporary employee or a casual employee. The fact that individuals may not have continual work does not, of itself, make such individuals self-employed contractors.

Departmental Correspondence.

285. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Minister for Finance if he will confirm receipt of correspondence from an organisation (details supplied); if their application has been considered; if their application has been successful; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33533/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh): The Maritime Institute of Ireland wrote to me earlier this year in relation to its plans for Phase III of the works to the Mariner's Church. Enclosed with the correspondence was a copy of the proposal the Institute had submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach seeking additional funding to progress the project and allow the proposed Museum to open to the public.

Officials from the OPW had discussions with the Department of the Taoiseach and provided their technical assessment of the proposal. While satisfied as to the merit of the project, further official support can only be considered in the light of available resources.

Tax Code.

286. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Finance if there are plans to abolish tax individualisation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33553/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The position is that all tax policies are reviewed in the context of the annual budget and Finance Bill.

It should be noted that the issue of individualisation of the income tax bands was considered by the Commission on Taxation. The commission concluded that the current partly individualised system represents a balance between, on the one hand, acknowledging the choices families make in caring for children and, on the other, taking account of the need to encourage labour participation and accordingly recommended that no change be made to the current system.

Departmental Expenditure.

287. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Finance if a Book of Estimates will be published in advance of budget day 2010; if not, when this practice ceased; the reason for not publishing same as in previous years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33590/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Budget 2008 marked the introduction of a unified budget whereby all of the key announcements on both the spending and the revenue side of the budget are announced together on budget day.

The detailed expenditure allocations that had previously appeared in the *Abridged Estimates Volume* (AEV) were presented as Budget Estimates as part of the budget documentation. In advance of the budget, an indication of the pre-budget expenditure position was included as part of the *Pre-Budget Outlook* in October 2007. As the Government decided to introduce an early budget in October 2008 no *Pre-Budget Outlook* was released, although Budget Estimates were published as normal.

The Government will decide in the near future on the make-up of the budgetary and Estimates-related documentation in the run-up to the 2010 budget.

Tax Code.

288. **Deputy Michael D’Arcy** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to apply the 80% capital gains tax on windfall gains to lands compulsory purchase ordered by the National Roads Authority for motorway construction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33680/09]

289. **Deputy Michael D’Arcy** asked the Minister for Finance if the 80% capital gains tax on windfall gains will be applied to disturbance fees paid to landowners whose lands are compulsory purchase ordered by the National Roads Authority for motorway construction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33681/09]

290. **Deputy Michael D’Arcy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will apply the 80% capital gains tax on windfall gains to lands compulsory purchase ordered by the National Roads Authority for motorway construction; if he plans to introduce measures to compensate landowners for the substantial moneys they would lose as a result; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33682/09]

291. **Deputy Michael D’Arcy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will apply the 80% capital gains tax on windfall gains to lands which are rezoned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33683/09]

292. **Deputy Michael D'Arcy** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider exempting sites sold for residential use from the 80% capital gains tax on windfall gains; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33684/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 288 to 292, inclusive, together.

The proposed 80% windfall tax to which the Deputy refers is being considered as part of the NAMA legislation and it will be discussed on Committee Stage of the Bill. The analysis of the Commission on Taxation will help inform my consideration of the measure.

However, it is not customary for the Minister of Finance to comment on the specific details of tax changes prior to publication of the legislation.

Pension Provisions.

293. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Finance the steps he will take to deal with the actions of persons who, as alleged in paragraph 5.5.6 of part 10 of the Commission on Taxation report 2009, avoid the pensions contribution cap introduced in budget 2009 by arranging for their employer to make contributions in excess of these relevant limits; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33685/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Tax relief on employee contributions to occupational pension schemes is subject to age-related percentage limits and to an overall annual earnings cap. The earnings cap, originally set at an amount of €254,000, was indexed with effect from 2007, and for the 2008 tax year, stood at just over €275,000.

Changes were announced in Budget 2009 and included in Finance (No. 2) Act 2008 to improve the equity of the existing tax arrangements in the pensions area by significantly reducing the annual earnings cap for 2009 to €150,000.

The annual earnings cap and age-related percentage limits for pension contribution purposes referred to above do not apply to employer contributions to occupational pension schemes but only to employee contributions.

The Commission on Taxation Report makes the point that changes could be made to the terms of employment contracts, due to the reduction in the annual earnings cap, to provide for a switch from employee contributions to employer contributions. In this regard, I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that any attempts to circumvent the limits imposed on personal contributions to pension schemes in this way would fall foul of the rules governing salary sacrifice arrangements.

The Revenue's Commissioners' position on salary sacrifice generally, is that if an employee forgoes any remuneration by way of any arrangement, either by changing the existing terms or contract of employment or creating new terms or contract of employment, or indeed if there are no recorded terms and conditions in relation to the employment, the employee will remain taxable on their 'gross' income. Remuneration sacrificed is to be considered as an application of the income earned by an employee rather than an expense incurred by that individual's employer.

Therefore, any arrangement under which an employee waives an entitlement to remuneration or accepts a reduction in remuneration in return for a corresponding payment by the employer into a pension scheme is an application of the employee's income and is not acceptable to the Revenue Commissioners. While under such an arrangement the payment is ostensibly being made by the employer, it is in practice being made by the employee. This has always been Revenue's view and is reflected in paragraph 3.8 of Chapter 3 of the Revenue Pensions

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Manual. Section 118B of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 which came into effect on 31 January 2008, deals with the issue of salary sacrifice and confirms the Revenue Commissioners' view that such arrangements have always given rise to a tax charge. The section ensures that, with certain exceptions, the remuneration sacrificed is taxable in full and the employer must operate PAYE and PRSI on it.

Tax Code.

294. **Deputy Frank Feighan** asked the Minister for Finance when a grant will issue to persons (details supplied) under the rural renewal scheme who have gone through all inspection stages and have received certificate of reasonable cost and all paperwork is with the Revenue Commissioners in Sligo. [33724/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that owner occupier tax relief, if any, will be determined when all information requested from the person in question is received.

Information requested by Revenue on 14 September 2009, and discussed with the person in question during a telephone call on 17 September 2009, has not yet been received.

National Asset Management Agency.

295. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the extent of complex derivative products within the €77 billion being acquired; and the types of derivatives involved. [33731/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) is being established to purchase all land and development loans and certain associated exposures from participating institutions.

It is often the case in financial markets that loans would have certain derivative instruments attached to them. In relation to the €77 billion loan portfolio projected to transfer to NAMA, the NTMA has indicated that the estimated total notional value of these derivatives is €15 billion. These derivatives are typically interest rate swaps or equivalent instruments designed to hedge interest rate payments and the notional value refers to the underlying assets to which the derivatives are related. These derivatives are an integral part of the loan portfolio and are not additional to this amount.

It is important to note that this information is provisional in nature and final figures and further detailed statistics will not be available until a loan by loan assessment has been undertaken.

296. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the reason for the reduction in loans acquired from €90 billion to €77 billion; the banks within which the smaller acquisition was decided upon; and the reduction in each case. [33732/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): When I initially announced, on 7 April, the Government's intention to establish NAMA, I indicated that the potential maximum book value of loans for transfer to the agency was estimated to be in the region of €80 to €90 billion. Since then, it has repeatedly been made clear, including on my Department's website and the NAMA website, that this was an indicative figure and that further detailed work and extensive due diligence on the loans books would be needed before final figures could be announced.

Since April, a substantial amount of work and analysis has been undertaken by the interim NAMA. In light of this work, it is now expected that NAMA will purchase loans with a book value of approximately €77 billion from certain institutions. Again I would emphasise that the final figure will not be available until a loan by loan evaluation had been completed.

The current estimate of €77 billion takes account of the decision that a €5 million threshold should apply to loans on the books of the larger banks. The application of this €5 million threshold is expected to generate significant operational efficiencies for NAMA.

Financial Institutions Support Scheme.

297. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the premium which is proposed for credit unions to cover the cost of the Government guarantee of deposits up to €100,000; if he has developed an agreement for the future operation of the savings protection scheme; and if he has convened the working group on the credit union legislative framework. [33733/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The Government has given legal effect to the announcement of 20 September 2008 to extend the deposit guarantee scheme to credit union savers. This was done by the enacting of the Financial Services (Deposit Guarantee Scheme) Act 2009 and the European Communities (Deposit Guarantee Schemes) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 last June. This measure has had a very significant effect in providing reassurance to credit union members that their savings are secure.

The next step is for me, as Minister for Finance, to make an order under section 12(2) of the Financial Services (Deposit Guarantee Scheme) Act 2009 bringing section 4 of the Act, dealing with the amount to be held in the Deposit Protection Account, into operation for credit unions. The Department is considering this in consultation with the Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland and a decision will be taken as soon as possible.

Alongside my announcement of 20 September 2008, I indicated that it was intended that the guarantee which was being announced for credit institution savers would act as a backstop to an approved stabilisation scheme for credit unions. I believe that approved stabilisation arrangements are important to the continued stability of the credit union movement as they will act as the first port of call in the event of a credit union experiencing significant financial stress. My Department will, of course, continue to work with the Registrar and the representative bodies to support the achievement of this objective.

The legal framework governing the regulation of credit unions is provided by the Credit Union Act 1997. The Act has served credit unions well providing stability and legal certainty during a period of substantial growth and development of the movement. As a result of this development and changes in the financial environment generally, the need for some modernisation of the legislative and regulatory framework for credit unions has become evident over time. There is consensus among all stakeholders that the current legislative framework needs reform. While some important preparatory work has already been carried out in this regard there is, however, no clear consensus at this stage on the future shape of the reformed legislative framework for credit unions. I have asked the Chair of the Financial Regulator to initiate a review of credit unions which it is hoped will make an important contribution to identifying the appropriate way forward.

Tax Yield.

298. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by reducing the threshold for application of the minimum effective tax rate for those availing of specified tax reliefs from its current level of

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€500,000 to €250,000, €200,000 to €150,000, €125,000 to €100,000, €90,000 to €80,000 and €75,000; if he will estimate the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis at each of the thresholds above if the minimum effective tax rate was from its current 20% to 21%, 22%, 23%, 24%, 25%, 26%, 27%, 28% 29% and 30%. [33766/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): It is assumed that the Deputy is referring to the restriction of reliefs measure relating to higher income earners announced in budget 2006, which took effect on 1 January 2007.

It is estimated by the Revenue Commissioners that reducing the existing threshold of €250,000 by the stated amounts, assuming double the stated amounts as the appropriate marginal relief limit and applying the stated tax rates to both the existing and altered thresholds, would result in the following full year yields to the Exchequer.

These estimates are based on personal income tax data for 2007, the latest year for which the relevant information is available.

Existing and new tax rates%	Existing and new thresholds & marginal relief limits	Full year yield
	€	€m
20	250,000 – 500,000	No change
	200,000 – 400,000	2.8
	150,000 – 300,000	6.3
	125,000 – 250,000	8.7
	100,000 – 200,000	11.2
	90,000 – 180,000	12.3
	80,000 – 160,000	13.3
	75,000 – 150,000	13.8
21	250,000 – 500,000	2.7
	200,000 – 400,000	5.8
	150,000 – 300,000	9.7
	125,000 – 250,000	12.4
	100,000 – 200,000	15.3
	90,000 – 180,000	16.7
	80,000 – 160,000	17.9
	75,000 – 150,000	18.5
22	250,000 – 500,000	5.6
	200,000 – 400,000	9.0
	150,000 – 300,000	13.3
	125,000 – 250,000	16.4
	100,000 – 200,000	19.8
	90,000 – 180,000	21.4
	80,000 – 160,000	22.8
	75,000 – 150,000	23.6
23	250,000 – 500,000	8.7
	200,000 – 400,000	12.4
	150,000 – 300,000	17.2

Existing and new tax rates%	Existing and new thresholds & marginal relief limits	Full year yield
	€	€m
	125,000 – 250,000	20.7
	100,000 – 200,000	24.6
	90,000 – 180,000	26.4
	80,000 – 160,000	28.1
	75,000 – 150,000	29.0
24	250,000 – 500,000	12.0
	200,000 – 400,000	16.2
	150,000 – 300,000	21.5
	125,000 – 250,000	25.3
	100,000 – 200,000	29.8
	90,000 – 180,000	31.9
	80,000 – 160,000	33.9
	75,000 – 150,000	34.9
25	250,000 – 500,000	15.5
	200,000 – 400,000	20.0
	150,000 – 300,000	25.9
	125,000 – 250,000	30.3
	100,000 – 200,000	35.3
	90,000 – 180,000	37.7
	80,000 – 160,000	39.9
	75,000 – 150,000	41.1
26	250,000 – 500,000	19.2
	200,000 – 400,000	24.2
	150,000 – 300,000	30.7
	125,000 – 250,000	35.5
	100,000 – 200,000	41.1
	90,000 – 180,000	43.9
	80,000 – 160,000	46.5
	75,000 – 150,000	47.8
27	250,000 – 500,000	23.1
	200,000 – 400,000	28.6
	150,000 – 300,000	35.8
	125,000 – 250,000	41.1
	100,000 – 200,000	47.4
	90,000 – 180,000	50.4
	80,000 – 160,000	53.4
	75,000 – 150,000	54.9
28	250,000 – 500,000	27.1
	200,000 – 400,000	33.2
	150,000 – 300,000	41.2
	125,000 – 250,000	47.0

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Existing and new tax rates%	Existing and new thresholds & marginal relief limits	Full year yield
	€	€m
	100,000 – 200,000	54.2
	90,000 – 180,000	57.4
	80,000 – 160,000	60.8
	75,000 – 150,000	62.5
29	250,000 – 500,000	31.5
	200,000 – 400,000	38.1
	150,000 – 300,000	46.9
	125,000 – 250,000	53.4
	100,000 – 200,000	61.3
	90,000 – 180,000	64.9
	80,000 – 160,000	68.7
	75,000 – 150,000	70.7
30	250,000 – 500,000	36.1
	200,000 – 400,000	43.4
	150,000 – 300,000	53.1
	125,000 – 250,000	60.3
	100,000 – 200,000	69.0
	90,000 – 180,000	73.0
	80,000 – 160,000	77.3
	75,000 – 150,000	79.6

These figures are downward revisions of figures previously provided, which is due to new historical information becoming available in the interim.

299. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by subjecting all social welfare payments to taxation in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation report 2009. [33770/09]

300. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by abolishing the remittance basis of taxation for income tax and capital gains tax in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation report 2009. [33771/09]

301. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by abolishing the rule that allows an individual, who makes a gift of property to the State, to be regarded as neither resident nor ordinarily resident here, notwithstanding being present here for significant periods in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation report 2009. [33772/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 299 to 301, inclusive, together.

I am informed that, where available, costings of the various recommendations made by the Commission have been provided in its report. The estimates are generally to be found adjacent

to the specific recommendation concerned. In the case of tax expenditures they are presented in a tabular form at the beginning of each relevant section of Part 5 of the report. I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that they provided extensive technical assistance and support to the Commission in the preparation of these costings. In a number of cases no costing has been provided because there was no data available upon which a reasonable estimate could be based. I am similarly not in a position to provide the Deputy with those costs.

302. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by introducing a property tax on land zoned for development of €1,000 per acre, per annum in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation report 2009. [33773/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed that, where available, costings of the various recommendations made by the Commission have been provided in its report. The estimates are generally to be found adjacent to the specific recommendation concerned. In the case of tax expenditures they are presented in a tabular form at the beginning of each relevant section of Part 6 of the report. I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that they provided extensive technical assistance and support to the Commission in the preparation of these costings. In a number of cases no costing has been provided because there was no data available upon which a reasonable estimate could be based. I am similarly not in a position to provide the Deputy with those costs.

303. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the Exchequer cost on a 2010 and full year basis of permitting persons who are made unemployed to offset the retraining costs they incur on certified training courses against income for the previous six years in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation report 2009. [33774/09]

304. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by discontinuing the partial reintroduction of the remittance basis in the Finance (No. 2) Act 2008 in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation report 2009. [33775/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 303 and 304 together.

I am informed that, where available, costings of the various recommendations made by the Commission have been provided in its report. The estimates are generally to be found adjacent to the specific recommendation concerned. In the case of tax expenditures they are presented in a tabular form at the beginning of each relevant section of Part 7 of the report. I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that they provided extensive technical assistance and support to the Commission in the preparation of these costings. In a number of cases no costing has been provided because there was no data available upon which a reasonable estimate could be based. I am similarly not in a position to provide the Deputy with those costs.

Questions Nos. 305 to 337, inclusive, answered with Question No. 242.

Financial Services Regulation.

338. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Finance if, during the period 1992/1993 when mortgage interest rates were increasing rapidly, pressure was put on financial institutions to enter into an agreement to maintain interest rates and increase the length of the mortgage instead; if so, if there is a copy of such an agreement in place; his views on whether this was

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an appropriate course of action; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that banks, when questioned by customers as to the reason their mortgages have not reached full-term, are then informing of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33812/09]

339. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether, during the period 1992-1993 when mortgage interest rates were increasing rapidly, when apparently financial institutions maintained interest rates and increased the length of the mortgage instead, this was a fair practise and was it acceptable for the financial institutions to simply place adverts in national newspapers and not write to individual mortgage holders; if a financial institution can change the terms of a mortgage agreement without entering into agreement with their customers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33813/09]

340. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Finance his views on whether, during the period 1992/1993 when mortgage interest rates were increasing rapidly, when financial institutions maintained interest rates and increased the length of the mortgage instead, it is fair for the banks to seek additional payments in respect of interest rate increases apparently not passed on to customers in this time of economic hardship in view of the fact that certain institutions have been slow to pass on interest rate reductions at various stages; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33814/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 338, 339 and 340 together. My Department has been informed by the Central Bank which was responsible for the prudential regulation of mortgage lending institutions during the period referred to in the Deputy's questions that it is not aware of any such agreements and in addition no guidance or directions were issued by the Central Bank in relation to this matter at that time.

The Deputy may wish to note that the terms and conditions applying to mortgage agreements can vary from institution to institution including in relation to the manner in which increases in mortgage interest rates are communicated to customers and each customer is bound by the conditions that they sign up to.

In relation to varying the terms of a mortgage agreement, it should be noted that it would be an option available to a financial institution, but only in agreement with its customer, to extend the term of a mortgage should a borrower experiencing financial stress wish to extend the term of the loan to maintain the existing level of monthly repayments.

Tax Collection.

341. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Finance if the Revenue Commissioners are conducting an investigation at any of the meat plants in respect of sheep imports and the payment of the flat rate vat refund on sheep; the names of the meat plants involved; the investigations concerned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33824/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that whilst there is no national project currently underway, local compliance interventions may be carried out. However, the details of any such interventions would not be disclosed for operational and confidentiality reasons. If the Deputy has details on a case of particular concern, he may contact the Revenue Commissioners.

Question No. 342 withdrawn.

Departmental Properties.

343. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he will respond to a query regarding property (details supplied) in County Cork which may be held by his Department under the State Property Act 1954. [33857/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Finance (Deputy Martin Mansergh): The Commissioners of Public Works, on behalf of the Department of Finance, are responsible for management of property under Sections 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the State Property Act; as a result of companies being dissolved, with voluntarily or as a result of being struck off the Companies Register, the assets of the company become vested in the Minister for Finance. The Minister for Finance can, if appropriate, waive his interest in property, under Section 28 of the Act.

The residents of Calderwood Circle, Donnybrook, Douglas, Co. Cork may, in this instance, make an application to the Minister to waive his interest. This Office will then acknowledge receipt of the application and refer the matter to the Chief State Solicitor's Office for advice. The Chief State Solicitor's Office will correspond with the applicant's solicitor, and will then advise if the Minister for Finance should waive his interest or not.

Financial Services Regulation.

344. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Finance the mortgage default rate and the foreclosure rate here since 2000; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33858/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The data which the Deputy has requested is not available as far back as 2000. Data on mortgage defaults is not compiled by the Financial Regulator on a routine basis. However, in December 2008, the Financial Regulator published the findings of an examination of procedures for handling arrears and repossessions across credit institutions and other mortgage lenders. This examination showed that at end June 2008, 13,931 mortgage accounts (1.44% of residential accounts at end June 2008) were over 3 months in arrears, compared with end December 2006 when there were 11,252 accounts over 3 months in arrears (1.21% of residential accounts at end 2006).

In relation to the foreclosure rate the Courts Service only hold data on the number of court repossession orders granted. Orders for repossession do not, of course, necessarily equate with actual repossessions. It is up to the person or company which obtained the order for repossession to pursue its execution. Notwithstanding this, the aforementioned December 2008 report of the Financial Regulator found that between January 2005 and June 2008 credit institutions repossessed 112 residential properties. Other mortgage lenders repossessed 16 properties in that time period. In total, there were 128 repossessions by court order for the period January 2005 to June 2008 out of a total of almost 1 million mortgage accounts reported to be held at end June 2008.

The Irish Bankers Federation (IBF) has confirmed that, with respect to its members, 96 repossessions took place in 2008, which represents 0.01% of all mortgages. In the first 6 months of 2009 70 repossessions have taken place.

Tax Collection.

345. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Finance the tax paid by a person (details supplied) in County Kildare in each of the past three years; if the person is entitled to any tax rebate for the stated periods; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33869/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I have been advised by the Revenue Commissioners that they have no record of tax payments by the person concerned for the past three

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years. Tax has been paid by the person during the current year, 2009, and they are writing to the person concerned in relation to the matter.

Financial Institutions Support Scheme.

346. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Finance if he will elaborate on his recent comments in relation to commercial property yields; the information which allowed him to definitively say that property yields have been pushed up; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33871/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The current position of property yields was based on an assessment of information indices published by organisations such as IPD (Independent Property Database) and JLL (Jones Lang LaSalle). Tables setting out details on property yields were included in the supplementary documentation circulated to Deputies at the beginning of the Second Stage debate on the NAMA Bill. The figures show that yields are moving towards being 2% higher than their long term averages, and more in some cases. While this is above the long term average, it is obviously considerably higher than yield figures at the peak of the market, which were at an all time low.

Consultancy Contracts.

347. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33901/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The following table sets out the consultancy firms commissioned by my Department during 2008, the work completed by them and the total cost of such work to date.

Name of Firm	Purpose of the Contract	Total Cost
		€
Arthur Cox	Legal Advice in respect of the Bank Guarantee Scheme	3,882,000
Hay Group Ireland, Lr. Mount Street, Dublin 2	Job evaluation of senior posts in the public sector for the Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector	114,000
MRPA Kinman Communications	Provision of Publicity Services for NDP/CSF to support delivery of NDP Communications Strategy particularly at local level	39,000
Baseline Creative Services Ltd	Development of NDP 2007-2013 identity guidelines as agreed under the Government-approved Communications Strategy for the National Development Plan 2007-2013	13,000
IPA — Institute of Public Administration	Work in relation to the review of the capacity of the Department of Finance	51,000
Ernst & Young	Study on the economic and budgetary implications of a CCCTB	194,000

In addition to these consultancy related items, the following reports were also commissioned during 2008: Mr. Maurice O'Connell (former Governor Central Bank) was commissioned to write a review of the National Pensions Reserve Fund (NPRF) in 2008. There were no costs associated with the report.

The Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes was announced by the Government in November 2008 and commenced its work in December 2008. The costs incurred by the Group in the preparation of its report, which was published in July this year, amount to €42,148.

Financial Institutions Support Scheme.

348. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the extent of State capital injections to date into Anglo Irish Bank since it was nationalised; the level of further capital injections expected in 2009 and 2010; if he expects the State to see any return on this capital injection; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33913/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): As per the Government announcement of 29 May last, €4 billion in capital has been provided to Anglo, in three tranches; €3 billion on 29 June, €827 million on 6 August following completion of the bank's debt buy back exercise, and the remainder, €173 million, on 25 September.

This capital was provided to Anglo to protect the economy from the wider losses that would occur in the event of the failure of the bank, to protect the €64bn of deposits in the bank and to prevent the bank becoming a systemic threat to the financial system. If a profit is generated by Anglo, this would be retained initially to reinforce Anglo's capital position rather than paying a dividend. As part of the terms of the capital provision, Anglo will prepare a restructuring plan which will examine all options for the future of the bank, and which will address the issue of compensatory measures for the capital provision.

Any possible further capital requirement by Anglo will be determined by the extent of impairment on the bank's loan book and by the precise terms of the expected transfer of €28 billion of Anglo loans to NAMA. Work related to both of these aspects is currently ongoing. When this work is complete, I will be in a position to make an estimate of Anglo's future capital needs and any capacity there is to generate capital internally.

The Government remains committed to providing institutions participating in NAMA, which includes Anglo, with an appropriate level of capital to continue to meet their requirements. Of course this would be done in a manner that is consistent with EU State aid rules and the credit needs of the economy.

349. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of subordinated debt remaining on the books of Anglo Irish Bank, broken down by category and seniority; the level of subordinated debt to which the counterparty is a current or former member of the Board of Directors or senior management team; the reason he decided to extend the State guarantee of existing subordinated debt; if he expects any of the holders of existing subordinated debt to share in the financial pain to be felt by taxpayers; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33914/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Anglo Irish Bank currently has €2.35 billion of subordinated debt, made up of €600 million in Tier 1 debt, €43 million in Upper Tier 2 debt, and €1.7 billion in Lower Tier 2 debt.

As the Deputy will be aware, Anglo recently undertook a debt buy back exercise, which crystallised losses for bondholders, who received payments significantly less than the face value of the bonds they held, and which generated a €1.6 billion profit for the bank. The undertaking of a future liability management exercise is a matter for consideration in the first instance by the Board of the bank on a commercial basis, taking into account the overall funding and capital implications of such an exercise for the bank.

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Anglo's subordinated debt is publicly traded and is dealt through clearing house systems. As an issuer, Anglo does not have access to the records of those clearing systems, and does not have a means of establishing the underlying ownership of its subordinated bonds at any given time. Unlike in the case of shares, the holders of listed debt instruments are not subject under company law to a disclosure regime.

Anglo is aware that its former chairman, Sean Fitzpatrick, purchased a beneficial interest in certain debt instruments of the Bank during 2008, at which time the price of the debt instruments involved was higher than that paid under the bank's recent debt buy back exercise. A specific disclosure on this holding was made in note 50 of Anglo's annual accounts for 30 September 2008.

Dated subordinated debt issued on or after the commencement date of the new draft Eligible Liabilities Guarantee (ELG) Scheme will not be guaranteed either under the ELG Scheme or under the current Credit Institutions Financial Support (CIFS) Scheme. However, dated subordinated debt already guaranteed under the CIFS Scheme will remain guaranteed under the CIFS Scheme due to the irrevocable nature of the CIFS guarantee.

350. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance if he can confirm reports that he has advised the EU Commission that there was no prospect of recovering the €4 billion injected into Anglo Irish Bank; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33915/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The Government decided to provide €4bn in capital to Anglo to protect the economy from the wider losses that would occur in the event of a failure of the bank, to protect the €64bn of customer and interbank deposits in the bank, and to prevent Anglo becoming a systemic threat to the financial system.

As part of the process of obtaining EU approval for the capital injection to Anglo, the European Commission was advised that it was not currently envisaged that there would be a dividend paid on the capital provided. If a profit is generated by Anglo, this would be retained initially to reinforce Anglo's capital position rather than paying a dividend, and the Commission accepted this point.

As part of the terms of the capital provision, Anglo will prepare a restructuring plan which will examine all options for the future of the bank, and which will address the issue of compensatory measures for the capital provision.

The Board of Anglo is currently progressing the development of this restructuring plan, which will be submitted to the European Commission for approval before end-November.

Commercial Property Yields.

351. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Finance his views on the most recent evidence of trends in yields on commercial property here; his further views on the refusal of some property owners to leave properties vacant rather than negotiating rent downwards, thus undermining their yield; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33916/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): As Minister for Finance, I have no function in relation to rental contracts on private commercial property. However, as I said during the Second Stage debate on the National Asset Management Agency Bill 2009, yields are now above their long term average, which suggests that values are bottoming out. I also provided statistical tables in the published supplementary documentation which demonstrates that the gap between yields and interest rates is much higher than at any time since the mid 1990s.

Tax Code.

352. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Finance if he will introduce a VAT refund on micro wind turbines; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33936/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I would point out that any proposed changes in VAT must be considered in the context of EU law, with which Irish VAT law must comply. There is no provision in European VAT law that would allow the application of a reduced VAT rate, or an exemption from VAT, on supplies of goods or services based on their environmental impact per se. While Member States can retain the zero rating provisions which they had in existence on 1 January 1991, they cannot introduce any new ones. Therefore, it is not possible for Ireland to apply a zero rate to micro wind turbines.

The supply of certain environmental products, such as insulation materials, wind turbine equipment, wood pellet boilers and solar panels, are chargeable at the standard VAT rate which in Ireland is 21.5%. However, the reduced VAT rate of 13.5% may be applied to such products where they are provided under a single supply and install contract where the VAT exclusive cost of the goods does not exceed two-thirds of the total VAT exclusive charge to the customer.

The Programme for Government contains a commitment to examine the current VAT classifications with a view to reducing the rate of VAT applied to certain environmental goods and services from the standard VAT rate to the reduced VAT rate of 13.5%. While the scope for reduced rates is limited, the Finance Act 2008 provided for the VAT rate applicable on the supply of miscanthus rhizomes, seeds, bulbs, roots and similar goods used for the agricultural production of bio-fuels being reduced from 21% to 13.5%. This and other measures under the Programme for Government clearly demonstrate the Government's commitment to addressing the environmental challenges which we face.

I would draw to your attention that the EU Commission recently undertook a study of the possibility of using reduced VAT rates as a tool to support the climate change agenda. Ireland expressed support for such a study. However, at a recent Council of Finance Ministers meeting, the Ministers noted that reduced VAT rates as a tool for achieving environmental policy objectives are relevant only to a certain extent.

Departmental Staff.

353. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Finance the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33952/09]

354. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Finance the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33967/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 353 and 354 together.

There is no direct cost to my Department arising from the payment of pensions and lump sums to retiring civil servants as the cost of such benefits are met from the Vote for Superannuation and Retired Allowances. However the lump sum costs arising in respect of my Department and bodies under its aegis are as set out in the following table.

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In addition to the recently announced Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) there are a number of other arrangements which make provision for retirement earlier than normal pension age in certain circumstances. These are:

- CNER Arrangements for cost-neutral early retirement which allows staff who are within ten years of their normal pension age to apply for early retirement with immediate payment of their superannuation benefits. The benefits are actuarially reduced to ensure that the early payment is cost-neutral to the Exchequer.
- Retirement before normal pension age with immediate payment of superannuation benefits may be permitted on medical grounds.
- Superannuation benefits may also be paid to a Civil Servant before normal pension age as a consequence of the abolition of his or her post or removal from office to facilitate improvements in the organisation of the Department by which greater efficiency and economy can be affected.

Year	Retirements	Cost of Lump sums	Resigned	Cost	Contract terminated	Cost
2006	4	466,299	6	0	0	0
2007	3	731,672	9	0	0	0
2008	4	298,764	3	0	0	0
2009 to date	11	168,985	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	22	1,665,720	40	0	0	0

Bodies under the aegis of the Department

Commission on Public Service Appointments

Year	Retirements	Lump Sum Cost	Resigned	Cost	Contract terminated	Cost
2006			0	0	0	0
2007			0	0	0	0
2008			0	0	0	0
2009	1	€10,535.97	0	0	0	0

State Laboratory

Year	Retirements	Lump Sum Cost	Resignations	Cost	Contracts terminated	Cost
		€				0
2006	1	73,675.63				0
2007	1	107,905.87				0
2008	0	0	1	0		0
2009	1	65,441.49				0
TOTAL	3	247,022.99	Nil	0		0

Public Appointments Service

Year	Retirements	Lump Sum Cost	Resigned	Cost	Contract terminated	Cost
2006	0		5	0	0	0
2007	2	53,288.91	2	0	0	0
2008	0		3	0	0	0
2009	0		1	0	0	0
TOTAL	2	53,288.91	11	0	0	0

Revenue Commissioners

Year	Retirements	Lump Sum Cost	Resigned	Cost	Contract terminated	Cost
2006	25	2,732,777	51	0	2	0
2007	39	3,498,623	80	0	4	0
2008	31	2,634,770	48	0	4	0
2009	147	2179738	6	0	1	0
TOTAL	242	11,045,908	185	0	11	0

At the time of reply details were unavailable for a small number of bodies under the remit of the Department. Details will be forwarded directly to the Deputy by the bodies concerned as they become available.

National Asset Management Agency.

355. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [33979/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Firstly, I should clarify that it is not the case that borrowers whose loans are transferred to NAMA will in some way benefit from the transfer or have improved terms and conditions. It is important to note that the establishment of NAMA is in no way intended to protect or bailout borrowers. The amount a borrower owes will not change because of the transfer of a loan to NAMA. The NAMA Bill provides the Agency with a wide range of powers it needs to pursue borrowers and enforce security. The Agency will have a statutory duty to maximise the return on the loans transferred in the interest of taxpayers and will be expected to use all the powers available to it to achieve this objective.

It is intended a minimum threshold of €5m will apply to certain loans eligible for transfer to NAMA. It is proposed currently that this limitation will apply only to certain of the larger institutions that have indicated they will apply to be designated as participating institutions. The application of this €5m threshold is expected to generate significant efficiencies for NAMA while ensuring the goal of cleansing the balance sheets of participating institutions is achieved. Loans below the €5 million threshold will continue to be managed in the normal manner by the institutions concerned.

Departmental Staff.

356. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated

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in the civil service or relevant state agency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34328/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The information requested by the Deputy is being collated and will be forwarded to him later this week.

Departmental Agencies.

357. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance if he sanctioned the payment of a pension top up or discretionary payment to a person (details supplied) on their retirement or resignation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34329/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): As the Deputy is aware, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment approved a severance package for the person concerned which was recommended to my Department. My Department gave its consent on condition that the case was exceptional and that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment was satisfied that the terms were appropriate in the circumstances.

Tax Code.

358. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance if a taxi provided by an employer (details supplied) to bring employees to work when no public transport is available constitutes a benefit in kind; if it is subject to income tax, PRSI and income levies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34330/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): In general the provision of any benefit is subject to income tax in accordance with the provisions of section 118 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

Benefits provided by an employer including payment of taxi fares for non-business journeys (e.g. travel to and from work) constitutes a taxable benefit and the cost of the taxi paid by the employer is subject to PAYE/PRSI.

However, PAYE/PRSI need not be applied to the benefit arising from the provision of taxi transport, on an irregular basis, to an employee where the employee is required to work early (before public transport commences) or late (after 10.00pm) by the employer, and the provision of the taxi transport is provided to ensure the safety of the employee. In all other circumstances, PAYE /PRSI must be applied to such outlays unless the travel is in the nature of business travel.

Departmental Expenditure.

359. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance his views on public bodies using public time and resources to lobby against recommendations in the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programme and Commission on Taxation 2009 reports; if he plans to issue a circular on same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34331/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes was established to make recommendations for savings on public expenditure and public service numbers with a view to restoring sustainability to the public finances. In the context of the 2010 Estimates process, Government Departments have been asked by my Department to identify options for making the necessary expenditure savings, taking into account the Special Group's proposals and any additional or alternative options of their own. However, decisions on all such options will be taken for the Government.

Similarly, the Commission on Taxation has prepared a Report setting out its recommendations for structural reforms in the taxation system, and the implementation of these recommendations will be a matter for Government to consider in the context of the annual budgetary process.

As regards the role of State bodies in this overall process, relevant bodies would be expected to contribute their views and analysis to inform the consideration of options by Departments, under whose aegis they operate, and in turn by the Government. More generally, State bodies are subject to oversight by the relevant Government Departments as regards their activities and expenditure, and are accountable to Dáil Éireann. Any specific queries or concerns about the use of public funds by particular public bodies would be a matter for the relevant Government Department to deal with in the first instance. Consequently, I have no plans for a circular at this stage although I take the point the Deputy is making.

Departmental Staff.

360. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34342/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): There are specific provisions within the Civil Service Superannuation Acts for added years in the following circumstances:

- Retirement before normal pension age with immediate payment of superannuation benefits may be permitted on medical grounds.
- Superannuation benefits may also be paid to a Civil Servant before normal pension age as a consequence of the abolition of his or her post or removal from office to facilitate improvements in the organisation of the Department by which greater efficiency and economy can be affected.
- Completion of term of office as TLAC appointee — Govt Decision S25189

Under the above arrangements the following number of staff retired from my Department in 2007, 2008 and 2009. As the numbers involved are so small any further breakdown by grade as requested would not be appropriate

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Year	2007	2008	2009
No. of cases	1	6	0
Circumstances	Ill Health	4 Ill Health 1 TLAC 1 Abolition of post	

Retirement earlier than normal pension age may also occur in the following circumstances. There are no top up provisions in these cases:

- Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER).

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- Arrangements for cost-neutral early retirement which allows staff who are within ten years of their normal pension age to apply for early retirement with immediate payment of their superannuation benefits. The benefits are actuarially reduced to ensure that the early payment is cost-neutral to the Exchequer.

Revenue Commissioners

I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the statistics requested by the Deputy with regard to the Office of the Revenue Commissioners are contained in the following table.

Year	2007	2008	2009
No. of cases	15	12	16
Circumstances	Ill-Health	11 Ill-Health, 1 TLAC	15 Ill-Health, 1 other (added years service awarded to officer seconded to international body)

Valuation Office

Year	2007	2008	2009
No. of cases	0	1	2
Circumstances		Ill-Health,	Ill-Health

At the time of reply details were unavailable for a small number of bodies under the remit of the Department. Details will be forwarded to the Deputy directly by the bodies concerned.

361. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34357/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): There have been no dismissals of staff in my Department in the period 2004 to date in 2009.

Tax Yield.

362. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance if a study has been undertaken to assess the return to the Exchequer if a wealth tax was introduced here; and if such a study has not been completed, if he will do so. [34430/09]

363. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will make a statement on the amount an annual 1% wealth tax on assets worth more than €1 million would return to the Exchequer in the course of a year. [34431/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 362 and 363 together.

I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that as they have no statistical basis for compiling estimates in relation to a potential wealth tax, it is not possible to provide the information requested by the Deputy.

I have also been informed that no general research has been carried out recently by either the Department of Finance or the Revenue Commissioners regarding the extent and breakdown of wealth as opposed to income. I have no immediate plans to carry out such a study. However, it should be noted that all of an individual's assets and liabilities are declared in a number of specific circumstances — for example:

- after the death of an individual, on an Inland Revenue Affidavit, which is a document that is required to be delivered to the Revenue Commissioners and certified by them in order to obtain a Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration; or
- if an individual is required to submit a Statement of Affairs in the context of an investigation by the Revenue Commissioners.

In addition, an individual is asked to list chargeable assets acquired and disposed of during a year on their annual tax return. Asset values increase and decrease over time and in the context of recent economic circumstances, they may have declined considerably in many cases. Thus, if the value of an asset or of an individual's wealth is measured at a particular time there is no guarantee that the asset value or the individual's wealth will remain at that level or increase from that point.

Capital Gains Tax (CGT) and Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) are, in effect, taxes on wealth, in that they are levied on an individual or company when they dispose of an asset (CGT) or acquire an asset through gift or inheritance (CAT). The rate of both these taxes was increased to 25% in the last Budget and Finance Act. All taxes and potential taxation measures are constantly reviewed in the context of the Budget and Finance Bill.

364. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the financial impact on the Exchequer of the abolishment of the 2% income levy on persons earning up to €75,036. [34433/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the cost to the Exchequer arising from abolition of the 2% income levy on persons earning up to €75,036 would be €975 million in a full year. The figure is an estimate from the Revenue tax-forecasting model using actual data for the year 2007 adjusted as necessary for income and employment trends for the year 2010. It is therefore provisional and likely to be revised.

365. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the amount that would be raised by introducing a third tax rate of 48% on income earned in excess of €100,000. [34435/09]

366. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the amount that would be raised by introducing a third tax rate of 50% on income earned in excess of €100,000. [34436/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 365 and 366 together.

It is assumed that the threshold for the proposed new tax bands mentioned by the Deputy would not alter the existing standard rate band structure applying to single and widowed persons, to lone parents and married couples.

I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the estimated full year yield to the Exchequer, estimated by reference to 2010 incomes, of the introduction of each of these 48% and 50% rate bands would be of the order of €355 million and €455 million respectively. Given the current band structures, major issues would need to be resolved as to how in practice such new rates could be integrated into the current system and how this would affect the relative

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position of different types of income earners. These figures are provisional and likely to be revised.

Departmental Expenditure.

367. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the amount paid out by the Exchequer in 2008 in pension tax reliefs. [34437/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): Data for the tax year 2008 on which to provide an adequate response to the Deputy's question is not yet available. For example, the tax returns incorporating 2008 claims for tax relief on pension contributions to personal pension plans such as RACs and PRSAs are not due to be returned by taxpayers until the end of this month. The following table provides a breakdown of the estimated cost of tax and PRSI reliefs for private pension provision for 2007, the latest year for which the most up-to-date data is available. The figures represent an update of the 2006 cost estimates set out in table 7.2 of the Green Paper on Pensions published in the Autumn of 2007.

Estimate of the cost of tax and PRSI reliefs for private pension provision 2007.

	Estimated costs
	€ million
Employees' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	590
Employers' Contributions to approved Superannuation Schemes	150
Estimated cost of exemption of employers' contributions from employee BIK	540
Exemption of investment income and gains of approved Superannuation Funds	900
Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs)	420
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs)	65
Estimated cost of tax relief on "tax-free" lump sum payments	130
Estimated cost of PRSI and Health Levy relief on employee and employer contributions	240
Gross cost of tax relief	3,035
Estimated tax yield from payment of pension benefits	410
Net cost of tax relief	2,625

Tax Code.

368. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the amount that would be saved if all discretionary tax reliefs were standardised. [34438/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the deductions and reliefs which are allowable for tax at an individual's marginal rate of income tax and for which estimates of cost can be provided are set out below together with estimated costs for the year 2006, the most recent year for which the necessary detailed information is available. If relief for these deductions and reliefs was confined to the standard rate of income tax the saving to the Exchequer could be of the order of €1,100 million.

This estimate does not take into account any possible behavioural change on the part of taxpayers as a consequence of such a change or the economic effect of such a change. This applies in particular to the BES, Film Relief and Capital Allowances regime. The standard rating of employee pension reliefs would also have an impact on workers' take home pay.

Tax Relief Provision	2006 Cost
	€m
Person Taking Care of Incapacitated Taxpayer	2.8
Health Expenses*	167.2
Contributions Under Permanent Health Benefit Schemes, after Deduction of Tax on Benefits Received	3.1
Employees' Contributions To Approved Superannuation Schemes	543.3
Retirement Annuity Premiums	435.9
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts	56.4
Interest paid relating to borrowings for purposes such as acquiring an interest in a company or partnership or to pay death duties.	31.1
Expenses Allowable to Employees under Schedule E	71.2
Donations to Approved Bodies	49.5
Donations to Sports Bodies.	0.3
Retirement Relief for certain Sports Persons.	0.2
Revenue Job Assist allowance	0.3
Allowance for seafarers	0.3
Investment in Corporate Trades (BES)	21.4
Investment in Seed Capital	1.2
Stock Relief	2.0
Relief for expenditure on significant buildings and gardens	6.2
Donation of Heritage items	5.7
Capital Allowances (Income Tax only)	796.8
Rented Residential Relief — Section 23	252.4
Investment in Films	36.4
Total	2,483.7

*For 2009, Health Expenses Relief has already been standard rated, with the exception of nursing home expenses. The majority of the saving in relation to this item will accrue to the Exchequer from 2010.

369. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the impact on the Exchequer of the withdrawal of the tax on insurance policies. [34439/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): At present the taxation of insurance policies is as follows:

- (i) 1% life insurance levy
- (ii) 3% non-life insurance levy

In addition, a stamp duty is charged on insurance policies. The life insurance levy was only introduced part-way through 2009. At the time of the Supplementary Budget, the estimated full year impact on the Exchequer from the withdrawal of the life insurance levy is €140 million. The estimated full year impact on the Exchequer from the withdrawal of the non-life insurance levy is €107 million. The estimated full year impact on the Exchequer from the withdrawal of stamp duty on insurance policies, other than life assurance policies, is €2 million.

It should be noted that a private health insurance levy introduced in the new health insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, is balanced by a new tax relief at source in respect for persons aged over 50 with health insurance. The overall impact of this measure on the Exchequer is intended to be revenue neutral.

Tax Yield.

370. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the return to the Exchequer if the health levy was increased by 3% on persons earning in excess of €100,000. [34440/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the yield to the Exchequer from increasing the health contribution rate by three percentage points on incomes in excess of €100,000 is estimated at €205m in a full year.

The figure is an estimate from the Revenue tax-forecasting model using actual data for the year 2007 adjusted as necessary for income and employment trends for the year 2010. It is therefore provisional and likely to be revised.

371. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the savings to the Exchequer if pension contributions were reduced to €100,000. [34441/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): It is presumed the Deputy is referring to the current annual earnings cap of €150,000, which operates to limit the level of tax-relieved personal pension contributions in any one year. The annual earnings cap acts, in conjunction with age-related percentage limits of annual earnings, to put a ceiling on the annual amount of tax relief an individual taxpayer can obtain on pension contributions.

The full year yield to the Exchequer arising from reducing the earnings cap to the amount mentioned in the question is estimated as follows:

Proposed Earnings Cap	Estimated Exchequer Yield
€ 100,000	€m 85
A breakdown of the figures by reference to income levels is available only in respect of the tax relief for contributions to Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs) and Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs) to the extent that these contributions are included in the personal tax returns of tax payers.	

With regard to occupational pensions, (that is, schemes set up by the employer), the figures in respect of employee contributions are available only in aggregate form. Information on such contributions is not captured in such a way as to make it possible to associate contributions with individual income levels. For that reason the estimated yield to the Exchequer in respect of these contributions is extremely tentative.

The estimated yield is based on assuming that tax relief which would be affected by the changes mentioned in the question is currently allowed at the top income tax rate of 41% and at the maximum age-related percentage limit of earnings. The figure provided could therefore be regarded as the maximum Exchequer yield in respect of those taxpayers.

372. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the savings to the Exchequer if all property based tax reliefs were abolished. [34442/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): It is assumed that the Deputy is referring to the abolition of the tax relief on future expenditure in relation to the following property based tax incentive schemes that remain in the tax code:

- *Convalescent Homes
- *Qualifying (Private) Hospitals

- *Qualifying Mental Health Centres
- Qualifying Specialist Palliative Care Units (subject to Commencement Order) Buildings used for Childcare Purposes
- *Registered Nursing Homes
- *Qualifying (Nursing Home) Residential Units, and
- Certain tourism infrastructure under the Mid-Shannon Scheme (only 80% of expenditure can qualify in certain areas).

I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that, based on information regarding the cost of these schemes that has been received and collated for the tax year 2007, the latest year for which data is available, the annual yield to the Exchequer from the abolition of these reliefs could be in the region of €43 million. Apart from the schemes listed above all other property based tax incentive schemes have been terminated on, or before, 31 July 2008.

*Abolished in Supplementary Budget and Finance Bill 2009.

Tax Code.

373. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the remaining property based tax reliefs. [34443/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The termination of most of the remaining property-related capital allowance schemes was announced in my Supplementary Budget speech in April last and was provided for, subject to transitional arrangements, in Finance Act 2009. As a result, the only remaining property-related capital allowance schemes are as follows:

- Qualifying specialist Palliative Care Units (subject to commencement order)
- Buildings used for childcare purposes
- Certain tourism infrastructure under the mid- Shannon scheme (scheme terminates 31 May 2013)

Tax Yield.

374. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the amount that would be saved by the Exchequer if mortgage interest relief for landlords was abolished. [34444/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The level at which interest repayments can be claimed against tax for residential rental properties was reduced from 100% to 75% in section 5 of the Finance Act 2009 at an estimated full year yield of €95 million. On this basis the saving from full abolition of the tax relief would be of the order of € 285 million in a full year.

375. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the return to the Exchequer of a 5% increase in DIRT. [34445/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the yield to the Exchequer from increasing the DIRT rate by five percentage points is estimated at €145m in a full year.

376. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the return to the Exchequer of an increase in betting shop profits from 2% to 10%. [34446/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): It is assumed the Deputy is referring to Betting Duty. The amount of Betting Duty paid in 2008 was €36.6m and the estimated yield in 2009 is around €31m. As the rate of Betting Duty in those years was 1 per cent, one could at first glance assume that the yield from a 10 per cent rate would be in the order of ten times those amounts. However, such a figure would not be realised. It is likely that a Betting Duty rate of 10 per cent would have a detrimental affect on the betting industry.

As the Deputy may be aware, due to pressure on the betting sector, I decided to defer the introduction of the increase in the betting duty provided for in Finance (No. 2) Act 2008 pending a review. Accordingly, the Finance Act 2009 contains a provision for continuing the existing betting duty rate of 1% unless and until an order is made bringing the 2% rate into effect, or alternative betting taxation arrangements are enacted. This decision is based on the premise that the betting sector will engage in constructive discussions about putting in place a fair and workable tax base for the sector. Such discussions will, inter alia, touch on issues such as online/phone betting, which is largely untaxed, and look at proposals that could potentially bring this area into the tax net, if possible, while also protecting Irish employment in the sector.

To this end my officials, in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, are looking at the scope to overcome legal and operational difficulties in the area of internet gambling and will continue to do so, on an ongoing basis.

In addition, my Department is working closely with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform which has initiated a review in order to provide the Government with options for a new and comprehensive legal and organisational framework governing gambling architecture in the State. The review, amongst other things, will consider:

- the recommendations contained in the Report Regulating Gaming in Ireland,
- the existing law regulating gaming lotteries and other forms of gambling in the jurisdiction,
- international developments, in particular the experience of the UK's Gambling Commission,
- developments in relation to remote gambling (e.g. via the internet and mobile phones).

Tax Code.

377. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance if he has examined the issue of re-introducing a tax on betting at race meetings. [34447/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The on-course levy currently stands at zero having been reduced from a rate of 5% in 1999. It was reduced in the context of the reduction in the off-course duty at that time and the importance of supporting attendances at race meetings. The issue of re-introducing a tax on on-course betting is not under consideration at present.

378. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance if he has examined increasing capital gains tax on share trading; and the return for the Exchequer if he increased this tax to 50%. [34448/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I am informed by the Revenue Commissioners that the estimated full year gain from increasing the capital gains tax rate for individuals to 50

per cent could be in the region of €140 million, assuming no significant behavioural change on the part of the affected taxpayers.

As CGT is very dependent on individual behaviour, any change in rate may not produce a corresponding increase or decrease in tax yield. In current economic conditions any estimate of additional yield must be treated with caution and, in such circumstances, increasing the rate could lead to a reduction in yield from the tax.

Pension Provisions.

379. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Finance the value of the National Pensions Reserve Fund. [34449/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The National Pensions Reserve Fund (NPRF) was established on 2 April 2001 under the National Pensions Reserve Fund Act 2000 with the objective of meeting as much as possible of the cost to the Exchequer of social welfare pensions and public service pensions to be paid from the year 2025 until at least 2055.

The National Pensions Reserve Fund Commission — who control and manage the Fund — publish a report on the performance of the NPRF at the end of each quarter. The most recent such report, to 30 June 2009, valued the Fund at €19.4 billion.

The Fund's annual and quarterly reports are available publicly on the Commission's website <http://www.nprf.ie/home.html>.

Tax Code.

380. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Finance if the €200 charge in respect of a non-principal private residence is tax deductible from rental income; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34500/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The position is that a person in receipt of rental income is assessed for income tax on the net amount of the rents received (i.e. the gross rents less allowable expenses incurred in earning those rents). In computing the net amount of the rents received, only those deductions that are specified in section 97(2) of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 are allowable. The main deductible expenses are:

- Any rent payable by the landlord in the case of a sub-lease;
- The cost to the landlord of any goods provided or services rendered to a tenant;
- The cost of maintenance, repairs, insurance and management of the property;
- Interest on borrowed money used to purchase, improve or repair the property; and
- Payment of local authority rates in the case of rateable properties used for commercial purposes.

As payment of the new local authority charge for residential properties is not included on the list of allowable deductions, it is not an allowable expense in computing taxable rental income.

Departmental Properties.

381. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Finance the properties rented, owned or leased by his Department in Dublin 1; 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 termin-

[Deputy Brian Hayes.]

ation imminent; the reason given for same; the plans in place for relocation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34515/09]

382. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Finance the properties rented, owned or leased by his Department in Dublin 3; 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; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34516/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 381 and 382 together.

I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that they are currently renting 7,434 sq. ft of warehouse space at Promenade Road, Dublin 3 on a short term basis from Blackhorse Transport Services Ltd. at a rent of €16,400 per month. The Office of Public Works has been asked to secure alternative accommodation in the area.

The Office of Public Works have supplied the attached tables of properties rented, owned or leased by the Office of Public Works on behalf of the Minister for Finance for other Government Departments in Dublin 1 & 3. The Landlord details and annual rent amounts in the case of leased properties are included in the schedule. It should be noted that the Commissioners of Public Works do not release the termination dates of leases, as such information is commercially sensitive.

Location Dublin 1

Building Name	Address	Rent PA	Type	Own or Lease	Landlord Name
		€			
Abbey Street Upper 26 – 30	Chapter House	667,133.08	Office	Leased	Liam & Roisin Carroll
Abbey Street Upper 26 – 30	Chapter House	1,206,162.28	Office	Leased	Liam & Roisin Carroll
Abbey Street Upper 26 – 30	Chapter House	994,569.76	Office	Leased	Liam & Roisin Carroll
Abbey Street Upper 26 – 30	Chapter House	211,542.00	Office	Leased	Liam & Roisin Carroll
Amiens Street (Gandon House)	Amiens Street	655,000.00	Office	Leased	Gandon Property Ltd
Amiens Street (Gandon House)	Amiens Street	75,500.00	Office	Leased	Gandon Property Ltd
Amiens Street (Gandon House)	Amiens Street	500,000.00	Office	Leased	Gandon Property Ltd
Arran Quay (Arran Court)	Arran Quay	165,337.23	Office	Leased	Linders
Bond Road Revenue Warehouse	Bond Road	733,092.00	Warehouse	Leased	Henry A Crosbie
Capel Street 89 -94	89 – 94 Capel Street	689,321.76	Office	Leased	Alexion (PROPCO) Limited
Cumberland St SWO	19-28 North Cumberland Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Custom House	Beresford Place – Custom House Q		Office	Owned	
Custom House Dublin Port	Promenade Road		Office	Owned	
Dublin Port Garda Car Park	Terminal Building	12,740.00	Carpark	Leased	Dublin Port Company
Ed HQ Office Blocks	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Fitzgibbon Street GS	24-30 Fitzgibbon Street		Garda Station	Owned(restricted)	
Frederick St North Frederick Crt	Frederick Court	702,000.00	Office	Leased	Irish Life Assurance
Gardiner Street Upper 77	77 Upper Gardiner Street	201,190.00	Miscellaneous	Leased	Dave Walsh
Great Strand St Millennium Hse	52-56 Great Strand Street	265,675.00	Office	Leased	Liam & Roisin Carroll
Henrietta St Registry of Deeds	Henrietta Street		Office	Owned	
Irish Life Centre Block 1	Lower Abbey Street	918,000.00	Office	Leased	Irish Life Assurance
Irish Life Centre Block 1	Lower Abbey Street	206,000.00	Office	Leased	Irish Life Assurance
Irish Life Centre Block 2	Lower Abbey Street	1,310,000.00	Office	Leased	Irish Estates
Irish Life Centre Block 4 & 5	Lower Abbey Street	273,000.00	Office	Leased	Irish Life Assurance
Irish Life Centre Block 5/7	Lower Abbey Street	1,110,000.00	Office	Leased	Irish Life Assurance
Irish Life Centre Block D E & F	Lower Abbey Street	900,000.00	Office	Leased	Irish Life Assurance

Location Dublin 1 — *continued*

Building Name	Address	Rent PA	Type	Own or Lease	Landlord Name
		€			
Kings Inn House SWO	Parnell St	558,200.00	Office	Leased	Danninger Ltd
Kings Inn House SWO	Parnell St	208,275.00	Office	Leased	Danninger Ltd
Marlborough St 101-104 Clare Hse	101-104 Marlborough Street	412,344.90	Office	Leased	Terrybium Limited
Marlborough St Car Park Educat	Marlborough St – Sean McDermott	306,962.96	Carpark	Leased	Q-Park Management
Marlborough St Ed HQ 28 Marl St	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ BMS Depot	Marlborough Street		Depot – BMS	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ C/nade Bldg	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ Clock Tower	Marlborough Street		Conference Centre	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ E D P Bldg	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ Talbot Hse	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ Train Colge	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ Tyrone Annex	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
Marlborough St Ed HQ Tyrone Hse	Marlborough Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
National Conference Centre	Spencer Dock		Conference Centre	Owned	
O'Connell St 29-32	Lyon/Findlater House	7,618.43	Office	Leased	Telecom Eireann
O'Connell St 29-32	Lyon/Findlater House	533,290.00	Office	Leased	Telecom Eireann
O'Connell St 29-32	Lyon/Findlater House	345,000.00	Office	Leased	Turson Limited
O'Connell Street Upper 11 – 13	Hamman Buildings		Office	Owned (restricted)	
O'Connell Street Upper 14 – 15	14-15 Upper O'Connell Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
O'Connell Street Upper 14 – 15	14-15 Upper O'Connell Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
O'Connell Street Upper 44	44 Upper O'Connell Street		Garda Station	Owned (restricted)	
O'Connell Street Upper 45	45 Upper O'Connell Street		Office	Owned (restricted)	
O'Connell Street Upper 9 – 10	Árus Brugha		Office	Owned	
Parnell Sq 13-15 Parnell House	13 – 15 Parnell Square	1,830,000.00	Office	Leased	ALSTEAD SECURITIES
Parnell Sq 16	16 Parnell Square	1,493,644.72	Office	Leased	ALSTEAD SECURITIES
Parnell Sq 2 – 3	2 – 3 Parnell Square	715,000.00	Office	Leased	AUSTIN KELLY
Parnell Sq 22 Municipal Art Gal	22 Parnell Square		Art Gallery	Owned (restricted)	

Location Dublin 1 — *continued*

Building Name	Address	Rent PA	Type	Own or Lease	Landlord Name
		€			
Parnell St Parnell Business Cntr	125 Parnell Street	45,801.99	Office	Leased	PASCAL CONROY
Parnell St Parnell Cntr Car Pk	Parnell Street	66,144.00	Carpark	Leased	Park Rite Limited
Parnell St Parnell Cntr Car Pk	Parnell Street	59,280.00	Carpark	Leased	Park Rite Limited
Store Street Aras Mhic Dhiarmada	Store Street		Office	Owned	
Store Street GS	Store Street		Garda Station	Owned	
Store Street GS Car Park	Store Street		Carpark	Owned	
Talbot Street 37 Car Pk	Ripley Court Hotel	60,750.00	Carpark	Leased	Ripley Court Hotel
Trinity Church	12C Lower Abbey Street		Church	Owned	

Location Dublin 3

Building Name	Address	Rent PA	Type	Own or Lease	Landlord Name
		€			
Clontarf GS	Strandville Avenue East		Garda Station	Owned	
East Wall PVII	Bond Road Extension	278,000.00	Miscellaneous	Leased	Molloy & Sherry

Ministerial Correspondence.

383. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance if he will respond to correspondence from a union (details supplied) seeking a resolution to the industrial relations dispute between the union and a bank; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34547/09]

384. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Finance if he or the Government appointed directors will intervene in a dispute (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34549/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 383 and 384 together.

I responded directly to the correspondence in question on 30 September 2009. I do not accept that Government support of an institution provides any argument in favour of any particular group. In fact, taxpayers will naturally look to bank employees to understand and respond to the financial situation in which these institutions find themselves. Jobs in the financial sector are now being protected by enormous taxpayer support and while ordinary financial sector workers are not to blame for this situation, they are getting more assistance than many other workers in other sectors. While I will not be participating in the negotiation process in relation to this dispute, either directly or by seeking to influence directors, and am not giving an opinion on the merits of this particular case, I feel this general background must be borne in mind by financial sector employees generally.

Secretarial Allowances.

385. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Finance if his attention has been drawn to the use of the special secretarial allowance (details supplied); the action he has taken on this matter; if he will implement the recommendation of the Oireachtas Commission that the SSA be terminated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34554/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The nature of the Special Secretarial Allowance (SSA) scheme available to Members of the Oireachtas and the purposes to which it applies are set out as follows.

There are four options available to TDs under the SSA scheme as follows:

- (i) a Parliamentary Assistant supplied and employed by the Oireachtas Commission, or
- (ii) two TDs may opt to combine and have a higher level staff member supplied and paid for by the Oireachtas Commission, or
- (iii) a fully vouched annual amount of up to €41,902 for employing a temporary staff member or for the purchase of secretarial equipment and services; or
- (iv) a vouched annual amount of €11,591 for work or service done or the employment of a temporary person, plus an un-vouched annual amount of €8,888. Ministers may avail of the options (iii) and (iv) above under the SSA scheme.

There are three options for Senators under the SSA scheme: either (i) Parliamentary Secretaries supplied and employed by the Oireachtas Commission; or (ii) a fully vouched annual amount of up to €20,546 for employing a temporary staff member or for the purchase of secretarial equipment and services; or (iii) a Parliamentary Secretary employed at 75% supplied and paid for by the Oireachtas Commission and an annual un-vouched amount of €6,666.

The Oireachtas Commission made proposals to me about the system of expense allowances payable to members of the Oireachtas including the application of the SSA scheme. The proposals were an attempt by the Commission to provide a more streamlined expenses system and the introduction of a single composite allowance in place of the existing separate allowances.

I have introduced enabling legislation which would allow the proposals of the Commission in regard to a composite allowance to be implemented. The Oireachtas (Allowances to Members) and Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices Act, 2009 provides for the introduction of a single composite allowance for Deputies and Senators to be known as the Parliamentary Standard Allowance.

However, I am of the view there is a need for further consideration and discussion of the proposed composite allowance before it is introduced in any regulations.

Public Service Staff.

386. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the value of payments made in overtime in special shift allowances in the main categories of public service employment in each month since January 2008 to September 2009. [34578/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The information which the Deputy has sought will require collation. The information will be provided to the Deputy by my Department as soon as possible.

387. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the cost of the public service wage bill in each month since January 2008 to September 2009. [34579/09]

388. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the cost of servicing public debt in each month since January 2008 to September 2009. [34581/09]

389. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the value of gross current spending net of public pay, social welfare and the cost of servicing public debt in each month from January 2008 to September 2009. [34582/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 387 to 389, inclusive, together.

The figures for the Voted component of current expenditure, including the Exchequer Pay and Pensions Bill, in the attached tables are presented in net expenditure terms, which is the only full monthly breakdown available. These figures are formally returned to the Department of Finance five working days after the end of the relevant month. It should be noted that they are point in time estimates and may be subject to revision on a full year basis following year-end. The end-September figures are not yet available.

Figures for national debt servicing are taken from the Exchequer Statement for the relevant month. The figures include interest costs, sinking fund contributions and other debt management expenses.

390. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Finance the value of total tax receipts of revenue from the public service levy and of borrowing in each month since January 2008 to September 2009. [34583/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The table presents figures for the pension-related deduction on public service remuneration and the Exchequer balance at the end of each month. The pension-related deduction is presented on a monthly basis.

[Deputy Brian Lenihan.]

The pension-related deduction on remuneration is not classed as a tax receipt; it is, for the most part, received by Departments as an appropriation-in-aid. These figures are returned by Departments five working days after the end of the month and, as such, the end-September returns are not yet available. A small component is paid directly to the Central Fund from the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA), the Central Bank and the Oireachtas. The figures in the attached table include the receipts by Departments and the Central Fund.

Receipts from the pension-related deduction on remuneration from Local Authority employees are not included as they do not accrue to Central Government.

2008

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
630	-125	-354	-3,742	-3,598	-5,648	-6,713	-8,425	-9,404	-11,013	-7,895	-12,714

2009

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept			
€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m			
-747	-2,085	-3,721	-7,316	-10,588	-14,709	-16,439	-18,733	-20,158			
0	0	11	89	96	95	91	78	—			

Departmental Staff.

391. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Finance the guidelines that exist with regard to the procedure applicable to the dismissal of a public servant or a chief executive or an employee of a State or semi-State body; the circumstances stated in such guidelines in which it is said to be appropriate to effect such dismissal; the financial arrangements applicable to same; if he will provide a copy of the said guidelines; if it is intended to make amendments to them. [34592/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): The area for which I have direct responsibility is the civil service. A Disciplinary Code for civil servants is set out in *Circular 14/2006: Civil Service Disciplinary Code revised in accordance with the Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Act 2005*. The Code came into effect on 4 July 2006 and replaced the previous Code as set out in Circular 1/92. The Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Act 2005 allows certain provisions contained in the Public Service Management Act 1997 to take effect. The 2005 Act gives each Secretary General/Head of Scheduled Office, as appropriate authority, responsibility for managing all matters relating to performance, conduct and discipline of civil servants below Principal Officer level. Ministers continue to be the appropriate authority for these matters in relation to civil servants at or above Principal level in accordance with the Civil Service Regulation Acts 1956 to 2005. The code is available on the personnel code website: www.personnelcode.gov.ie.

Specific arrangements apply to disciplinary matters affecting employees in other areas of the public service and these are the prime responsibility of the relevant Ministers. For instance, procedures for the suspension and dismissal of teachers have recently been agreed and these are available from the Department of Education and Science.

Guidelines are available on the contracts, remuneration and other conditions of chief executives and senior management of commercial state bodies. The guidelines are available on my Department's website — www.finance.gov.ie.

Contracts for Chief Executives of individual non-commercial state bodies contain provisions relating to circumstances in which the employment of the chief executive may be terminated. The circumstances in which employment may be terminated normally include misconduct or gross default affecting the business of the Body concerned, bankruptcy, incapacitation and conviction of a criminal offence, other than an offence which in the opinion of the Body concerned does not affect the position as chief executive.

As regards severance/early retirement arrangements for chief executive officers, there are guidelines set out in the letter to all Heads of Departments of 26 May 1998. The provisions in that letter may be applicable where the board and the responsible Minister consider that a fresh approach is needed in the interest of the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. A copy of the letter is as follows:

Ref: *P18/126/98*

26 May 1998

To: All Heads of Department

A Chara,

Severance and Early Retirement for Chief Executives of State Sponsored Bodies

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that he has considered the issue of severance/early retirement payments for Chief Executives of State Sponsored Bodies (SSBs). This consideration has had particular regard to the fact that it is becoming more common for Chief Executive Officers of State Sponsored Bodies to be employed on fixed term contracts, and that there may be times when the Board of a State Sponsored Body and the relevant Minister may conclude that it is in the best interests of the efficiency and effectiveness of the SSB concerned to terminate or not to renew the contract of an incumbent CEO. This need not necessarily arise as a result of any dissatisfaction with the performance of the individual concerned, but perhaps because a new and fresh approach needs to be introduced. In such circumstances, the Minister will not object to the application of special early retirement/severance provisions, subject to certain conditions and safeguards.
2. The Minister has therefore decided that this Department will not object to the making of severance payments or grant of early retirement terms to Chief Executives of State Bodies within the following maximum limits and subject to the conditions specified, from a current date. Departments may deal with cases within the guidelines and limits without reference to this Department except where such reference is specifically required (drafts of any consequent changes in the relevant pension schemes would need to be cleared in the normal way).
 - a) Payment of pension and lump sum, based on actual reckonable pensionable service, increased as appropriate in accordance with paragraph (b) following, may be allowed at age 55 for a CEO who retires from that position, who has served at least 6 years in that capacity and who has at least 15 years actual service overall in the public sector only service with the body from which the CEO is retiring or service which has been transferred into the scheme of that body may reckon.

[Deputy Brian Lenihan.]

- b) In determining the pension and lump sum to be paid, one added year of pensionable service may be granted for each year in excess of 15 years overall actual service in the public sector¹ (i.e. including service in capacities other than as a CEO) subject to a maximum of 5 added years;
 - c) Actuarially reduced benefits may be made available without age restriction — this means that a person might receive a pension benefit or lump sum before age 55, provided that the cost of providing these benefits at the earlier age are entirely offset by a reduction in the amount of benefits payable: the amount of such reduction would require to be determined by the relevant scheme's actuaries;
 - d) Where an immediate pension (other than on an actuarially reduced basis) is not payable, a severance payment of four weeks pay per year of continuous service, up to a maximum of 26 weeks pay, may be made. However, where pension becomes payable within 26 weeks of retirement, the amount of the severance should be reduced to the amount of salary which would have been payable between the date of retirement and commencement of pension.
3. Application of the foregoing terms would be strictly conditional on completion of contract, unless the Board, in agreement with the appropriate Minister and the Minister for Finance, decides to terminate the CEO's employment before the termination of the contract. It is not therefore appropriate to make such payments where the initiative for the termination of a contract comes from the CEO concerned.
4. Application of these terms would also be conditional on there being no re-employment, direct or indirect, of the individual concerned by the body from which s/he is retiring, or another public sector body in the same sector.
5. Where subsequent employment is obtained in the public sector such that pension plus pay in the new job exceeds the equivalent of the retirement salary on the basis of which the pension is payable, then pension will be abated to bring the total down to the level of that salary. This abatement will not apply in relation to work after age 65. Where pension rights are acquired in respect of post-retirement work, the original pension (if based on actual service *plus* added years) would be reduced and based on actual service only. In such circumstances the uprated portion of the lump sum attributable to the added years would be required to be repaid. It should be explicitly stated that any grant of early retirement terms would be subject to these conditions.
6. The terms set out above are intended to be maximum ones, and a Board would be free to apply lesser benefits or not to apply early retirement benefits at all. Early retirement benefits might be denied, for example, if the Board wanted the contract renewed for a further term. It is not, therefore, intended to interfere with the freedom of Boards in this area, but rather to indicate the maximum limits which the Minister would be prepared to approve.
7. Adjustment to the terms set out above will be necessary where a retiring CEO has already availed of a severance or early retirement package from a public sector body, and in such cases this Department should be consulted.

8. The arrangements set out in this letter should be allowed strictly on the basis, accepted in writing by the CEO, that they are in full and final settlement of any claim which the CEO may have in relation to the early retirement or termination or non-renewal of a contract.
9. The Minister does not anticipate approving any improvement on the terms set out above, even in individual exceptional cases, other than on foot of a Government decision.
10. It is essential that Departments should convey to the Pensions Section of this Department details of each case dealt with under the terms of this letter. The contact point in this Department for telephone queries is Mr. Kevin Cardiff at (01) 604-5476.

Yours sincerely,

John Hurley

Secretary General, Public Service Management and Development.

An Roinn Airgeadais

Department of Finance

Ref: P18/126/98

4 June 1998

To: All Heads of Department

A Chara,

Severance and Early Retirement for Chief Executives of State Sponsored Bodies

I am directed by the Minister for Finance to refer to this Department's letter of 26 May 1998, in regard to the above. For the purposes of clarification, Departments should note that the grant of added years in accordance with paragraph 2(b) of that letter is subject to the following conditions, in accordance with the normal practice in relation to such added years, viz.

- i. A person may not receive a greater number of added years than the additional service s/he would have if s/he served to his/her maximum retirement age. Thus a person retiring from a CEO position at 63 cannot receive more than 2 additional years service.
- ii. The grant of additional pensionable service may not lead to a person having more than the maximum pensionable service for the relevant pension scheme (i.e. 40 years in most cases).

Yours sincerely

Kevin Cardiff

392. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Finance the guidelines that exist with regard to the procedure applicable to the early retirement of a public servant or a chief executive or an employee of a State or semi-State body; the circumstances stated in such guidelines in which it is said to be appropriate to effect such early retirement; the financial arrangements applicable to same; if he will provide a copy of the said guidelines; if it is intended to make amendments to them. [34593/09]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Brian Lenihan): In the civil and public service, Cost Neutral Early Retirement (CNER) has been available since 1 April 2004 for individuals who wish to retire with immediate pension up to 10 years before normal retirement age. More recently, the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER) has been available. The procedures and circumstances whereby these arrangements may be availed of are set out in Circulars 10 of 2005 (CNER) and 12 of 2009 (ISER). Civil and public service superannuation schemes provide for early retirement on grounds of ill-health, which may include some additional years of notional service, depending on age and service.

There are specific early retirement provisions in various areas of the Public service. Gardaí, prison officers and psychiatric nurses who are not new entrants as defined in the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004 may retire on reaching the age of 50 if they have 30 years of service. This means that they have qualified for full pension entitlements because under their schemes each year of service in excess of 20 years reckons as 2 years of service for pension purposes. Primary and secondary school teachers may retire on or after age 55 if they have 35 years of service. In the Defence forces, officers who are not new entrants under the 2004 Act may retire with immediate pension after 12 years service regardless of age and similar enlisted personnel may retire with immediate pension after 21 years service also regardless of age.

Section 6 of the Superannuation Act 1909 and sections 6 and 7 of the Superannuation and Pensions Act 1963 set out rules governing early retirement of civil servants as a consequence of abolition of office or for the purposes of facilitating improvements in the organisation of the department in order to effect greater efficiency and economy. Section 6 of the 1909 Act allows for the immediate payment of pension on retiring. Section 6 of the 1963 Act allows for the addition of up to 10 years of notional service and section 7 of that Act allows for the grant of a special severance gratuity of up to one-half of annual salary. In the wider public service the provisions of the 1909 and 1963 Acts serve as guidelines in dealing with similar cases. In operating these provisions, the practice in the main is not to grant additional years of notional service and a severance payment to any one individual.

The Government agreed that these provisions could apply in the case of Secretaries General who retire on completion of their contracts with the addition of up to 10 years of notional service and up to 6 months pay in severance regardless of age. Similar provisions are included in the Local Government Superannuation Scheme in relation to County Managers.

For full-time board members and equivalent positions in the Competition Authority, Labour Court, Environmental Protection Agency and Bord Pleanála retirement is normally between age 60 and 65; however, members who have their appointment terminated (other than for stated misconduct), or are not re-appointed on expiration of their period of office, are entitled to immediate pension and lump sum where they have accrued more than two years' service. Preservation of benefits applies only in case of voluntary resignation after two or more years' service.

The Department of Finance letter of 26 May 1998 to all Heads of Departments sets out the enhanced retirement/severance terms for chief executive officers of non-commercial semi-State

bodies whose contracts are not renewed or are terminated, and the conditions under which they may be made available. Such non-renewal or termination might arise where the board and Minister conclude that there is a need for a fresh approach in the interest of efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. As regards this letter about CEOs, consideration will be given to the possible need for clarification of the terms provided for and the conditions attaching to them.

It is not possible to cover all the early retirement arrangements across the public service. The Deputy might wish to consult respective Ministers about specific circumstances pertaining to agencies and bodies under their aegis.

Health Services.

393. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an application for a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33101/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

394. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an application in respect of persons (details supplied) in County Cork. [33102/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

395. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an application for an allowance in respect of persons (details supplied) in County Cork. [33103/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Child Care Services.

396. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will respond to correspondence (details supplied). [33117/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): As the Deputy will be aware, I have responsibility for the implementation of the free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme which is being introduced in January 2010.

The ECCE scheme is a general one and services participating will be required to make reasonable accommodation for children with special needs in accordance with the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004. However, the scheme takes account of a number of issues to accommodate children with special needs.

While the age range in which children will qualify for the scheme is, generally, between 3 years 3 months and 4 years 6 months on 1 September each year, exceptions to the upper age limit will be considered where a child cannot start primary school until s/he is more than 5 years 6 months of age, due to either being assessed by the Health Service Executive (HSE) as being developmentally delayed or having a physical or sensory disability which prevents the child from availing of age-appropriate education. In such cases, the pre-school year relevant to such children will be taken as their qualifying year.

[Deputy Barry Andrews.]

To apply for an exemption to be made on either of these grounds, a letter should be forwarded to the Childcare Directorate in my Office stating the reasons for the exception sought. The letter should be accompanied by a copy of the child's birth certificate, details of his or her Personal Public Service (PPS) number and the name and address of the pre-school service in which s/he will be enrolled. In addition, the letter should be accompanied either by a supporting assessment report from the HSE or, where relevant, by a letter from the Principal of the local primary school confirming the age admissions policy applied. as having a special need which will delay his or her entry to primary school. Given the timeframe available before the introduction of the first period of free pre-school provision in January next, it is accepted that not all parents will have had time to apply for and receive an assessment report in advance of this date. To accommodate parents in this position, a professional assessment other than from the HSE may be accepted. This would not include assessments provided, for example, by a General Practitioner.

Additionally, the general requirement that a child would be expected to attend 4 or 5 days each week will not apply to children with special needs where a shorter week would be more appropriate to their needs. Many specialist pre-school services arrange for children attending their services to also attend a mainstream service for 1, 2, or 3 days a week and this will continue to be facilitated under the ECCE. In the case in question, I understand that the reason for shorter hours of attendance at pre-school will arise from the fact that a Special Needs Assistant will be available to the child for less than the 15 hours per week available under the ECCE. While I regret that this will be the case, I would point out that attendance for the full period of provision each week is not compulsory and no child, particularly in the circumstances outlined, will be precluded from availing of his or her pre-school place on this basis.

Food Labelling.

397. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding food labelling and particularly the labelling of Irish products; if her attention has been drawn to a practice of re-labelling poultry and poultry products, which were original sourced in the UK, packaged in Northern Ireland and then subsequently sold as Irish produce; if she will clarify if this process is legal; and the steps he will take to halt this practice. [33567/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Trevor Sargent): Food labelling is currently governed by Council Directive 2000/13/EC, transposed in 2002, with several amendments since. While I am not aware of any specific case of re-labelling poultry and poultry products which were originally sourced in the UK, under Council Directive 2000/13/EC, it is permissible to state, under country of origin labelling, the country in which the product last underwent a substantial, economically justified, transformation.

In January 2008, the European Commission presented its proposals on updating and harmonising this legislation. The proposal is still under discussion. The new labelling proposal, however, states that, in the event of the country of origin being stated on the label, the place of birth, rearing and slaughter of the animal, where different from the country of origin must also be stated. Legal advice provided to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland confirms that it is permissible for food produced in Northern Ireland to be labelled as Irish.

Pension Provisions.

398. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will respond to a query from a person (details supplied) in County Dublin. [34046/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): All employees, including full time and part time employees on the payroll, who are, or are entitled to be, members of a public service occupational pension scheme or pension arrangement are subject to the deduction provided for under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act, 2009.

I can confirm that the levy applies to all employees of St Michael's House as this employer is deemed to be a public sector employer for the purposes of the legislation (Sections 1 (i), 2 (1) (b) (i) and 2 (1) (b) (iii) refer).

The employee in question is liable to the pension levy under Section 2(1)(a)(i) and 2(1)(b)(iii) if he is employed on a contract of service (i.e. the normal employment arrangement) i.e. he is liable in respect of his remuneration as a public servant but not in respect of the pension he receives.

Health Services.

399. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health and Children the status of an application for domiciliary care allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34458/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

400. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will make a statement on the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick. [32955/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Nursing Home Support Scheme.

401. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a commencement order will be signed in respect of a scheme (details supplied). [32963/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): The Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009 was signed by the President on the 1st July 2009. To date, the Minister has signed three commencement orders in respect of the Act.

The first of these was signed on the 3rd July and enabled the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to immediately commence price negotiations with private nursing homes.

The second was signed on the 21st September and commenced the new care representative appointment process from the 5th October. This allows people to apply to the Circuit Court for appointment as a care representative from that date where they wish to request the Nursing Home Loan on behalf of an applicant with reduced capacity.

A third commencement order was signed on the 28th September and enables the HSE to prescribe forms for the purposes of the scheme. As of yesterday, the application form and information booklet for the scheme are available to the public and may be obtained from the HSE. This will enable people to familiarise themselves with the application form and process, gather necessary information and generally prepare themselves so that they are ready to apply when the scheme is introduced.

[Deputy Áine Brady.]

Finally, the Minister announced yesterday that the Nursing Homes Support Scheme will commence on the 27th October 2009 and intends to sign an order commencing all remaining sections of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009 with effect from that date.

Child Abuse.

402. **Deputy Ciarán Cuffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans for the introduction and implementation of mandatory reporting in cases of suspected child abuse; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32976/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): The introduction of mandatory reporting has not been proceeded with to date, on the basis that it has not been adequately demonstrated that the system would result in greater protection for children. We also need to ensure that available resources are used efficiently. I understand that recent research points to difficulties in other jurisdictions where mandatory reporting was introduced.

The Implementation Plan approved by Government in response to the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse identifies the need for legislation to provide that staff employed by the State and in agencies in receipt of funding from the Exchequer will have:

- a duty to comply with the *Children First* national guidelines;
- a duty to share relevant information in the best interests of the child
- a duty to co-operate with other relevant services in the best interests of the child.

It is intended that this legislation will be drafted by December 2010.

A revised edition of *Children First* Guidelines will be published by the end of this year. Children First Guidelines are national over-arching guidelines that apply to all individuals and agencies that are dealing with children. They are intended to support and guide health professionals, teachers, and members of the Garda Síochána and the many people in sporting, cultural, community and voluntary organisations who come into regular contact with children.

Medical Cards.

403. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason the medical card renewal application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare has not been determined in view of the fact that same was submitted in July 2009; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32985/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

National Treatment Purchase Fund.

404. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of patients referred by a hospital (details supplied) to the National Treatment Purchase Fund in 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009; if she will break these figures down by their area of requirement; the total cost of NTPF surgeries in this hospital since 2007; the number of doctors and specialists working in this hospital serving both public patients and with the NTP; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33001/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The number of patients referred by Tallaght Hospital to the National Treatment Purchase Fund in 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009; broken down by area are set out as follows:

Year	Referrals for day-case & in-patient surgery	Referrals for first time out-patient appointment	Referrals for Radiology (MRI)	Number of cases undertaken for NTPF in Tallaght Hospital & cost of same
2007	613	705	—	5 / €81,770
2008	1,101	240	102	44 / €67,800
2009	732	813	73	47 / €67,600

As the number of doctors and specialists working in Tallaght Hospital serving both public patients and the NTPF is a service matter, this matter has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Health Services.

405. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Health and Children if any consideration has been given towards establishing a pilot family nurse partnership (details supplied); her views that such a project whilst costly to establish and maintain would be beneficial to society and save money in other areas; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33006/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Hospital Staff.

406. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she has met the Attorney General regarding the case of a person (details supplied); if she will report to the Houses of the Oireachtas on her discussion and the decision taken with regard to same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33007/09]

423. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Health and Children the progress made by her to date with regard to the holding of an inquiry (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33207/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 406 and 423 together.

I met with a support group for victims who were former patients of Mr. Michael Shine at the end of June last and undertook to consider their submission, which included a request for an independent inquiry, in consultation with my cabinet colleagues and the Attorney General. I subsequently met with the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Attorney General and plan to further consult with my colleagues to consider options in relation to the matter. I expect to meet with the support group again in the coming weeks to discuss these deliberations.

Nursing Homes Support Scheme.

407. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will support the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin. [33021/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): The Minister announced yesterday that the Nursing Homes Support Scheme will commence on the 27th October 2009.

The application form and information booklet for the scheme are now available to the public and may be obtained from the HSE. This will enable people to familiarise themselves with the application form and process, gather necessary information and generally prepare themselves so that they are ready to apply when the scheme is introduced.

In addition, the new care representative appointment process commenced from the 5th October. This allows people to apply to the Circuit Court for appointment as a care representative from that date where they wish to apply for the Nursing Home Loan on behalf of an applicant with reduced capacity.

The family of the individual referred to by the Deputy should contact the HSE for further information at this stage. The number for the HSE's Infoline is 1850 24 1850.

Medical Cards.

408. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if an application for a medical card in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Kilkenny will be expedited. [33031/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

409. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if an appeal in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny to the Health Service Executive who refused them a medical card will be expedited and approved. [33032/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Hospital Waiting Lists.

410. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath will receive an initial consultation; the reason for the delay; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33042/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Hospital Accommodation.

411. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Health and Children her views on reopening an infectious disease hospital or part thereof, to contain a major outbreak of the swine flu or to cater for another infectious epidemic, as Cherry Orchard Hospital, Dublin, was meant to cater for in the past before it was regraded a few short years ago; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33073/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Ministerial Travel.

412. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Health and Children the annual cost to her Department of Ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagements; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33085/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The total amounts paid to Ministers for Health and Ministers of State at the Department of Health and Children for travel and subsistence in respect of overseas travel during the ten years ended 2008 amounted to €44,083 and are set out in the following tables. Hotel accommodation charges are generally paid directly to the hotel by, or on behalf, of the Department though in some cases hotel costs were paid directly to the Minister/Minister of State which are included in the figures. Summary: total paid each year

Year	Amount Paid
	€
1999	6,802
2000	5,851
2001	6,977
2002	3,884
2003	1,694
2004	4,754
2005	1,815
2006	5,409
2007	1,657
2008	5,240

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister Mary Harney

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount claimed
			€
November 2004	USA: New York	Visiting health facilities	618.51
March 2005	Ljubljana, Zagreb & Sarajevo	St Patrick's Day Programme	267.37
April 2005	Italy: Rome as Tánaiste	Attending Pope's funeral	103.50
May 2005	Switzerland: Geneva	WHO: World Health Assembly	186.15
May 2005	Isle of Man as Tánaiste	Speaker at British/Irish Council meeting	20.64
May 2005	Switzerland: Geneva as Tánaiste	Speaker at Economic forum — Davos	440.49
June 2005	Luxembourg	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	178.67
October 2005	UK: Hertfordshire	EU:Council of Health Ministers meeting	84.89
November 2005	UK: London	EU Presidency -Patient Safety summit	151.36
December 2005	Brussels	EU: Council of Ministers	140.67
February 2006	Canada: Toronto and Vancouver	Analysis of Cancer Control Governance Models	486.53
February 2006	Austria: Vienna	EU: Council of Ministers meeting	112.67
March 2006	Bahrain and South Africa	St Patrick's Day Programme	1,351.44
April 2006	Austria: Vienna	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	56.33
May 2006	USA: Philadelphia and Washington DC	Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics conference, National Cancer Institute & health facilities	835.70
October 2006	USA: Chicago	Visit to Children's Memorial Hospital	402.88
November 2006	Brussels	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	356.22
February 2007	Italy: Milan as Tánaiste	Speaker at "Observatory on Europe" meeting	377.72
March 2007	Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen	St Patrick's Day Programme	922.77

[Deputy Mary Harney.]

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount claimed
			€
February 2008	USA: Arizona, Texas and Washington DC	Visiting health facilities	772.92
March 2008	Czech Republic: Prague	St Patrick's Day Programme	618.32
April 2008	Slovenia	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	112.00
June 2008	Luxembourg	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	142.50
June 2008	Estonia: Tallinn	WHO ministerial conference	126.32

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister Micheál Martin

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
March 2001	USA: New York	St Patrick's Day Programme	764.82
December 2001	Egypt: Cairo	Official visit to Cairo	447.07
June 2002	Luxembourg	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	416.88
May 2003	Switzerland: Geneva	WHO: World Health Assembly	301.07
September 2003	USA: Washington DC	Visiting health facilities	238.75
November 2003	Hungary: Budapest	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	177.45
March 2004	USA: Los Angeles and San Francisco	St Patrick's Day Programme	1,193.93
March 2004	Czech Republic: Prague	ENDSP conference	276.12
May 2004	Switzerland: Geneva	WHO: World Health Assembly	283.96
June 2004	Hungary: Budapest	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	176.91

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister Brian Cowen

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
March 1999	France: Paris	St Patrick's Day Programme	1,594.31
June 1999	USA: New York	Visit to UN	2,283.18

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister for Children: Mary Hanafin:

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
April 2000	Russia: Moscow	Meetings on Adoption	723.31
June 2000	Germany: Munich	WHO conference on nursing and midwifery	287.01
November 2000	France: Paris	OECD conference on gender main streaming	864.40
November 2000	Egypt: Cairo	Arab League of Women summit	442.74
January 2001	Sweden: Stockholm	International Forum on combatting intolerance	360.54

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
March 2001	USA: New York & Boston Canada: Toronto	St Patrick's Day Programme	3,270.25
June 2001	Luxembourg	EU: Council of foreign Ministers meeting	160.65
July 2001	Canada: Vancouver	World Assembly on Mental Health	1,195.23
August 2001	Australia: Melbourne Philippines: Manila	Meetings on international adoption agreements	1,990.44
February 2002	Poland: Warsaw	Conference on a tobacco free Europe	835.33
March 2002	USA: Chicago	St Patrick's Day Programme	1,060.38

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister of State John Moloney

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
June 2008	Brussels	Mental Health conference	661.83
September 2008	China: Beijing	Attending Paralympics Games 2008	1,133.67
November 2008	UK: London	Celebrations for Samaritans 100 years	157.69

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister of State Pat 'The Cope' Gallagher

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
March 2007	USA: California	St Patrick's Day Programme	276.03
September 2007	Spain: Barcelona en route from Athens	International health conference on advances in clinical medicine	199.25
November 2007	China: Beijing	Food Safety Conference	456.73
December 2007	Brussels	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	155.33
December 2007	Italy: Rome	Health policies meeting	427.00

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister of State Seán Power

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
June 2006	Luxembourg	EU ministerial meeting	484.10
July 2006	USA: Washington DC	World conference on tobacco	160.19
November 2006	Turkey: Istanbul	WHO ministerial conference	767.84
November 2006	France: Strasbourg	Council of Europe Ministerial Conference	374.00

[Deputy Mary Harney.]

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister of State Tim O'Malley

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
March 2003	Cyprus	St Patrick's Day Programme	269.10
March 2004	Czech Republic: Prague	St Patrick's Day Programme	1,900.00

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister of State Ivor Callely

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
September 2002	Germany: Berlin	UN conference on Ageing	240.78
October 2002	Luxembourg	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	119.11
March 2003	UK: Manchester	St Patrick's Day Programme	194.08
March 2003	Malta	Official visit to Malta	206.39
January 2003	UK: London	Visit to Camden Primary Trust	307.28
May 2004	USA: New York and Washington DC	Visit to US	923.45

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister of State Dr Tom Moffatt

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
April 1999	Greece: Athens	EU: Council of Health Ministers meeting	257.77
May 2000	USA: Minneapolis	Meeting with Minnesota Department of Health re Food Alerts	1,250.39

Travel and subsistence paid to Minister of State Frank Fahey

Month of travel	Destination	Type of meeting attended	Amount Claimed
			€
March 1999	USA: Texas	St Patrick's Day Programme	1,923.04
April 1999	Luxembourg & Brussels	EU meetings	480.70
June 1999	Luxembourg	EU: General Affairs Council meeting	231.07
October 1999	Finland: Helsinki	European summit	293.55
October 1999	USA: New Orleans	Celtic Nations Heritage Festival	1,155.61
November 1999	Norway: Oslo	UN convention on the rights of the child	442.26
December 1999	UK: London	Irish National Youth Federation meeting	423.34

Hospital Services.413. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of hospice

beds in County Mayo; the locations of same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33092/09]

414. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans for additional hospice beds in County Mayo; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33093/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): I propose to take Questions Nos. 413 and 414 together.

As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

415. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Health and Children when new beds for older people will come on stream in St Joseph's Hospital, Raheny and in Clontarf Orthopaedic Hospital, Dublin; and the financial provision that has been made by the Health Service Executive for commissioning these beds into use and operating them thereafter. [33106/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Health Services.

416. **Deputy Edward O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an application by a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33114/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

417. **Deputy Edward O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an application for an allowance by persons (details supplied) in County Cork. [33115/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

418. **Deputy Dinny McGinley** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding the proposed new health centre for Dunfanaghy, County Donegal; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33126/09]

422. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding a health centre (details supplied) in County Cork; the stage the development of the centre is currently at; the funding available for the centre; and the timescale for the project. [33186/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 418 and 422 together.

As these questions relate to service matters they have been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputies.

Medical Cards.

419. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding a person (details supplied) in County Cork; if, in view of the industrial dispute which is delaying the processing of medical card applications for persons who have turned 16 years of

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age, she will re-instate their original card entitlement; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33132/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Health Services.

420. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of home care packages approved in the Health Service Executive south area; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33133/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

421. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a medical card will issue in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33141/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Question No. 422 answered with Question No. 418.

Question No. 423 answered with Question No. 406.

Cancer Screening Programme.

424. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health and Children the plans in place to build on the success of prostate cancer awareness week; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33211/09]

427. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will introduce a comprehensive screening programme for prostate cancer here in respect of men over 50 years of age; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33214/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 424 and 427 together.

I have no plans to introduce a population-based screening programme for prostate cancer at this time. The available international evidence does not indicate that such a programme would be effective in reducing mortality. For this reason the National Cancer Control Strategy (2006) did not recommend the introduction of a population based screening programme for prostate cancer. This position is consistent with the Recommendations adopted by the European Union which indicate that cancer screening programmes should be introduced only when they have demonstrated their efficacy having regard to expert medical evidence. My Department and the National Cancer Screening Service will keep emerging international evidence under review, including the results of randomised trials that are currently being conducted internationally.

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) is working to enhance access to early diagnosis and multi-disciplinary decision-making for prostate cancer. I am pleased to say that Rapid Access Prostate Cancer Diagnostic Clinics are being established in each of the eight

cancer centres designated under the NCCP. Patients at higher risk will be fast-tracked to these clinics, and those patients who receive a diagnosis of prostate cancer will have immediate access to a multidisciplinary specialist cancer consultation regarding appropriate management.

The first two Rapid Access clinics have opened at University Hospital Galway (UHG) and St. James's Hospital, Dublin, with two more (St. Vincent's and Beaumont) to be established later this year and a further four in 2010.

Any man who has concerns in relation to prostate cancer should contact his GP for appropriate referral.

Hospital Staff.

425. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of consultant urologists employed by the Health Service Executive; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33212/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Hospital Waiting Lists.

426. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Health and Children the average waiting time for a public patient to gain access to prostate cancer services; the average waiting times which have been recorded for the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33213/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The matters raised by the Deputy relate to the provision of healthcare services and accordingly, I have asked the HSE to respond directly to the Deputy on these matters.

Question No. 427 answered with Question No. 424.

428. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason a person (details supplied) in County Kildare, listed for surgery on 4 September 2008, had their operation cancelled and has not received an alternative date for treatment; if she will review the situation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33234/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Inter-Country Adoptions.

429. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding the applications of couples here adopting from Ethiopia if Ireland fully signs up to the Hague Convention principles on adoption during the couples adoption process; if this will halt all adoptions from Ethiopia that will be in process at that time; if couples in the system will be allowed to continue with their adoption; the stage of the process they must have reached in order to be classed as in the system; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33235/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): The Adoption Bill, 2009, which is designed to give force of law to the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption, has passed through the Seanad and I am actively seeking time for its progression in the current Dáil session. I firmly believe that legislation and, specifically, the regime of the Hague Convention,

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provides an assurance for individual children, their families, and the State that appropriate procedures have been followed and that the adoption was affected in the best interests of the child. This applies in the case of adoptions from Ethiopia and other countries who have not, as yet, ratified the Hague Convention, and would seem unlikely to do so in the immediate future. Only adoptions effected before the commencement of the Act can be registered on the Register of Inter-Country Adoptions to be established under the Bill.

Hospital Charges.

430. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to empower public hospitals to reclaim funding from health insurers in situations in which private patients have been admitted to publicly designated beds; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33236/09]

580. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she has had discussions with the Health Service Executive regarding the problems surrounding the collection of money from private health insurers in relation to private patients in public hospitals; if changes are proposed with regard to persons who are treated by consultants who opted for a public only contract and private patients who are accommodated in beds designated for public patients; if she has received further information from the HSE on retrieving money owed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34520/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 430 and 580 together.

The Government’s focus is to achieve fair access by patients to publicly-funded hospital capacity based on medical need. The new consultants’ contract includes new measures designed to progress this, for example, through the operation of one-for-all outpatient and ambulatory diagnostic clinics, a key entry point to hospital care. There are also clear new rules on consultants’ public-private mix of patients and new measures to manage these rules by newly appointed clinical directors. These contractual features complement existing ‘bed designation’ rules, set out as follows.

Although patients may be treated in public hospitals on a private basis, the core purpose of the public hospital system is to provide services for all patients under the statutory eligibility provisions. All persons ordinarily resident in Ireland have full eligibility for hospital services, meaning there is universal access to public hospital care. The fact that a person may have private health insurance does not take away from his/her eligibility for services as a public patient.

Bed designation was introduced as part of the mechanism to control the level of private activity in publicly funded hospitals and to help ensure equitable access for public patients. Under the Health (In-Patient) Regulations 1991, beds in public hospitals are categorised as public, private or non-designated. Under these Regulations no private patient being admitted electively may be accommodated in a designated public bed. Similarly no private patient admitted as an emergency may be accommodated in a designated public bed unless (and only for such time as) a designated private bed is not available. The Regulations contain reciprocal provisions regarding the accommodation of public patients in beds designated as private.

Thus, there are limits provided for, and implemented, on the usage of publicly-funded hospital capacity for private activity. The absence of such limits — even if the economic cost of private activity were fully recouped — would create an unacceptable incentive for both consultants and hospitals to maximise private activity, which, while certainly generating income

for public-contract holding consultants and for public hospitals, could only be at the expense of fair access for public patients. Indeed, it would call into question why Exchequer funds were allocated for such hospital capacity at all.

It is important that the application of these Regulations and the operation of the mixed public/private hospital system supports the achievement of Government policy on fair access for public patients. I have no plans, therefore, to enable the HSE to levy an accommodation charge in respect of the situations referred to by the Deputy as I believe it would be contrary to the fundamental purpose of public hospital services.

With the support of my Department, the HSE is working to improve business processes for collecting outstanding debts due from private health insurers in respect of patients using private facilities in public hospitals. This includes engagement with private health insurers. The HSE has also drawn up proposals for centralising the management of patient debts and other income. Earlier this year the VHI agreed to make a payment of €50m towards outstanding debts. This was in response to an initiative that I undertook to enable the HSE to implement its National Service Plan for 2009.

National Treatment Purchase Fund.

431. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if the amount paid by the National Treatment Purchase Fund for procedures in private hospitals equates to the amount paid for the same procedures by private health insurers; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33252/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I have emphasised to the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) the need for maximum cost-effectiveness in the discharge of its remit, consistent with providing safe and effective care, and I am satisfied that the Fund is aware of its responsibilities in this regard. I have also asked the NTPF, in its dealings with private hospitals, to seek even better value in the current year and the Fund indicates that it has already succeeded in negotiating reductions in the prices paid for certain high-volume procedures. The Fund has also stated that where acceptable prices cannot be agreed, it will not purchase the required service from the provider concerned.

The NTPF uses a number of benchmarks in determining whether the prices offered by private providers represent value for money. These include public hospital average case mix costs and, where known, the prices paid by private health insurers. The NTPF has undertaken a comparison of the average price it has paid for certain high-volume procedures with the public hospital average case mix cost for similar treatments. While it is not appropriate to draw a direct comparison between the price charged by a private hospital for a procedure and the average public hospital case mix cost, the NTPF indicates that for the treatments in question there is a reasonable correlation in average costs. In some cases the price paid by the NTPF is appreciably lower than the average case mix cost in the public hospital system.

In his Annual Report for 2008, having reviewed the relevant NTPF records, the Comptroller and Auditor General concluded that most procedures purchased from private hospitals by the NTPF cost less than the case mix-adjusted benchmark cost in the public hospital system. The initial cost payable for these procedures is necessarily set on the basis of complication-free surgery. In general, the samples examined suggest that cost uplifts are limited to cases requiring additional clinical care, the need for which was not apparent when the treatment was contracted for.

Health Service Allowances.

432. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an application for the back to school clothing and footwear allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33258/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Community Care.

433. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to provide funding for a suitable supported residence in the community for people ready to move on from the Central Mental Hospital; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33267/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As this is a service matter the question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Hospital Services.

434. **Deputy Charles Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the status of the new unit for cystic fibrosis patients at St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin 4; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33274/09]

441. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will support a matter (details supplied). [33328/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 434 and 441 together.

The next phase in the development of St. Vincent's Hospital will involve the building of a new ward block to replace existing accommodation. The new facility will provide accommodation for cystic fibrosis patients with appropriate isolation facilities for the treatment of their condition. It will also include a dedicated day unit for people with cystic fibrosis.

The HSE, in partnership with St. Vincent's Hospital, structured the tender for this development in such a way that payments for the works can be deferred towards the end of the construction period. A contract has recently been awarded by the hospital to begin the site preparation work. In the interim tender documents are being completed for the development in order to ensure earliest possible commencement of construction in 2010. It is intended that the development will become operational as early as possible in 2011.

Vaccination Programme.

435. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will review the estimated cost of the full roll out of the human papilloma virus vaccine; if she has completed a cost benefit analysis of the vaccine programme; if she will reverse the decision not to roll out this vaccine programme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33277/09]

519. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to roll-out the human Papilloma virus vaccine; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33923/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 435 and 519 together.

I have considered all the relevant advice available to me in relation to the potential public health benefits of HPV vaccination in the prevention of cervical cancer and the wider policy implications for its possible introduction into the National Immunisation Programme. I accept the consensus view of the relevant expert bodies that the introduction of a universal high uptake vaccination programme in young girls, in conjunction with population based cervical screening, could significantly reduce overall cervical cancer incidence. All of the clinical advice available to me indicates that, in the context of the limited resources available, the national roll-out of a cervical screening programme should take precedence over the introduction of a HPV vaccination programme.

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has completed an assessment of the cost effectiveness of HPV. It shows that the vaccine does have the potential to play an important long term role in the prevention of cervical cancer and that a vaccination programme should be put in place to enable these long term benefits to be realised.

Accordingly, in August 2008, the Health Service Executive (HSE) was requested by the Department to examine operational and procurement issues relating to the introduction of a HPV vaccination programme for 12 year old girls on a basis that would achieve maximum cost effectiveness and appropriate national uptake rates.

I am keeping the cost of implementing such a programme under review. I am committed to progressively introducing cancer prevention measures, such as new screening and vaccination programmes, according to clinical prioritisation within resources available.

Hospital Staff.

436. **Deputy Michael Noonan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the progress made in appointing a third geriatrician to the Limerick region; if, in sanctioning this appointment, she will sanction the necessary support staff to provide a full geriatric service; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33279/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

437. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a medical card will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Dublin; if same is being assessed on the over 70s criteria on the basis of their spouse being over the age of 70 years and their combined gross income being below the relevant thresholds. [33282/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Health Service Staff.

438. **Deputy Emmet Stagg** asked the Minister for Health and Children if, in view of the crisis in undermanning of the special needs assistants service in County Kildare, she will direct the Health Service Executive to make further staff and resources available to deal with the backlog and daily work load of community welfare officers; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33287/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Health Services.

439. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding the case of a person (details supplied) in County Wicklow; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33296/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Nursing Homes Support Scheme.

440. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding the nursing homes support scheme, a fair deal, which was to be introduced in July 2009; when same will be introduced; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33298/09]

464. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Minister for Health and Children if her attention has been drawn to the hardship caused by the delay of the introduction of the fair deal scheme for nursing homes; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33483/09]

508. **Deputy Emmet Stagg** asked the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 454 of 16 September 2009, if the implementation of new charges on long-term stay patients in public nursing homes has been introduced at this stage under the fair deal scheme. [33746/09]

572. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health and Children when the Nursing Home Support Scheme Act 2009 will come into operation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34473/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): I propose to take Questions Nos. 440, 464, 508 and 572, together.

The Minister announced yesterday that the Nursing Homes Support Scheme will commence on the 27th October 2009. The legislation providing for the scheme was signed into law on the 1st July 2009. Certain sections of the Act were commenced on the 3rd July to enable the National Treatment Purchase Fund to immediately begin price negotiations with private nursing homes. This work, which must be completed before the scheme can commence, is almost concluded.

The Minister is aware of the effect of the delay in introducing the new scheme on nursing home residents and is anxious to ensure that they benefit from the scheme as soon as possible. For this reason, she commenced two particular elements of the legislation which will allow people to prepare in advance so that they are ready to apply on the 27th October.

Firstly, as of the 5th October, the new care representative appointment process has commenced. This allows people to apply to the Circuit Court for appointment as a care representative from that date where they wish to apply for the Nursing Home Loan on behalf of an applicant with reduced capacity.

In addition, the Minister signed an order enabling the HSE to prescribe forms for the purposes of the scheme. The application form and information booklet for the scheme are now available to the public and may be obtained from the HSE. This will enable people to familiarise themselves with the application form and process, gather necessary information and generally prepare themselves so that they are ready to apply on the 27th October when the scheme is introduced.

Question No. 441 answered with Question No. 434.

Community Care.

442. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Health and Children the disability day care services that are available to adults in the south Dublin area; the number of places which are available in each centre; the number of these that are currently filled; the number of places that are still available to new patients; the amount of money currently allocated to fund each of these places; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33330/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

443. **Deputy Paul Connaughton** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding a medical card review for persons (details supplied) in County Galway; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33343/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Hospital Waiting Lists.

444. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason a child (details supplied) in County Longford has been informed that they should receive treatment in early 2010; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33349/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Health Services.

445. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of children awaiting assessment for orthodontic treatment in Counties Longford and Westmeath; if the facilities in the constituency are able to cope with the demand for orthodontic treatment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33351/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

446. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to overcome the problems that persons will encounter as beds and wards at a care centre (details supplied) in County Longford close due to cutbacks; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33352/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Hospital Waiting Lists.

447. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the waiting time for hip replacements in respect of persons in Counties Longford and Westmeath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33353/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Health Service Staff.

448. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the steps she has taken with the Health Service Executive to resolve the continuing dispute at a nursing home (details supplied) in County Longford, due to the withdrawal of early morning allowance, the pensions scheme, sick pay services and night shift allowance and the reduction in Sunday premiums, annual leave, working hours and unpaid breaks; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33355/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): The Deputy's question refers to a private nursing home and as such I have no function in relation to the management or resolution of disputes at the home.

Child Care Services.

449. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to introduce amendments to the early childhood care and education scheme; if it is intended to address the many anomalies that arise under it which have been communicated to the Minister of State with responsibility for children and youth affairs; if she acknowledges that the fees payable under the scheme may reduce both the quality of care and the number of qualified staff in some crèches; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33359/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): As the Deputy will be aware, the new Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme which provides a free Pre-School year to eligible children and which will be introduced in January 2010, was announced in the Supplementary Budget in April this year. Since the announcement of the scheme I have had a number of meetings with the National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, which represent the views of child care service providers throughout the country, and also with individual childcare providers. I have also listened carefully to the views of parents and where possible have made modifications to the scheme to address issues which have been raised.

In relation to the age range for eligibility which includes children aged between 3 years 3 months and 4 years 6 months at 1 September each year, it has been agreed to interpret the application of the age range as generously as possible to include children who are aged more than 3 years 2 months and less than 4 years 7 months on the 1 September. This will mean that children born on or between 2 February 2005 and 30 June 2006 will be eligible to enter the scheme in January 2010 and in September 2010, children born on or after 2 February 2006 or on or before 30 June 2007 will qualify, and so on in subsequent years.

The options available to pre-school services as to how they deliver the pre-school year was raised with my Office and has been responded to by allowing for a wider range of options. Full or part-time day care services can provide the pre-school year for 2 hours and 15 minutes per day, 5 days per week for 50 weeks (241 days) per year, in return for the capitation fee of €48.50 per week. In addition, they can also apply to provide the pre-school year for 3 hours and 45 minutes per day, 3 days per week for 50 weeks per year.

A play-school sessional service will, normally, provide the pre-school year for 3 hours per day, 5 days a week for 38 weeks (183 days) per year, in return for a capitation fee of €64.50 per week. However, where for good reason a sessional service is unable to operate over 5 days, it will be allowed to provide the pre-school year for 3 hours 30 minutes per day for 4 days per

week over 41 weeks (157 days). Further flexibility is provided for in that, a full or part-time service may choose to provide a sessional service over 38 weeks of a year (or 2 sessional services each day) while a sessional service may choose to provide 2 hours 15 minutes per day over 50 weeks.

The issue of commercial rates on pre-school services was also raised. In July of this year the Valuation Office, which is responsible for implementing the Valuation Act 2001, clarified that the ECCE will result in certain services being considered exempt from commercial rates. Services covered by this exemption must be participating in the ECCE and solely and exclusively used for the provision of educational services which are available to the general public. In addition, the expenses incurred in providing the service must be defrayed wholly or mainly by the State. The legal position for services not covered by the exemption is unchanged and rateable status of community services will continue to be dealt with on a case by case basis on the grounds of charitable status as provided for under Schedule 4 Item 16 of the Valuation Act.

Some service providers expressed the view that the capitation of €64.50 (€2,450 p.a.) a week provided for under the scheme did not take into account the high level of qualification which some staff in the pre-school sector had attained. I am pleased to advise the Deputy that, in July of this year, sanction was received to add a higher capitation rate of €75 per week (€2,850 p.a.), for sessional services with highly qualified staff. To qualify for the higher capitation fee all Pre-School leaders must hold a level 7 or 8 qualification relating to childcare and have 3 years experience working in the sector, and all assistants must hold a relevant level 5 qualification.

The annual capitation fee of €2,450 (or €2,850 in the case of the higher rate) will be paid to participating services for each child enrolled and availing of the free pre-school provision. This is considered sufficient to accommodate the great majority of services. The scheme also allows participating services to charge parents for additional services which they provide, including additional hours and activities, provided these are offered on a clearly optional basis to parents. Mandatory charges are not permitted under the scheme. The ECCE introduces, for the first time, minimum requirements in relation to staff qualifications. Together with the Workforce Development Plan, which is due to be launched next year, I am satisfied that the ECCE scheme will support the improvement of quality care and the level of qualifications held by staff working in pre-school services.

Departmental Staff.

450. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of posts in the Office of Tobacco Control occupied by staff on fixed-term contracts; and when those contracts end. [33360/09]

451. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of posts in the Office for Tobacco Control occupied by staff on secondment; and when those staff are required to return to their original posts. [33361/09]

452. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of posts, full time and part time, which will exist in the Office for Tobacco Control at the end of 2009. [33362/09]

453. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the staffing levels it is intended to maintain at the Office of Tobacco Control until such time as the office has been merged with the Medicines Board and the Food Authority of Ireland in 2010. [33363/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): I propose to take Questions Nos. 450 to 453, inclusive, together.

There are four posts occupied by staff on fixed term contracts that expire on 31 December 2009. Three posts are occupied by staff on secondment, who are due to return to their original posts by 31 December 2009. Three further posts are occupied by staff on contracts of indefinite duration. My Department is currently considering a proposal that was submitted by the Office for Tobacco Control in September, outlining the staffing levels required to maintain the Office until the merger.

Accident and Emergency Services.

454. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will give a commitment that the accident and emergency department in St. Columcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown, County Dublin will be maintained on a 24-hour basis in view of reports that the department will close at night from 4 October 2009; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33418/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

455. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the status of a medical card for a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33422/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Adoption Services.

456. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Health and Children the status of a bilateral agreement or the drafting of such an agreement on adoption in Russia by Irish parents; the issues still outstanding in regard to missing post-placement reports; the delays that are being experienced by parents wishing to adopt from Russia; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33438/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): Ireland has no bilateral intercountry adoption agreement in place with Russia. However, work on the preparation of a draft agreement with the Russian authorities is being undertaken. I am aware that there are people who have received Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability to adopt outside the State and may intend to adopt from Russia. The decision regarding the country of choice for adoption is a matter for prospective applicants. This choice obviously should have regard to their personal preference, to their knowledge of and/or connection with the proposed country of origin and, also, to the status of the country as a contracting State either to the Hague Convention or to a bilateral agreement.

The Adoption Bill, 2009, which will give force of law to the Hague Convention, was published on 23 January, 2009. The Bill, which recently passed all the stages in the Seanad, will continue to be prioritised by the Government for its passage through the Oireachtas. Any applicant who is seeking to proceed with an adoption from a non-Hague country, or from a country with which Ireland does not have a bilateral agreement, should have regard to the likelihood of the adoption being completed in advance of the Adoption Bill being commenced.

In relation to post-placement reports, an extensive examination of a list of required post-placement reports was carried out by the Health Service Executive and the Adoption Board. The Adoption Board has written to the Russian Embassy arising from this examination. I understand that the majority of the outstanding reports have been completed and are with the adoptive parents for translation, apostilling and notarisation — that is, the social workers have already conducted the home visit and the report. In a small number of cases, parents have neglected or have been unwilling or unable to arrange for a home visit with their social worker. Further contact has been made again to arrange for all outstanding visits to be undertaken and is being prioritised by the Health Service Executive Adoption Services to ensure that the parents can have the required reports forwarded to the Russian Embassy in Dublin.

Children in Care.

457. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Health and Children the steps taken since the publication of the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse 2009 to deliver on the implementation plan; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33450/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): Following the publication and acceptance by Government of the recommendations contained in the *Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* was tasked with producing an Implementation Plan. The Plan was endorsed by Government and was published on 28 July 2009. The Plan sets out 99 actions to address each of the 20 recommendations contained in the Ryan Report. It includes measures considered necessary to further improve services for children in care, in detention and at risk, to address the effects of past abuses, to reform service provision and to ensure that children and young people have a voice.

Work has commenced across the various Government Departments and agencies to address the actions under their remit. The actions contained in the Plan are to be implemented over a four year timeframe, with each action assigned an individual target date for completion. As set out in the Plan, I will chair a high level group to oversee the implementation of the actions specified in the Plan.

Hospital Waiting Lists.

458. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Health and Children the national average waiting time for an MRI scan; the longest waiting time for an MRI scan here; the length of the waiting list in each hospital providing this scan; the international best practise waiting time for such a test; and if she will make a statement on the level of equipment and staff devoted to this test. [33451/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The management of waiting lists generally is a matter for the HSE and the individual hospitals concerned. I have, therefore, referred the Deputy's question to the Executive for direct reply.

Health Services.

459. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will report on the facilities being put in place to assist persons (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33459/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

460. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will expedite an appointment for a consultation in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33462/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Departmental Staff.

461. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason a lump sum was not awarded to a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon by the Health Service Executive on their retirement; and the progress made in verifying their outstanding service. [33467/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The Health Services Executive is responsible for administering the pension schemes that its employees are members of and therefore it is the appropriate organisation to address the Deputy's query. My Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to have the matter investigated and to have a reply issue to the Deputy.

Mental Health Services.

462. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health and Children the lands and buildings of psychiatric institutions which have been disposed of since January 2006; the amount raised from the sale of these assets; the amount surrendered to the Department of Finance; the amount reinvested into the development of mental health services in view of the fact that *A Vision for Change* has been adopted as policy and that a commitment to reinvest all money realised from the sale of such assets into mental health services was made; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33471/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): '*A Vision for Change*' the Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy recommended that a plan to bring about the closure of all psychiatric hospitals should be drawn up and implemented and that the resources released by these closures should be re-invested in the mental health service. The Departments of Finance and Health and Children have agreed in principle to the release of the proceeds of the disposal of properties prior to 2006 for reinvestment in mental health capital development.

The arrangements for property disposal require Department of Finance approval in each case, the lodging of the proceeds as Exchequer Extra Receipts and the re-voting of the funds for approved projects. The HSE has disposed of a small number of psychiatric properties in recent years. Proceeds of the sale of St. Loman's Hospital, Verville Retreat in Clontarf and two other Dublin properties, amount to just over €42m, and these funds have been surrendered to the Exchequer. A submission detailing the priority projects to be funded from these historic disposals has been received from the HSE. The submission has been examined in detail in the Department of Health & Children and some preliminary discussions have taken place with the Department of Finance in relation to the proposals. However, a number of issues have arisen which require clarification and further consideration. The HSE has recently been requested to provide additional information and this information is awaited.

Departmental Bodies.

463. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding

the setting up of the Health and Social Care Professions Council, registration boards for certain designated health and social care professions and the designated professions under section 4 of the Health and Social Care Professional Act 2005 for which established boards have been set up in view of the fact that this Act was signed into law on 30 November 2005. [33472/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The Health and Social Care Professionals Council, launched in March 2007, is being established on a phased basis. The CEO and one head of administrative staff were appointed in 2008. An additional two senior administrative staff took up duty with the Council in late August 2009 and will be responsible for Registration and Education and Legal Affairs and Fitness to Practice. These particular appointments will greatly assist the Council in their ongoing work in preparing for the establishment of the individual Professional Registration Board the first of which, The Social Work Registration Board, will be established later this year. It is hoped to bring additional Registration Boards on stream commencing in 2010, including The Physiotherapy Registration Board which has been delayed due to legal issues which are currently being resolved.

The 2008 Budget Day announcement on rationalisation of agencies provided for the merging of the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) and the Opticians Board into with the Health and Social Care Professionals Council. There is a considerable amount of work involved for the Council in facilitating this rationalisation as efficiently and as effectively as possible. My Department is working with the Council, the PHECC and the Opticians Board to ensure that the appropriate administrative and legislative provision is in place to initiate this rationalisation, commencing 2010. The resources, both human and financial, which the Council will acquire on foot of rationalisation, will be of great assistance in rolling out of the twelve Registration Boards on a phased basis.

Question No. 464 answered with Question No. 440.

Hospital Staff.

465. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a person (details supplied) who was in full-time employment with the South Eastern Health Board and the Health Service Executive for 26 years as a laboratory aide at St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny, will be restored to that position in view of the circumstances of his case; if she will insist on the HSE taking action in the case. [33493/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

466. **Deputy Seán Fleming** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a person (details supplied) in County Laois will be considered for a transfer to Abbeyleix Hospital. [33494/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Adoption Services.

467. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children when the Hague Convention is expected to be ratified; the reason the Adoption Board is not checking the law compatibility of other Hague compliant countries prior to application for entry in the adoption register; and if she will make a statement on the countries which will be available to adopters here once the Hague convention is ratified and countries which have children available for adoption. [33508/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): The Adoption Bill, 2009, which will give force of law to the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption, has passed through Seanad Éireann, and I am actively seeking time for its progression in the current Dáil session.

I firmly believe that legislation and, specifically, the regime of the Hague Convention, provides an assurance for individual children, their families, and the State that appropriate procedures have been followed and that the adoption was affected in the best interests of the child.

The Adoption Board, on an on-going basis, reviews the compatibility of adoption laws in other countries with Irish law. As of today, the Adoption Board has undertaken a review of 42 countries — 19 of which have ratified or acceded to the Hague Convention.

Medical Cards.

468. **Deputy Charlie O'Connor** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will provide assurances that medical card services will continue to be delivered effectively to the residents of Tallaght, Dublin 24 and the general Dublin south west area; her plans in this regard; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33530/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I take it that the Deputy is referring to the centralisation of the processing of medical card applications from Local Health Offices to the Executive's Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) in Finglas. Up to the start of this year, medical card and GP visit card applications were processed in the Health Service Executive's (HSE's) 32 local health areas. However, under the HSE's 2009 Service Plan, the processing of all medical card and GP visit card applications will transfer to the PCRS. The change is being implemented on a phased basis and has commenced with the PCRS processing all medical card applications for persons aged 70 or over. The phased implementation will allow the situation to be continuously monitored and, if required, modified to address any issues arising.

The HSE has advised my Department that there are no plans to close any of the local health offices and these offices will continue to deal with queries of a general nature about the medical card scheme and will provide any assistance needed with the application process. However, the process will involve a reassignment of existing human resources within the HSE to other critical frontline services and the Executive is working through the formal process with the trade union involved. This flexibility by public service workers is essential in the context of the current economic environment.

I fully support the HSE's decision to centralise the medical card and GP visit card application and review process to one location. The HSE has advised that when fully implemented, this measure will ensure:

- Improved turnaround time for the processing of applications (Under the new arrangements, the Executive will be aiming for a turnaround time of 15 days or less for all medical card applications. Emergency applications will be dealt with immediately with a card issuing within 24 hours);
- Equitable application of eligibility across the country;
- Consistency of service provision to customers;
- Clearer lines of governance and accountability; and
- Improved unified data.

The HSE has also indicated that this project, while realising health sector efficiencies and savings, will not have an adverse affect on patient care or the quality of service provided. Applications from people whose income exceeds the income guidelines but have a case to be considered on medical or hardship grounds will also be processed by the PCRS.

This project is an example of the type of innovation signalled in the Transforming Public Services Programme announced by the Taoiseach last November. It demonstrates how improved services can be delivered within the more limited resources available in a way which meets the needs of citizens in a modern society.

As the Deputy's question refers specifically to the position in Tallaght, Dublin 24, and the general Dublin south west area, my Department has requested the Parliamentary Affairs Division of the Executive to arrange to address this matter, and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

Hospitals Building Programme.

469. **Deputy Charlie O'Connor** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position in respect of a plans for the development of a major new children's hospital at the Mater Hospital site, Dublin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33531/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The project is proceeding as planned and is being overseen by the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board which was established in May, 2007. The HSE is working closely with the Board in progressing the project, which is scheduled for completion in 2014.

Health Service Staff.

470. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to deal with the breakdown of the speech therapy service in County Mayo in view of the fact that there is no national panel to recruit from and the Health Service Executive is unable to do it another way; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33536/09]

473. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plan for a national recruitment campaign for the appointment of speech and language therapists; when this campaign will begin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33539/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 473 and 470 together.

There has been a growing demand for, and investment in, speech and language therapy services over the last number of years. A particular priority for my Department and the Department of Education and Science in recent years has been the expansion of the supply of therapy graduates. The Government has also invested heavily in the education and training of such personnel in order to secure a good supply of graduates to provide for the health care needs of the population into the future. In this regard, since 1997, the number of training places for speech and language therapy has been increased from 25 to 105 which represents an increase of 320%.

Almost 130,000 people work full-time or part-time in our public health services. In recent years, the Government's ongoing high level of investment in health has achieved and maintained significant increases in the numbers of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals employed in the public health services. The numbers employed in speech and language therapy has also grown significantly, from 282 whole time equivalents employed in December 1997 rising to 755 whole time equivalents employed in March 2009, which represents

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an increase of 168%. The Government is committed to ensuring continued adequate recruitment of professional staff across a range of service settings. Additional funding of €20 million has been provided in 2009 for health and education services for children with special educational needs. This includes funding of €10 million provided for health services for children with disabilities. This funding will provide a total of 125 additional therapy posts in the HSE (speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers) targeted at children of school-going age. 90 of these will be in disability services and 35 posts will be allocated to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

My Department has written to the Health Service Executive setting out the overall approved employment control ceiling for 2009. As part of this approval, written confirmation has been provided to the HSE that the general moratorium on recruitment, promotion and the payment of acting up allowances does not apply to specific designated grades. Delegated sanction has been given to the HSE for the creation and filling of frontline posts including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy posts. The approval indicated that vacancies in existing posts in these grades may continue to be filled. New posts may also be created in these grades, up to a specified limit, provided that the HSE is satisfied in each case that there is no scope to redeploy an equivalent post from the hospital sector to the primary and community care sector. This moratorium exemption provides for an increase in the number of therapy posts, in line with Government policy, in order to meet the requirements of integrated care delivery and primary care needs particularly in respect of children at risk, the elderly and those with disabilities. The recruitment and retention of these key front line therapy posts, including speech and language therapists, is vital to ensure continued progress in the development of community settings.

Subject to overall parameters set by Government, the Health Service Executive has the responsibility for determining the composition of its staffing complement. In that regard, it is a matter for the Executive to manage and deploy its human resources to best meet the requirements of its Annual Service Plan for the delivery of health and personal social services to the public. With regard to a national recruitment campaign for the appointment of speech and language therapists, as this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Child Care Services.

471. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to deal with the situation in County Mayo in which children are unable to be screened in respect of speech and language therapy for the first time in 20 years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33537/09]

472. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of children on waiting lists to be screened for speech and language therapy; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33538/09]

474. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of children who have been recommend for speech and language therapy and are waiting for appointments; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33540/09]

475. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the average waiting time for speech and language therapy for children in County Mayo; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33541/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 471, 472, 474 and 475 together.

As the Deputy's questions relate to service matters I have arranged for the questions to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Question No. 473 answered with Question No. 470.

Questions Nos. 474 and 475 answered with Question No. 471.

Adoption Services.

476. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Minister for Health and Children her views on the contents of the MoLISA report. [33548/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): In late August, I was made aware of two significant Reports regarding child welfare, protection and adoption in Vietnam. The issues referred to in these two reports are of concern to the Government especially since they confirm anecdotal reports that have been aired in the past.

Firstly, the Vietnamese Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, with technical assistance from UNICEF in Vietnam, published a Report known as the 'MoLISA Report' entitled "*Creating a protective environment for children in Vietnam: An assessment of child protection laws and policies, especially children in special circumstances in Vietnam*". The MoLISA report found that, *inter alia*:

- there are no detailed principles or criteria to guide the assessment in Vietnam of prospective guardians, foster parents or substitute families for orphans;
- there is no framework for the systematic, professional assessment of orphans and abandoned children to determine what type of placement would be in their best interest, and to ensure that they are matched with the most appropriate alternative family;
- there is no clear requirement that decisions about alternative care be based on the child's best interest;
- there is no clear statement in law that international adoptions shall be used only as a last resort, once all options for placement within the country have been considered;
- there are no systematic procedures for ensuring that all efforts are made to find a suitable domestic family before consideration of international options;
- there is no requirement that birth parents be given counselling and be clearly informed of the consequences of adoption prior to giving consent;

The Report contains a series of recommendations including, the need to:

- reform the institutional care of orphaned and abandoned children in Vietnam;
- provide counselling to birth parents prior to giving consent to adoption;
- intensify preparations for accession to the Hague Convention on inter-country adoption;
- centralise authority to consider and approve inter-country adoptions, and

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- stipulate that international adoptions may be considered only after all other options have been explored and, also, that the child cannot be placed into foster care or with a family or cannot, in any suitable manner, be cared for in Vietnam.

In addition to the MoLISA Report, I have recently received, in draft form, the report of an examination of inter-country adoption in Vietnam carried out by the International Social Services (ISS) — a UN-affiliated organisation. The Report was jointly commissioned by UNICEF and the Vietnamese Ministry of Justice and seeks, inter alia, to “*identify and address problems in both domestic and inter-country adoption processes with a view to assisting Vietnam in its preparations to ratify the Hague Convention*”.

I will be considering these two Reports jointly. These Reports go to the heart of the matter in relation to concerns in relation to inter-country adoption in Vietnam. I would be failing in my duty to protect children if I did not acknowledge and consider the content of these Reports extremely carefully before deciding on an appropriate response.

Medical Cards.

477. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason a person (details supplied) in Dublin 10 has not heard back or has not been granted a medical card despite having applied for the card nearly one year ago. [33557/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Ambulance Service.

478. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason the Health Service Executive has not paid arrears of €8.6 million to Dublin City Council in relation to the provision of the ambulance service despite being invoiced monthly; the reason for the delay in payment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33564/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

479. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a medical card will issue in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33579/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Health Services.

480. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a person (details supplied) in County Galway will be supported. [33592/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy’s question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

481. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a medical card will be issued to a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if she will expedite the appeal. [33595/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Health Services.

482. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Health and Children if, in view of the fact that a person (details supplied) in County Wicklow was told in July 2009 that they would be eligible in August 2009 for an appointment, they will be seen as a matter of urgency; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33601/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Health Service Staff.

483. **Deputy Ulick Burke** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason a receptionist has not been appointed to the Birr community nursing centre, County Offaly, in view of the fact the position has been vacant for the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33620/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Health Services.

484. **Deputy Ulick Burke** asked the Minister for Health and Children the cost of the security provided at the Birr Community Nursing Unit, County Offaly; the Health Service Executive budget from which it has been financed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33621/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

485. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will request the Health Service Executive to reconsider the centralisation of the medical card administration, in view of the hardship being caused by the new regulations for the over 70s medical card; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33623/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): Up to the start of this year, medical card and GP visit card applications were processed in the Health Service Executive's (HSE's) 32 local health areas. However, under the HSE's 2009 Service Plan, the processing of all medical card and GP visit card applications will transfer to the Executive's Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) in Dublin. The change is being implemented on a phased basis and has commenced with the PCRS processing all medical card applications for persons aged 70 or over. The phased implementation will allow the situation to be continuously monitored and, if required, modified to address any issues arising.

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The HSE has advised my Department that there are no plans to close any of the local health offices and these offices will continue to deal with queries of a general nature about the medical card scheme and will provide any assistance needed with the application process. However, the process will involve a reassignment of existing human resources within the HSE to other critical frontline services and the Executive is working through the formal process with the trade union involved. This flexibility by public service workers is essential in the context of the current economic environment.

I fully support the HSE's decision to centralise the medical card and GP visit card application and review process to one location. The HSE has advised that when fully implemented, this measure will ensure:

- Improved turnaround time for the processing of applications (Under the new arrangements, the Executive will be aiming for a turnaround time of 15 days or less for all medical card applications. Emergency applications will be dealt with immediately with a card issuing within 24 hours);
- Equitable application of eligibility across the country;
- Consistency of service provision to customers;
- Clearer lines of governance and accountability; and
- Improved unified data.

The HSE has also indicated that this project, while realising health sector efficiencies and savings, will not have an adverse affect on patient care or the quality of service provided. Applications from people whose income exceeds the income guidelines but have a case to be considered on medical or hardship grounds will also be processed by the PCRS.

This project is an example of the type of innovation signalled in the Transforming Public Services Programme announced by the Taoiseach last November. It demonstrates how improved services can be delivered within the more limited resources available in a way which meets the needs of citizens in a modern society.

Hospital Waiting Lists.

486. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the waiting time for an appointment with a consultant dermatologist in Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33631/09]

487. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of patients awaiting an appointment with a consultant dermatologist in Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33632/09]

488. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to appoint a consultant dermatologists to Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33633/09]

489. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason she supported a situation (details supplied) in Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33634/09]

491. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children her views on whether it is morally or legally right to permit a system of making and cancelling appointments to see non-existent consultants; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33636/09]

492. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will issue an apology to the patients of Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath, who were issued with false appointments; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33637/09]

493. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the name of the person or organisation who gave the authority to Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath to issue false appointments; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33638/09]

494. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason the midlands has been targeted for the cutting of medical services; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33639/09]

496. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason the Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath was permitted to issue appointments with a consultant dermatologist that could not be delivered; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33641/09]

497. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason she and the Health Service Executive failed to reply to queries in relation to the malpractice at Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath in relation to appointments; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33642/09]

498. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the person who prompted the spokesperson for Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital to say that appointments which were false were made in good faith. [33643/09]

499. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will confirm what constitutes good faith in the medical services for which she has responsibility; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33644/09]

500. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children if her attention has been drawn to the potential risk to the health of patients who were given false appointments to see a consultant dermatologist who had left Longford/Westmeath Regional Hospital six months previously; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33645/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 486 to 489, inclusive, 491 to 494, inclusive, and 496 to 500, inclusive, together.

All hospitals funded by the HSE, including those in the Dublin/Midlands region, are required to deliver a high quality service to its patients, while remaining within the financial allocation provided.

The first Consultant Dermatologist for the Midlands Area was appointed to the Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar in September 2007. This Consultant Dermatologist resigned her post earlier this year.

The HSE sought on a number of occasions to recruit a suitable temporary replacement without success. Discussions have taken place between the HSE and a major teaching hospital

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in Dublin with a view to expanding the remit of the post. As a result of these discussions, the HSE intends to advertise the permanent restructured post within the coming weeks. In the meantime, the HSE is endeavouring to put arrangements in place pending filling of the post permanently.

I understand that the appointment times issued to patients by the hospital were based on an expectation, at the time, that the consultant post was about to be filled. Unfortunately, the expected appointment did not materialise. The hospital management regrets any confusion resulting from this.

In the meantime, some patients who required urgent treatment have been seen in Dublin and arrangements have also been made for children to be treated in Dublin.

I have asked the HSE to reply directly to the Deputy on the waiting times and numbers of patients on the waiting list.

Hospital Staff.

490. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of hospitals here which have consultant posts which do not exist; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33635/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): Subject to overall parameters set by Government, the Health Service Executive has the responsibility for determining the composition of its staffing complement, including medical consultant staffing. In that regard, it is a matter for the Executive to manage and deploy its human resources to best meet the requirements of its Annual Service Plan for the delivery of health and personal social services to the public.

As the Deputy's question refers to arrangements for the provision of services it has been referred to the Executive for direct reply.

Questions Nos. 491 to 494, inclusive, answered with Question No. 486.

Hospitals Building Programme.

495. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children the reason phase 2B of Longford-Westmeath Regional Hospital, Mullingar, County Westmeath is not completed after 12 years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33640/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The Midland Regional Hospital at Mullingar forms part of the Dublin/Midlands Hospital Group and provides an extensive range of acute services to the population of Dublin/Midlands and in particular the Longford/Westmeath area.

Stage I of the Phase 2B Capital Development at Mullingar commenced in 2006 and is scheduled for completion shortly at a cost of €23m.

This Phase of the Project includes:

- Fit out of the existing ward shells to provide a new paediatric ward, a new day surgery/gynaecology ward, a new obstetric ward and a new medical ward, incorporating an acute stroke unit.
- Refurbishment of the existing paediatric and obstetric wards to provide surgical and medical wards and a Palliative Care Unit.

- An extension of the existing facilities to accommodate an interim Special Care Baby Unit adjacent to the new paediatric ward.

I understand that these works are completed and that the ward areas are now fully occupied.

In addition, approval was granted for the refurbishment of two further wards in the existing hospital — a Medical/Surgical and a Delivery/Gynaecology ward. This work has been completed and I am advised that the wards will be commissioned by the end of this month.

Questions Nos. 496 to 500, inclusive, answered with Question No. 486.

Health Services.

501. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position of an application for orthodontic treatment for a person (details supplied) in County Carlow; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33661/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Pregnancy Counselling Services.

502. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health and Children if her attention has been drawn to the existence of unregulated crisis pregnancy agencies here; if so, the steps she proposes to take to deal with same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33686/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I assume that the Deputy is referring to agencies which seek to manipulate women by providing a “disingenuous” crisis pregnancy counselling and/or information service.

The Crisis Pregnancy Agency was established in October 2001 and is to be integrated with the HSE at the end of this year as part of the Government’s programme of rationalisation of State agencies.

Among the Agency’s mandates is the provision of services and supports to women experiencing crisis pregnancy with a view to reducing the number of women with crisis pregnancy who opt for abortion. The Agency supports the delivery of crisis pregnancy and post termination counselling services through service level agreements with 14 providers operating in over 50 locations nationwide.

The Crisis Pregnancy Agency is aware of the existence of a number of agencies which seek to manipulate women by providing a “disingenuous” crisis pregnancy counselling and/or information service. The Agency is working on a wide range of actions to address this issue. These actions include:

- A public awareness campaign which I launched in July 2009 entitled “Don’t be manipulated” which highlights the existence of disingenuous agencies and promotes the availability of free, non-judgemental state-funded crisis pregnancy services.
- Continuous promotion through the “Positive Options” campaign of the availability of free, non-judgemental and confidential state-funded crisis pregnancy counselling services.
- Redevelopment of the “Positive Options” website to highlight the actions of disingenuous agencies and to give guidance on how to deal with same.

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- Prominent advertising of “Positive Options” and consumer tips in the Golden Pages, including the regional directories, under “Pregnancy Testing and Counselling” and “Family Planning” sections. The use of a common logo for all state funded counselling services in current editions of the Directories.
- Funding of resources which provide clear objective information on the adoption process. The Agency provides information on adoption in manuals used in the training of *bona fide* crisis pregnancy counsellors.
- Expansion of crisis pregnancy counselling services nationally by over 50% since the Agency was established in 2001.
- Guidance for crisis pregnancy counselling services in responding to third party complaints they may receive about “disingenuous” counselling services.
- Standardised training and up-skilling for counsellors in state-funded crisis pregnancy counselling services.

Health Services.

503. **Deputy Kathleen Lynch** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of people in receipt of home care packages in the Cork region in 2009; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33687/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

504. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a medical card will be approved for a person (details supplied) in County Carlow; if home help and other assistance will be approved; and if she will expedite a response. [33737/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

505. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a medical card will be approved for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny. [33741/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Health Services.

506. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if an appointment will be made with a psychologist for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; if domiciliary care allowance will be awarded and back dated; and if she will expedite both matters. [33742/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As this is a service matter the question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Hospitals Building Programme.

507. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Health and Children when the Health Service Executive will commence building of the new National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoghaire for spinal cord injuries; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33744/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The Health Service Executive is involved in ongoing discussions with the National Rehabilitation Hospital regarding its development proposals. I recently met with a delegation from the National Rehabilitation Hospital.

The development of a new National Rehabilitation Hospital needs to be considered within the context of a national policy for the delivery of rehabilitation services. My Department and the Health Service Executive established a Working Group to develop a policy/strategy for the provision of rehabilitation services. Its terms of reference include the development of an appropriate policy framework for rehabilitation and a preferred model of care for the provision of rehabilitation services. The Working Group has met on a number of occasions to date and it is expected to complete its work in 2009.

In the current economic situation, there is a need to ensure that all developments are planned and implemented to give best value for money and with the most appropriate mix of national, regional and local services.

The proposal to develop a new National Rehabilitation Hospital at a capital cost in excess of €100m and an additional revenue requirement of €45m annually, must also be considered in the context of the current economic climate and available funding.

Question No. 508 answered with Question No. 440.

Health Service Allowances.

509. **Deputy Noel Ahern** asked the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 207 of 9 July 2009, the service available for persons caring for mentally ill relatives; if there is an easily accessible point of contact within the Health Service Executive from whom the carer can seek professional advice by phone in order to deal with the problems which may arise on a daily basis with the mentally ill person. [33758/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): I understand from the HSE that a reply was issued to the Deputy on 28th September 2009.

Services for People with Disabilities.

510. **Deputy Noel Ahern** asked the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 228 of 8 July 2009, the position regarding persons with an intellectual disability and particularly with reference to a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5; if all existing funded schemes in this area are being maintained; the reason they are being told there will be no service for them from September 2009 unless additional funds are provided; and if she will provide same. [33759/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Hospital Staff.

511. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health and Children the process undertaken in relation to the appointment of four regional directors of the Health Service Executive;

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if candidates from outside the HSE were interviewed for this position; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33811/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Child Care Services.

512. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Health and Children if her attention has been drawn to the fact that an increasing number of children and teenagers have had to stop their private orthodontic treatment mid-way due to inability to pay as a consequence of loss of income on the part of their parents or themselves and whether she will instruct the HSE to take over these cases; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33839/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Health Repayment Scheme.

513. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a person (details supplied) in Dublin 12 will have their application for the health repayment scheme addressed and responded to promptly and in detail; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33855/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Hospital Accommodation.

514. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Health and Children the cuts that have taken place at Our Lady's Hospital, Crumlin, in 2009; the number of wards that have been closed; the number of clinics that have been cut; the number of children awaiting inpatient treatment for more than three months, six months and 12 months; her plans for funding the hospital in 2010; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33870/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): Each hospital funded by the HSE is required to deliver services within the financial allocation provided. In common with all hospitals, Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin must deliver a high quality service to its patients, while remaining within budget.

The Deputy's Question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply in relation to the specific service issues raised.

Health Services.

515. **Deputy Noel Ahern** asked the Minister for Health and Children the counselling and advisory services available from her Department or agencies under her Department for women who have lost a baby through death or miscarriage; if there is a specific service provided by maternity hospitals; if this service is available for a specific period thereafter; if women in such situations are referred on by maternity hospitals; the structure, organisation and availability of such services and relevant routes to tap into such services; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33872/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): My Department has been informed that a reply to the Deputy's previous question on the topic is due to be issued today by the HSE.

Social Welfare Benefits.

516. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health and Children the provisions which have been made to process the increased number of applications for the back to school clothing scheme in view of the delay experienced by applicants; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33887/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Community Care.

517. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will validate the continued investment (details supplied) in inpatient treatment despite the fact that community care has been her policy since 1984. [33892/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): Policy for the development of mental health services is outlined in 'A Vision for Change' the Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy. The aim is to migrate from traditional institutional based model to a patient-centred, flexible and community based mental health service, where need for hospital admission is greatly reduced, whilst still providing in-patient care when appropriate.

Implementation of the recommendations in 'A Vision for Change' is primarily the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). In April 2009 the HSE adopted an implementation plan for the five-year period 2009-2013. In addition, a joint research initiative between the Mental Health Commission, the University of Limerick and the HSE is underway to examine the functioning and effectiveness of Community Mental Health Teams. The HSE will shortly appoint a national lead for mental health which will bring a new impetus to the implementation of 'A Vision for Change'.

Departmental Contracts.

518. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of experts' and consultants' reports her Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33903/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the table.

Reports Commissioned in 2008

Name of Report	Cost
	€
National Children's Advisory Council (NCAC) — End of Term Report 2005-2008	Nil
Report of the Independent Pharmacy Pricing Body	41,597
Strategic Plan for the St. Ultan's Children's Project	14,702
Dáil na nÓg Delegate Report 2008	18,137
A Directory of Health Research Undertaken on Children (0-17 years)	60,148

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Name of Report	Cost
	€
Evaluation Report on the Inclusion Programme: Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs	15,727
National Men's Health Policy 2008-2013	20,604
Phase III of a Qualitative Longitudinal Study of Homeless Youth in Dublin	22,000
Report on the Irish Medicines Board assuming the role of Competent Authority for Cosmetics Products	Nil
Research on Young Carers in the Irish Population	108,476
Review of <i>Protecting our Future: Report of the Working Group on Elder Abuse 2002</i>	65,181
Third Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Group on 'A Vision for Change' — the Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy	16,154
Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services	Final cost not yet available.
Report of the Commission established to provide an independent assessment of how a 35 hour week can be achieved for nurses	397,540
Review of the circumstances surrounding the elapse of time in bringing to completion the Western Health Board inquiry into allegations of abuse in the Brothers of Charity Services, Galway	21,015
Study of certain Accounting Issues within the Health Service Executive	54,450

Question No. 519 answered with Question No. 435.

Health Services.

520. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding the provision of a public nursing home bed for a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33930/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

521. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will investigate delays in providing speech therapy for persons (details supplied) in County Dublin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33931/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

522. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will review the entitlement to a medical card of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 10; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33932/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

523. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will ensure that a person (details supplied) in County Sligo will have their medical card reinstated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33933/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Departmental Staff.

524. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Health and Children the cost to her Department and each agency under the aegis of her Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33954/09]

525. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of persons in her Department and each agency under the aegis of her Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33969/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 524 and 525 together.

The number of Civil Servants in my Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 is set out as follows:

Civil Servants

	2006	2007	2008	Jan – 6/10/09
Early Retirement	3	6	1	14
Contract Terminated	0	0	0	0
Resignation	5	11	5	1

The “Early Retirement” category includes officers who retired on ill health grounds, those who availed of the civil service scheme of cost neutral early retirement and those who availed of the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement up to 6th October 2009.

Officers who resign from the Civil Service with more than two years service receive no payment on resignation. Their pension entitlements are preserved and the officer must apply for same on reaching the appropriate age of retirement i.e. 60 or 65. Officers who resign with less than two years service receive a refund of their superannuation contributions less tax payable.

My Department does not have delegated authority to calculate, award and pay superannuation to officers who resign or retire from the Department. This is a matter for the Department of Finance.

The above figures do not include (i) staff who retired on age grounds between the ages of 60 and 65 or (ii) staff whose contracts expired (including staff appointed to support Minister/Ministers of State whose contracts expired when the relevant Minister/Minister of State ceased to hold office).

In addition to the above, one staff member was dismissed from my Department in 2009. No payment was made to the officer on dismissal.

My Department does not collect information on early retirements, termination of contracts or resignations in respect of agencies that come within its remit. I would however, refer the Deputy to my reply to Question Number 34344/09 which deals with pension top-ups or discretionary payments on retirement.

Health Services.

526. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children if persons (details supplied) will be supported. [33977/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

527. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a person (details supplied) will be supported. [33978/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Child Care Services.

528. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding the payment of a child care grant to a group (details supplied) in County Cork. [33984/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): As the Deputy will be aware, I have responsibility for the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) 2006-2010, under which the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) is being implemented.

Capital funding of €250,000 under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000-2006 was approved for the group in question in November 2005. This funding was transferred to the NCIP as the group failed to get to contract within the required timeframe under the EOCP. Additional NCIP funding of €40,000 was approved in February 2008. In February 2009 a decommital was approved for €290,000 as the group had failed to get to contract within the required timeframe under the NCIP. An appeal was received from the group in March 2009 regarding this decision. On 17 September 2009 €33,507 was approved on appeal to cover debts incurred by the group whilst trying to get to contract. This payment is being withheld pending receipt of some specific documentation from the group.

Health Services.

529. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 150 of 22 September 2009, when a reply will be issued; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33985/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I understand from the HSE that it will be in a position to respond to the Deputy in the near future.

Legal Staff.

530. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 479 of 16 September 2009, when a reply will be issued; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33987/09]

531. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 480 of 16 September 2009, when a reply will be issued; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33988/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 530 and 531 together.

The HSE has informed me that replies to these questions are due to be issued to the Deputy this week.

Health Service Staff.

532. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 410 of 16 September 2009, when a reply will be issued; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33989/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I understand from the HSE that this information is currently being collated and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Medical Cards.

533. **Deputy Edward O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the position regarding an application for a medical card by a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33999/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Hospital Accommodation.

534. **Deputy Edward O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will clarify the position in relation to bed closures at a hospital (details supplied) in County Cork and if she will request a review of this proposal with a view to maintaining the four beds in question. [34001/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Health Services.

535. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Health and Children the action she has taken to replace a speech and language therapist providing services to a school (details supplied) in County Offaly; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34004/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): Subject to overall parameters set by Government, the Health Service Executive has the responsibility for determining the composition of its staffing complement. In that regard, it is a matter for the Executive to manage and deploy its human resources to best meet the requirements of its Annual Service Plan for the delivery of health and personal social services to the public. As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

536. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Health and Children if the occupational therapy service provided by her to a school (details supplied) in County Offaly has been changed; the reason for same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34005/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

537. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Health and Children the schools in County Offaly receiving speech and language therapy services from her; if any of these services have been withdrawn from schools in the county; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34006/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

538. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Health and Children the schools in County Offaly receiving occupational therapy services from her; if any of these services have been withdrawn from schools in the county; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34007/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Mental Health Services.

539. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health and Children when steps will be taken by the relevant Departments and agencies to ensure that adequate and appropriate accommodations will be provided to people with mental health problems; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34019/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): 'A *Vision for Change*' provides a comprehensive policy framework for the development of mental health services over a 7-10 year period. It recommends, inter alia, that access to housing for individuals with mental health problems should be on the same basis as every other citizen, the provision of social housing is the responsibility of the Local Authority and opportunities for independent housing should be provided.

Bilateral meetings with officials from the Office for Disability and Mental Health and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to discuss progressing recommendations in 'A *Vision for Change*' have taken place. The Office is participating in the development of a national housing strategy for people with a disability, including mental illness, by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Cooperation between the HSE and Local Authorities is on-going. The voluntary housing sector also plays a significant role in the provision of social housing with regard to people with disabilities, in partnership with local authorities. Capital funding is provided by the Department of the Environment, through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), to approved housing bodies to deliver housing for special needs groups, such as people with disabilities including those with a mental illness.

Health Services.

540. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will support the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5. [34024/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As this is a service matter the question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

541. **Deputy Edward O’Keefe** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will assist in having payments due to a person (details supplied) in County Cork issued without delay under the drugs repayment scheme. [34027/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

542. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a person (details supplied) in County Cork will be granted enhanced subvention; when they will be provided with a public or contract bed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34037/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

543. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the length of time which a child must wait for a speech therapy in areas (details supplied); the way these waiting times compare to waiting times over the past five years. [34057/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy’s question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Ambulance Services.

544. **Deputy Noel O’Flynn** asked the Minister for Health and Children if her attention has been drawn to the fact that the All Ireland Air Ambulance Service which is located at Ballydwyer, Ballymacelligott, Tralee, County Kerry has requested assistance of her Department for approval of the voluntary ambulance service to come under the protocol of the 999 and 112 phone and channel 16 systems; if she will consider supporting the ambulance service through the Health Service Executive by providing medical staff to be part of the crew on the helicopter which will provide medical assistance to injured persons which, when operational, augment the services already provided by the road vehicle ambulance services; if her further attention has been drawn to the success of this voluntary service in the UK and other countries; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34067/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The Booz Allen Hamilton study, jointly commissioned by the Department of Health and Children and the Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the introduction of a dedicated helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) for the island of Ireland, was published in April 2004. The study did not support the establishment of a HEMS for emergency responses, as data on mortality and morbidity benefits to patients transported by HEMS in the primary response role and relative to ground ambulance services was inconclusive. The study offered a supportive view of helicopter use for inter-hospital transfers, with some evidence for the use of helicopters in the aeromedical response role, in support of the land service.

In light of the report and the need to significantly enhance land ambulance services in both jurisdictions, the Departments agreed that policy for the medium-term would concentrate on the consolidation and development of land services. For the HSE, this includes:

- working to unify land ambulance services into one integrated national service;
- ensuring that ambulance personnel are trained to provide more complex pre-hospital care;

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- improving the command and control function;
- organising emergency ambulance services to support the reconfiguration of the acute hospital service.

An air ambulance service is currently provided by the Air Corps through a service level agreement with the Health Service Executive. The Air Corps service provides for the following categories:

- inter-hospital transfer of patients with spinal or other serious injury or illness;
- neonates requiring immediate medical intervention in Ireland;
- patients requiring specialised emergency treatment in the UK;
- organ retrieval teams within Ireland;
- paediatric patients requiring immediate medical intervention in Ireland.

In addition, the Irish Coast Guard provides air ambulance inter-hospital transfers and also provides emergency medical evacuation from the islands around Ireland. In situations where the Coast Guard service is not available, the Air Corps will transport patients from offshore islands to mainland hospitals.

In the circumstances, therefore, there are no plans at present to pursue the introduction of alternative air ambulance services. In the event of the All-Ireland Air Ambulance Service commencing operations, the HSE would not be in a position to provide communications or manpower support or to integrate its activities into those of the public emergency ambulance services in any other way.

Hospital Services.

545. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she plans to move the life-saving stroke unit out of the Midlands Regional Hospital; if so, the facilities she envisages will remain in the hospital under the HSE's removal of essential services from the Midlands; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34080/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Child Care Services.

546. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of providers who have applied to participate in the new scheme to provide free pre-school year of early childhood care and education; the list of the providers countrywide who will be taking part in this particular scheme; if she expects the scheme to commence in January 2010; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34085/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy Barry Andrews): As the Deputy will be aware, I have responsibility for the implementation of the new scheme to provide a free Pre-School year of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) which was announced in April by the Minister of Finance. The scheme is being introduced on the 1st January 2010.

Some 4,700 pre-school services are notified to the Health Service Executive (HSE) and nearly 100 services are registered with the Irish Montessori Educational Board (IMEB). As part of the preparations for introducing the new scheme, my Office wrote to all pre-school service providers in the State in June of this year inviting them to participate in the initiative. To date, applications have been received from approximately 4,180 services. I am informed that some 200 of the services written to have not applied to enter the scheme from January 2010 as they are already satisfactorily funded under other Government schemes such as the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS).

It is expected that a list of participating services will be made available to the City and County Childcare Committees by my Office by the middle of next month when the contract process is completed. Arrangements for the implementation of the scheme are progressing well and it is on course to come into effect from January 2010.

Health Services.

547. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Health and Children her views on correspondence in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 16; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34092/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): I am not in a position to comment on individual cases. Under the Health Act 2004, the management and delivery of health and personal social services is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive. Therefore I have asked the Executive to update the Deputy in relation to the matters raised in the correspondence.

Health Service Staff.

548. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of nursing staff employed in the each Health Service Executive area in 2009 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34160/09]

549. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of nursing staff employed in the each Health Service Executive area in 2008 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34161/09]

550. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of nursing staff employed in the each Health Service Executive area in 2007 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34162/09]

551. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of nursing staff employed in each Health Service Executive area in 2006 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34163/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 548 to 551, inclusive, together.

As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

552. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of staff employed in each Health Service Executive area in 2005 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34164/09]

553. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of non-medical staff and their grade employed in the Health Service Executive in 2009 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34165/09]

554. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of non-medical staff and their grade employed in the Health Service Executive in 2008 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34166/09]

555. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of non-medical staff and their grade employed in the Health Service Executive in 2007 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34167/09]

556. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of non-medical staff and their grade employed in the Health Service Executive in 2006 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34168/09]

557. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of non-medical staff and their grade employed in the Health Service Executive in 2005 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34169/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 552 to 557, inclusive, together.

The number of public health service staff employed, in each HSE area, in 2005 is as follows:

Dublin/Mid-Leinster	Dublin/North-East	National	South	West	Total
29,965.27	22,963.77	559.08	22,976.98	25,513.03	101,978.13

The number of public health service staff employed, by grade category, from Dec 2005 to Aug 2009 is as follows:

Dublin/Mid-Leinster	Dublin/North-East	National	South	West	Total
29,965.27	22,963.77	559.08	22,976.98	25,513.03	101,978.13
	31/12/2005	31/12/2006	31/12/2007	31/12/2008	31/08/2009
Medical/ Dental	7,266.44	7,712.38	8,005.00	8,109.48	8,076.71
Nursing	35,248.45	36,737.34	39,005.99	38,107.92	37,955.71
Health & Social Care Professionals	13,951.74	14,912.96	15,704.67	15,979.73	15,779.48
Management/ Admin	16,699.19	17,261.64	18,043.36	17,967.47	17,649.89
Other Patient & Client Care	15,585.75	16,738.58	17,846.03	18,230.15	18,908.77
General Support Staff	13,226.56	12,909.81	12,899.83	12,630.55	12,118.97
Total	101,978.13	106,272.71	111,504.88	111,025.30	110,489.53

Student nurses are included in the 2007 and 2008 employment ceiling on the basis of 3.5 students equating to 1 wholetime equivalent. The employment levels adjusted for student nurses on the above basis are 110,664 WTE (Dec '07) and 111,001 WTE (Dec '08).

Departmental Staff.

558. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of staff and their grade employed in her Department for 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34170/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The total number of staff (whole time equivalents) employed in my Department in the years requested by the Deputy is listed below in the following table.

Year	Non Industrial Employees
2005	635.64
2006	621.59
2007	592.52
2008	526.51
31st August 2009	500.55

The following table details the breakdown of staff (whole time equivalents) by grade in respect of 2008 and 2009.

Grade	31st December 2008	31st August 2009
Secretary General	1.00	1.00
Assistant Secretary	8.00	8.00
Principal Officer	36.80	37.80
Assistant Principal Officer	93.40	87.50
Administrative Officer	13.50	13.50
Higher Executive Officer	91.6634	88.2317
Executive Officer	90.60	85.30
Staff Officer	10.40	9.70
Clerical Officer	97.4617	96.03
Services Officer	10.80	9.80
Ministerial Staff	21.00	13.00
Other Miscellaneous Grades	24.2817	22.2817
Seconded in staff	27.60	28.40
Total	526.51	500.5434

A breakdown of staff in the format requested by the Deputy is not readily available in respect of the 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Health Services.

559. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a speech therapy assessment will be undertaken in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34181/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As the Deputy's question relates to service matters I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

560. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9 can be expect to be called for a procedure; and if she will arrange for this appointment to be scheduled at the earliest possible date. [34225/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Departmental Contracts.

561. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will respond to a query (details supplied). [34317/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): Vodafone Ltd. has the contract for the supply of mobile phones to my Department, including all Ministers. The contract was awarded following a competitive tendering process based on a framework agreement negotiated by the Department of Finance.

Departmental Staff.

562. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of occasions on which her Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34344/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): Arising from the establishment of the HSE and following an agreement with IMPACT, the Department of Finance sanctioned the application on an administrative basis of the standard public service superannuation “abolition of office” terms to certain former senior health board personnel who did not obtain posts in the new HSE structure where this was recommended by an independent mediator. This arrangement was subject to the following conditions: it applied only to relevant posts at or above Director function; and the posts in question would be abolished with a corresponding reduction in the HSE’s employment ceiling. A total of 20 people have exited the system under this arrangement in the three year period from June 2006 to date (a number of others left prior to June 2006).

In addition, following a recommendation by an independent mediator, special exit arrangements were sanctioned by the Department of Finance for former health board Chief Executive Officers who had been appointed to their posts on fixed term contracts to reflect the fact that their posts no longer existed under the new structure. Only one individual, who had a linkage to this group, has exited on this basis in the three year period from June 2006 to date (others left prior to June 2006).

My Department is also aware of a chief executive officer who retired from a health service provider on grounds of redundancy and of one person who left another organisation as a result of rationalisation/restructuring in accordance with normal public sector arrangements.

While individual benefits constitute personal data, I am making the following information available (based on the information available to me).

Position	Year	Additional lump sum payment	Addition to Pension
1	2006	17,269	5,756
2	2006	22,629	7,543
3	2006	37,206	12,402
4	2007	25,888	3,650
5	2007	14,277	4,759
6	2007	17,500	5,834
7	2007	21,236	7,079

Position	Year	Additional lump sum payment	Addition to Pension
8	2007	27,476	9,159
9	2007	36,926	12,308
10	2007	41,686	13,896
11	2007	43,518	14,506
12	2007	43,562	14,521
13	2008	17,370	649
14	2008	37,707	12,569
15	2008	39,541	12,761
16	2008	43,595	14,532
17	2008	47,925	15,976
18	2009	3,772	1,257
19	2009	27,512	9,171
20	2009	79,332*	—
21	2009	42,193	14,065
22	2009	44,673	14,891
23	2009	51,513	17,171

*On the basis of their contract, this individual was also entitled to added years and six months severance.

The calculation of pension benefits for retired officers of my Department is a matter for the Department of Finance in accordance with regulations governing these arrangements. My Department has not sanctioned, or applied for sanction for, payment of any pension top-ups or discretionary payments in relation to any officer outside the terms of these regulations.

563. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Health and Children the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34359/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): No staff were dismissed from my Department for misconduct, poor performance or for failing to fulfil the terms of their contract in the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. One staff member was dismissed for misconduct in 2009.

National Drugs Strategy.

564. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Health and Children her views on whether it is appropriate that the State should accept money from an international charity (details supplied) whose funds might more properly be directed to the developing world; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34364/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I am supportive of the partnership approach between the HSE, the Irish Pharmacy Union and the Elton John AIDS Foundation in the provision of needle exchange services in 65 new locations across the country. The Foundation is providing funding over a 3-year period which is being matched by the HSE. The HSE is committed to continuing the programme thereafter. The HSE is committed under action 34 of the National Drug Strategy 2009-2016 to providing needle exchange services where they are required.

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The Elton John AIDS Foundation is a leading world wide organisation dedicated to preventing the transmission of the HIV virus. I understand that it supports projects in 55 countries (including the UK and the United States) across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. Given that the Foundation funds projects on a wide geographic basis, I do not see anything inappropriate in the Irish health service having accepted its generous offer of support.

Medical Cards.

565. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children if assistance will be given in having a medical card approved on renewal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [34427/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Ambulance Services.

566. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children her plans to implement the recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General 2008 report in relation to the Dublin ambulance service; if so, when these recommendations will be put in place; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34450/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): Emergency ambulance services in Dublin have been provided by Dublin Fire Brigade for many years on behalf of the Health Service Executive. It is important to ensure that all of our pre-hospital emergency services, including the service provided by the Dublin Fire Brigade, function as a high quality, integrated health service. The advice of the Health Information and Quality Authority on pre-hospital care issues will be a significant factor in determining how services should be organised so that they operate efficiently and that clinical governance, patient safety and quality standards are met.

The HSE and Dublin City Council are in discussion regarding a number of practical issues, including the nature and terms on which Dublin Fire Brigade provides emergency ambulance services in Dublin. The views of the Comptroller and Auditor General in relation to ambulance services in Dublin will be considered in this context.

Medical Aids and Appliances.

567. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the progress made in reducing the cost of medicines and medical devices here; if her attention has been drawn to the fact that, for example, an inhaler tube costs nearly four times as much in the Republic of Ireland compared to Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34451/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): My Department and the HSE have implemented a number of reforms to reduce the cost of medicines to both the State and individual patients. Under the terms of the current agreements between the HSE and pharmaceutical manufacturers, price cuts of 35% have been applied to all off-patent proprietary products for which generic alternatives are available on the Irish market. A report published by the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics in May 2009 estimated that approximately €250 million will be saved due to off-patent price cuts, up to August 2010, when the agreements come up for renewal.

Since 2006 a larger basket of reference countries has been used for determining the prices of new products accepted for reimbursement under the State drugs schemes. The current agreements also permit price adjustments to reflect price changes in the reference countries.

I recently reduced the wholesale mark-up payable on medicines from 17.66% to 10% and reduced the retail mark-up payable under certain schemes from 50% to 20%. Savings from the measures have been estimated at €55 million for 2009 and €133 million on a full year basis.

Historically, the reimbursement prices of non-drug items in Ireland were determined by the currency-adjusted UK prices. The prices of non-drug items have been frozen since 2003. The HSE has established a group to review the non-drug area and to consider procurement options for non-drug items which will deliver increased value for money. My Department and the HSE are continuing to examine all options for containing pharmaceutical expenditure, including the introduction of a system of reference pricing.

Health Services.

568. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the new child and adolescent psychiatric beds which will be in place by end of 2009; the new child and adolescent psychiatric teams which will be in place by the end of 2009; the location of same; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34452/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As this is a service matter the question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Capital Programme.

569. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children the capital projects that are underway or are in the design or planning process under her Department; if attempts have been made to achieve cost reductions on these projects in view of changing economic circumstances; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34453/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The Health Service Executive is currently progressing a large number of projects under its ongoing capital programme. The HSE continues to pursue all available options to ensure that best value for money is obtained for capital projects, including competitive tendering and the application of reductions in professional fees under Government policy. In line with recent general trends for capital investments, significant cost reductions are being achieved by the HSE, particularly in relation to the construction phase of all newly-contracted capital projects. The question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply in relation to the details of the projects being progressed.

The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs provides capital funding support for the development and refurbishment of childcare facilities under the National Childcare Investment Programme. Approximately one thousand such projects have or are being supported under this programme and a 25% reduction has been sought on the projected construction costs of projects that have not yet reached an advanced stage of development. The replacement Cork centre for the Irish Blood Transfusion Service is currently in the design process.

Health Services.

570. **Deputy Jan O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she has given policy direction to the Health Service Executive on the areas in which it should focus on budget cuts for 2010; if she will protect the primary community and continuing care budgets in

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accordance with the stated policy of providing more care for patients outside of acute hospitals; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34454/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): The Government will be considering the Estimates for 2010 over the next few months, in the context of its target to reduce the general government deficit to 3% of GDP by 2013 as part of its strategy for economic recovery. As part of the Estimates process, my Department and the Health Service Executive are examining options which might provide expenditure savings next year, while to the greatest extent possible meeting the objective of maintaining population health and access to services. This process is being informed by the recommendations of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes and other relevant considerations.

All of these issues are being examined in the context of the Estimates process. Deliberations by Government on the expenditure allocations for next year are likely to continue up until Budget time. The very difficult financial position facing the Exchequer will obviously require very careful management across all areas of expenditure.

Departmental Statistics.

571. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if there is a system in place to record the length of time patients are waiting for outpatient appointments after having been referred by their general practitioner to a hospital consultant; the statistics available in this regard in relation to each of the acute hospitals; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34455/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Question No. 572 answered with Question No. 440.

Hospital Accommodation.

573. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a public bed will be provided for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if she will expedite the matter. [34476/09]

583. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a public bed will be provided for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if she will expedite the matter. [34535/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): I propose to take Questions Nos. 573 and 583 together.

As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

574. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a full medical card will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34489/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Community Care.

575. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children when home help or community service assistance will be arranged for a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34490/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Health Services.

576. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if travel costs can be recouped in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34491/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Medical Cards.

577. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health and Children when a medical card will issue to persons (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34492/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Services for People with Disabilities.

578. **Deputy Ciarán Cuffe** asked the Minister for Health and Children the grounds on which persons with autism or Asperger's syndrome are not included in the national intellectual disabilities database; the measures taken to compile data on this intellectual disability; the action she has taken to improve service provision and future service requirements; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34501/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): The Department of Health and Children does not collect information on children identified with Autism and Asperger's on a national basis. Information pertaining to diagnosis is specifically excluded from the National Intellectual Disability Database as the database is not designed as a medical epidemiological tool. Accordingly the database does not record the incidence of Autism or any other disability.

With regard to the remaining matters raised by the Deputy, these relate 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 these matters investigated and to have a reply issued directly to the Deputy.

Health Services.

579. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will respond to correspondence (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34505/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children (Deputy John Moloney): As this is a service matter the question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Question No. 580 answered with Question No. 430.

581. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will intercede with the Health Service Executive on behalf of a person (details supplied) in County Sligo; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34521/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service matter it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

Hospital Services.

582. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Health and Children if a hospital appointment will be expedited for a person (details supplied) in County Louth in view of their medical condition; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34525/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue, it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Question No. 583 answered with Question No. 573.

Hospital Waiting Lists.

584. **Deputy Deirdre Clune** asked the Minister for Health and Children if her attention has been drawn to reports that waiting times for cardiac procedures at Crumlin children's hospital are increasing due to the lack of intensive care beds; her plans to address this situation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34538/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Nursing Home Subventions.

585. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she plans to discontinue the nursing home subvention scheme, to change the eligibility criteria for receiving nursing home subvention or change the scheme in any way; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34555/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Health and Children (Deputy Áine Brady): The Minister announced yesterday that the Nursing Home Subvention Scheme will be replaced by the Nursing Homes Support Scheme, A Fair Deal, on the 27th October 2009. From this date onwards, no new applications for nursing home subvention will be processed. However, it is important to note that anyone currently in receipt of subvention can choose to retain their current arrangements or can opt to transfer to the new scheme.

Given that the subvention scheme will be replaced (for new applicants) by the new Nursing Homes Support Scheme, there are no plans to alter the terms or criteria of the subvention scheme for existing residents in any way. The new Nursing Homes Support Scheme is a scheme of financial support for anyone in need of nursing home care. The application form and information booklet for the scheme are now available to the public and may be obtained from the HSE.

Hospital Services.

586. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Health and Children if she will ensure that a person (details supplied) in County Longford is admitted for an operation at St. James's Hospital, Dublin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34559/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As this is a service issue it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Health Services.

587. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Health and Children the amount of funding provided by her or the HSE, on a yearly basis in a tabular format, since a facility (details supplied) in County Mayo was set up; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34591/09]

Minister for Health and Children (Deputy Mary Harney): As these are service matters, they have been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Rural Transport Services.

588. **Deputy Jim O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Transport if his attention has been drawn to the fact that a recent CSO survey shows that 50% of rural households reported difficulty in accessing public transport and were consistently more likely to experience difficulties accessing basic services such as banking, groceries, post office and GP services; if the rural transport scheme operation under his Department at a relatively small cost to the taxpayer will continue to operate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34016/09]

594. **Deputy John Deasy** asked the Minister for Transport if he will ensure that the rural transport scheme is not abolished in view of the social and economic value this scheme has for people living in rural areas without public transport; his views on restructuring the scheme and introducing a fee for people who avail of the scheme to make it more sustainable; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33044/09]

596. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Transport his proposals on the rural transport scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33125/09]

602. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Transport his plans to extend a programme (details supplied); if the programme will be expanded; and the projected budget for this programme for 2010. [33364/09]

603. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Transport the funding provided for a programme (details supplied) on a county basis, for each of the past five years and to date in 2009. [33365/09]

604. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Transport the estimated number of service users, on a county basis of a programme (details supplied) to date in 2009. [33366/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): I propose to take Questions Nos. 588, 594, 596, 602, 603 and 604 together.

There are commitments to the Rural Transport Programme (RTP) in the National Development Plan, Towards 2016 and the Department of Transport's sectoral plan under the Disability Act 2005. The Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes recom-

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mended the abolition of the RTP. The Government will consider the Group's recommendations as part of its preparations for Budget 2010. The Government has also referred the Group's report to the Oireachtas Committee on Finance and General Affairs for consideration prior to the Budget.

Separate to and before receipt of the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, my Department had already decided that a Value for Money Review would be undertaken on the RTP in 2010. Subject to the outcome of the deliberations and decisions referred to earlier, it is the intention to proceed with the review next year and all relevant matters relating to the operation of the Programme will be examined. This will include, as suggested by the Deputy, consideration of increased passenger revenue as, in appropriate circumstances, it is already the practice for passengers to make a personal contribution towards the cost of services.

It is important that all the State resources devoted to rural transport generally are utilised as cost-effectively as possible and in that context a number of initiatives are currently under way to explore the potential for improved synergies between existing transport providers (namely, the Health Service Executive for health transport, Department of Education and Science for school transport, Bus Éireann for conventional public transport and Pobal for RTP services). These initiatives involve pilot transport projects in the North East and North West, an exercise to map all transport services in County Louth and a cross-border pilot rural community transport project under the auspices of the British-Irish Council. The outcome of these initiatives will feed into the continuing development of rural transport.

It is not possible to give a breakdown of the number of service users or funding provided under the RTP on a county by county basis as some of the community transport groups funded under the Programme operate across county boundaries. However, the following table provides data on a global basis for the Programme for the years since it was launched in February 2007:

Year	Funding	Number of Services	Number of Passenger Journeys
	€		
2007	9,000,000	120,753	998,350
2008	10,000,000	140,000	1,200,000
2009	11,000,000	(Estimated outcome) In excess of 140,000	(Estimated outcome) In excess of 1,200,000

Public Transport.

589. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Transport the average subsidy per DART passenger for 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32932/09]

590. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Transport the average subsidy per passenger on all CIÉ mainline rail journeys in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32933/09]

591. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Transport the average subsidy per passenger for all Dublin Bus journeys in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32934/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): I propose to take Questions Nos. 589 to 591, inclusive, together.

The information sought by the Deputy is set out as follows:

Year	Bus Atha Cliath			Iarnród Éireann		
	Subvention (€m)	Passenger numbers	Subsidy per passenger	Subvention (€m)	Passenger Numbers	Subsidy per passenger
2008	85.629	143.5m	€0.60	181.152	43.3m	€4.18

The allocation of the Irish Rail subvention across DART, Suburban, other commuter and InterCity services is a matter for the company.

Road Safety.

592. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Transport if he will introduce legislation to ensure that all heavy goods vehicles are required to retrofit cyclops mirrors in view of the recent death of another cyclist ; if he will introduce a tax rebate on retrofitting these mirrors in order to incentivise this life saving mechanism; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33008/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): Under the Road Safety Authority Act 2006 (Conferral of Functions) Order 2006 (S.I. No 477 of 2006) this is a matter for the Road Safety Authority.

Flood Relief.

593. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Transport the meetings which took place with his Department's officials and a local authority following an incident (details supplied) in County Donegal; if funding has been or will be provided to assist in view of the infrastructural damage caused. [33019/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): In September, 2004 the Government confirmed the Office of Public Works (OPW) as the State's lead agency in flooding, to be tasked with delivering an integrated, multifaceted programme aimed at mitigating future flood risk and impact. As regards flooding of roads, the improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is a statutory function of each road authority, in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act, 1993, to be funded from its own resources supplemented by State road grants. The initial selection of works to be funded from these grants is also a matter for the local authority.

When road grants for regional and local roads are allocated each year, my Department does not hold back a reserve allocation at central level to deal with weather contingencies. Such an arrangement would mean a reduction across all local authorities in the road grant allocations to them at the beginning of each year. Instead, the allocation made to local authorities is inclusive of the weather risk factor. Local authorities are expressly advised that they should set aside contingency sums from their overall regional and local roads resources to finance necessary weather related works.

Donegal County Council submitted a report to my Department in June this year in relation to damage to roads caused by flooding. An official from the Department's Roads Inspectorate visited the site of the flooding to evaluate the extent of the damage. In the course of that visit he met with local authority engineers. As an exceptional measure, and in view of the particular circumstances of the Donegal flooding, funding of €130,000 has been provided to Donegal County Council, for works approved by the Roads Inspectorate. Consideration of any appli-

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cations for financial assistance from local authorities has, of course, to take account of the current budgetary situation, the resources already allocated to the authority and the authority's ability to fund works from its own resources.

Question No. 594 answered with Question No. 588.

Ministerial Travel.

595. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Transport the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagements; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33089/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The information sought by the Deputy is being compiled and will be provided to him as soon as it is available.

Question No. 596 answered with Question No. 588.

Rail Services.

597. **Deputy Dinny McGinley** asked the Minister for Transport the reason Donegal is not being included in the strategic rail review which would link Derry to Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33180/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The Strategic Rail Review (SRR), which was completed in 2003, set out priorities for future rail investment which fed into the development of Transport 21, my Department's ten-year investment framework, which runs from 2006 to 2015. While the SRR considered possible developments in Donegal, in particular a proposed Derry-Letterkenny rail link which could, potentially be extended to Sligo, the SRR did not include this as a priority in its recommendations. As a consequence, no capital provision for rail developments in County Donegal was included in Transport 21.

Airport Development Projects.

598. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Transport if he will respond to a query (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33269/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The Irish Aviation Authority recently lodged a planning application in respect of the proposed new Visual Control Tower at Dublin Airport. However, the building of the proposed Tower will only be required if the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) proceeds with the construction of a second runway at Dublin airport. The current decline in the aviation market has affected traffic at the airport and the DAA has therefore deferred this element of its proposed capital programme for the airport, until such time as demand dictates.

Rail Services.

599. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport if a matter (details supplied) will be supported. [33272/09]

607. **Deputy Pádraic McCormack** asked the Minister for Transport his plans for proceeding with phase two of the western rail corridor which is an essential part of the infrastructure in the west of Ireland to open opportunities for job creation and development of the region; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33679/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): I propose to take Questions Nos. 599 and 607 together.

Work is continuing on the first phase of the Western Rail Corridor, from Ennis to Athenry, and the line is on target to be completed by the end of the year. The Government has previously decided to reopen phases 2 (Athenry-Tuam) and 3 (Tuam-Claremorris) of the corridor under Transport 21, my Department's investment framework for the years 2006-2015.

The immediate next step, following completion of phase 1, will be for Iarnród Éireann to undertake a detailed evaluation of phases 2 and 3 with a view to arriving at precise costs to undertake the works. I am committed to progress planning on the Western Rail Corridor. The current funding environment is very difficult and it will not be possible to progress all the projects in Transport 21 in accordance with the ambitious timescale envisioned at its launch. Nevertheless, I am seeking to progress planning of projects such as the Western Rail Corridor phases 2 and 3, to ensure that we are in a position to move speedily to construction when financial circumstances permit.

In its report, the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, under the chairmanship of Mr. Colm Mc Carthy, and established by the Minister for Finance, Mr. Brian Lenihan T.D., recommended that there should be no further development of the Western Rail corridor. The Government will be reflecting on the Report's recommendations over the months ahead. Decisions on implementation will rest with the Government and Dáil Éireann, including in the context of preparing the Budget for 2010 and later years. The Government has referred the Report for analysis and comment by the Oireachtas Committee on Finance and General Affairs prior to the Budget in December.

Public Transport.

600. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Transport the position regarding a specific route (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33299/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The initiation or alteration of a bus service by Bus Eireann is subject to compliance with a requirement to give advance notice to my Department and to compliance with the provisions of Section 25 of the Transport Act 1958 concerning competition with licensed private operators. Where proposed services by the Company are deemed to be in competition with services that are the subject of a licence held by a private bus operator issued under the Road Transport Act, 1932, Bus Eireann is required to obtain my consent under section 25 of the Transport Act 1958 before the Company can introduce such services.

My Department received a proposal from Bus Eireann in June 2007 for changes to its Route 133 service from Wicklow to Dublin Airport to include a pick up and set down point in Bray. Following an initial examination, which included consultation with Bus Eireann, my Department concluded that the proposal would give rise to competition with an existing licensed service. Accordingly, my Department advised Bus Eireann on 10th November, 2007 that an application in accordance with Section 25 of the Transport Act, 1958 was required. No application has since been received by my Department.

Road Network.

601. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Transport if funding will be made available to improve access to primary road routes for motorists from Tay Lane, Newcastle, County Dublin and Tandy's Lane, Lucan, County Dublin. [33310/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads, in its area, is a statutory function of each road authority in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the Roads Act, 1993. Works on such roads are a matter for the relevant local authority to be funded from its own resources supplemented by State road grants. The initial selection and prioritisation of projects to be funded is also a matter for the local authority.

Regional and Local Road Grant allocations were announced in April this year. In the case of South Dublin County Council, the total grant allocation from the Department in 2009 is €8,250,000. In August my Department sought applications for consideration for funding under the Specific Improvement Grants scheme in 2010. It is open to South Dublin County Council to include these projects among its applications when they are submitted in due course. The 2010 road grant allocations will be decided early in the New Year.

Local authorities may also use their Discretionary Improvement grant allocations from the Department to fund eligible improvement schemes. The 2009 Discretionary Improvement grant allocation to South Dublin County Council is €167,000. The selection of works to be funded from this allocation is entirely a matter for the local authority.

Questions Nos. 602 to 604, inclusive, answered with Question No. 588.

Taxi Regulations.

605. **Deputy Charlie O'Connor** asked the Minister for Transport his proposals to deal with the concerns of persons involved in the taxi industry; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that this is a serious issue in Tallaght, Dublin 24 and elsewhere; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33532/09]

617. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport his plans to reform the Taxi Regulation Act 2003; and if a time frame has been set for such reform. [34051/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): I propose to take Questions Nos. 605 and 617 together.

The regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV) industry, including dealing with concerns of persons involved in the industry, is a matter for the Commission on Taxi Regulation in accordance with the Taxi Regulation Act, 2003. The CTR is currently finalising its proposals for the future development and regulation of the industry, in follow-up to the economic review published earlier this year. The Commission is also working closely with the Gardaí, Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Revenue Commissioners. Apart from the amendments to the Taxi Regulation Act 2003 provided for in the Public Transport Regulation Bill 2009, which, inter alia, relate to the amalgamation and strengthening of the functions of the CTR within the proposed National Transport Authority, I have no further proposals for the amendment of the 2003 Act.

Traffic Calming Measures.

606. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Transport if, in view of a recent accident, he will instruct the relevant authorities to provide for traffic calming measures without further delay on the Diswellstown Road in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33609/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads, in its area, is a statutory function of each road authority in accordance

with the provisions of section 13 of the Roads Act, 1993. Works on such roads are a matter for the relevant local authority to be funded from its own resources supplemented by State road grants. The initial selection and prioritisation of projects to be funded is also a matter for the local authority. Regional and Local Road Grant allocations were announced in April this year. In the case of Fingal County Council, the total grant allocation from the Department in 2009 is €5,788,866.

In May this year, my Department invited applications from road authorities for funding in 2010 under the Low Cost Safety Improvement Works scheme of grants. The applications for funding under this scheme submitted by Fingal County Council did not include proposals for works on the Diswellstown Road in Dublin 15. Local authorities may also use their Discretionary Improvement grant allocations from the Department to fund traffic calming works. The 2009 Discretionary Improvement grant allocation to Fingal County Council is €215,000. The selection of works to be funded from this allocation is entirely a matter for the local authority.

Question No. 607 answered with Question No. 599.

Road Network.

608. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Transport if he has received confirmation of the successful tender for the Ballinagar Bridge in County Kerry from Kerry County Council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33743/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): My Department recently received a tender recommendation for the Ballinagar Bridge project in County Kerry, from Kerry County Council. My Department has issued a letter to the Council approving the appointment of the proposed contractor.

School Transport.

609. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Transport if he will arrange financial assistance for the transport of a child (details supplied) in County Carlow; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33765/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The issue raised is a matter for my colleague the Minister for Education and Science.

Road Network.

610. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport the position regarding an application by a local authority (details supplied) for an improvement grant. [33826/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads, in its area, is a statutory function of each road authority in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the Roads Act, 1993. Works on such roads are a matter for the relevant local authority to be funded from its own resources supplemented by State road grants. The initial selection and prioritisation of projects to be funded is also a matter for the local authority. In August my Department sought applications for consideration for funding under the Specific Improvement Grants scheme in 2010. Cork County Council has included the R611 Belgooly to Carrigaline Road among its applications for funding. The 2010 road grant allocations will be decided early in the New Year.

Traffic Management.

611. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Minister for Transport the reason he has no plans to regulate the clamping industry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33830/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The provisions of the Road Traffic Acts relating to parking apply only to the parking of vehicles on public roads or in local authority car parks. The practice of clamping or the removal of vehicles on private property does not come within the scope of Road Traffic legislation and, accordingly, I have no plans to regulate in this area.

Light Rail Project.

612. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Transport if he will re-affirm his commitment to provide the line F — Luas for Lucan; if he will commit to provide this project by the scheduled date of 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33846/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): I want to assure the Deputy that I remain fully committed to the delivery of Luas Line F to Lucan. The implementation of this project will be determined as appropriate by the outcome of public consultation, the statutory planning approval process, the public procurement process and the funding available to my Department during the current difficult economic climate. I understand that the planning and design of this line is at an advanced stage and the Railway Procurement Agency intend submitting a Railway Order application to An Bórd Pleanála in 2010 in respect of this line.

Public Transport.

613. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Transport if he will approve an application for grant aid submitted by a group (details supplied) under the smarter travel project scheme to facilitate the transport of cancer patients in County Kerry to the centre of excellence in Cork. [33884/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): Action 47 of the Governments Smarter Travel Policy states that a fund would be set up to support innovative sustainable travel projects. Such a fund, the Smarter Travel Project Fund was set up in June 2009. It is envisaged that the total value of the fund will be €15 million, with €3 million per annum being made available over a five-year period. The closing date for applications was September 9th 2009, and there were over 120 applications to the fund. I can confirm that my Department has received the application from the Kerry Cancer Support Group. This application is currently being examined as part of the assessment process, in line with the criteria set out in the application form.

Departmental Reports.

614. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Transport the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33907/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The information requested by the Deputy is contained in the following table.

Commissioned Reports for 2008

Nature/Objective of Report	Cost of Report
	€
1. Review of the Travel Trade legislation	No cost to Department
2. Article 4 verification checks on EU co-financed public transport projects under the ESIOIP 2000-2006	48,400
3. Value for Money review of the second Railway Safety Programme	109,846
4. Feasibility study on migration of SafeSeas Application from Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to Department of Transport	19,360
5. Print Management/Efficiency for the Department	4,250
6. Accommodation and technical advice for Irish Coast Guard Co-ordination centres	22,675
7. To assess the accessibility of a representative selection of domestic passenger ship and the harbour/ports	36,633
8. Report of the Maritime Passenger Transport Forum	5,666
9. Report and advice relating to procuring facility management operator for Terminal Two at Dublin Airport	236,925
10. Consultancy relating to the Cork Airport debt	30,250
11. Cost & Efficiency Review of Dublin Bus & Bus Eireann	306,959
12. Standardisation Review of the System Dossier on Internal Financial Controls	23,326

Departmental Staff.

615. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Transport the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department of early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33958/09]

616. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Transport the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33973/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): I propose to take Questions Nos. 615 and 616 together.

The information requested pertaining to my Department is in the table. This excludes contract terminations and/or resignations arising from Cabinet changes. Costs arising from early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations of staff in my Department is borne by the Exchequer through the Department of Finance. The information requested pertaining to the agencies is a matter for each agency itself.

Department of Transport	2006	2007	2008	2009
Early Retirements	1	2	1	12
Contract Terminations	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Resignations	4	N/A	3	N/A

Question No. 617 answered with Question No. 605.

Traffic Management.

618. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Transport if he will respond to a matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34091/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The levels of fixed charge penalties payable in respect of contravention of traffic and parking regulations were set in 2006. I have no plans to reduce the level of fixed charge penalties payable.

Departmental Contracts.

619. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Transport if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34321/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The Department of Transport has contracts with O2 and Vodafone under the National Mobile Voice and Data Framework, which was negotiated by the Department of Finance.

Road Safety.

620. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Transport his proposals to change the regulations in regard to motorcycles; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34322/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012 sets out a range of measures to be undertaken in relation to motorcycle safety, including the development of a national motorcycling safety strategy and the introduction of compulsory basic training for motorcyclists. The Road Safety Authority (RSA) has undertaken consultation processes on both a national motorcycling safety strategy and the introduction of compulsory basic training for motorcyclists. The RSA will bring forward in due course proposals for my consideration.

Departmental Staff.

621. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Transport the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under its remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34348/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): My Department has neither sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of my Department or any agency under the remit of my Department in the past three years.

622. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Transport the number of staff who have been dismissed from his Department for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34363/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): One member of staff from my Department has been dismissed in the period from 2004 to date in 2009.

Air Services.

623. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Transport if he will meet with the manage-

ment of Aer Lingus regarding the conditions which have been placed on customers who form part of group bookings via overseas tour operators and raise the detrimental effect this is having on previously loyal operators with the tradition of bringing tourists here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34365/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): While I have no role in commercial or operational matters of Aer Lingus, I would be concerned if conditions were being imposed by any airline serving the Irish market that were having a detrimental effect on inbound tourism. I recently received representations on the matter, which I intend to bring to the attention of the Aer Lingus management.

Departmental Agencies.

624. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Transport if each company under his remit has a policy on whistle-blowing; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34459/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): This is a matter for the agencies concerned and I have no function in the matter.

Public Transport.

625. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Transport the reason a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath is being asked to cease operating a school bus service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34478/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The Road Transport Act, 1932 provides the statutory basis for regulating the provision of passenger road services by private bus operators. Any private operator providing a passenger road service is required to hold an annual passenger licence for that service. My Department was made aware that the operator in question commenced a passenger road service without obtaining a passenger licence in breach of section 7 of the Road Transport Act, 1932. The service is also in direct competition with an existing licensed service. My Department requested the operator to immediately cease the operation of the illegal service. As the operator chose to ignore my Department's request the case has been referred to the Garda Síochána for appropriate attention.

626. **Deputy Michael Mulcahy** asked the Minister for Transport the percentage of buses in the Dublin Bus fleet that can accommodate wheelchair passengers; the number of these that can accommodate more than one wheelchair passenger at a time; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34534/09]

Minister for Transport (Deputy Noel Dempsey): The percentage of Dublin Bus vehicles which are currently wheelchair accessible is 88%, all of which can accommodate one wheelchair passenger at a time.

Residency Permits.

627. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when a decision will be made on an application for residency for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33113/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am advised by the Immigration Division of my Department that the application for residence in the State

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based on their marriage to an EU national made by the person in question is currently the subject of High Court proceedings and is therefore sub judice.

Road Traffic Offences.

628. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of section 49 prosecutions here for 2007 and 2008 which were detected at checkpoints and so on; the number which were detected as a result of road traffic accidents; the number of deaths which occurred as a result of excess speed and where there was no detection of alcohol; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33121/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office, as the national statistical agency, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose. I have requested the CSO to provide the statistics in relation to prosecutions under section 49 of the Road Traffic Act 1961 sought by the Deputy directly to him. In accordance with the Road Safety Authority Act 2006 (Conferral of Functions) Order 2006, the Road Safety Authority has responsibility for carrying out research into the causes of road accidents and developing measures and practices to improve safety on our roads. This includes publication of an annual report, Road Collision Facts.

Commercial Leases.

629. **Deputy Joe Behan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the reason for the delay in the introduction of the ban on upward only commercial rent reviews as provided for in the Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33513/09]

633. **Deputy Ciarán Cuffe** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when the provision relating to the prohibition of so-called upward only rent review clauses in commercial leases, as contained in the Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2009, will become legally operable. [32950/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I propose to take Questions Nos. 629 and 633 together.

When Section 132 of the Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2009 was brought forward in July, I made it clear that an appropriate period of time would be needed to allow the market to factor in the very significant changes which were being introduced. That remains the position. While I have taken no final decision on a commencement date, I would note that the section will not be commenced before 1 December at the earliest as that is the date which has been chosen for other sections in the Act.

Prevention of Corruption.

630. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if his attention has been drawn to the fact that Ireland has been placed at number 16 on the Transparency International Global Corruption Report 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33820/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): Transparency International is a non-governmental organisation that publishes a report each year giving an overview of corruption around the globe. This report also contains the Corruptions Perceptions

Index (CPI) which charts levels of corruption in countries worldwide. The CPI has a rating scale of between 10 and 0, with a score close to 10 indicating an extremely low level of corruption, and a score close to 0 indicating a very high level of corruption.

In the 2009 Report, Ireland is ranked jointly with the United Kingdom at 16th place with a CPI score of 7.7. This is in comparison to the 2008 report which ranked Ireland in 17th place with a CPI score of 7.5. The 2009 assessment means that Transparency International has assessed that Ireland is the 16th least corrupt country out of the 180 countries analysed. While there is no room for complacency, Ireland's ranking in relation to global corruption has improved. It is my intention to enact the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill 2008 at the earliest opportunity. Enactment of this Bill will allow for the ratification of the UN Convention Against Corruption and will help ensure that Ireland's rating will continue to improve.

Road Safety.

631. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the cost to date of rolling out the national speed cameras programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34172/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): An Garda Síochána is engaged in a procurement process, in accordance with EU Directives, national public procurement procedures and relevant legislation, for the provision and operation of safety cameras by a service provider. A preferred bidder has been selected, and contract discussions are currently underway. Until these discussions are concluded and a contract concluded, no additional expenditure will be incurred on the roll out of the safety cameras programme.

Proposed Legislation.

632. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform his plans to introduce legislation to protect good Samaritans and volunteers from being sued following the report by the Law Reform Commission in June 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34099/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The recommendations of the Law Reform Commission in its June 2009 Report on the Civil Liability of Good Samaritans and Volunteers are currently being examined in my Department with a view to putting legislative proposals to the Government.

Question No. 633 answered with Question No. 629.

Crime Levels.

634. **Deputy Ciarán Cuffe** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of goods vehicle checkpoints or individual officer interventions at the roadside mounted by the Garda Síochána within the Dublin city heavy goods vehicle permit zone during 2008 and to date in 2009; the number of 5-/6-axle HGV permit infractions detected by the Garda Síochána within the permit zone for 2008 and to date in 2009; the outcome in each case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32951/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): In the time available it has not been possible for the Garda authorities to supply the information requested by the Deputy. I will be in contact with the Deputy when the information is to hand.

Appointments to State Boards.

635. **Deputy Ciarán Cuffe** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when he plans to appoint a legal services ombudsman as provided for under the Legal Services Ombudsman Act 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32952/09]

650. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding the appointment of a legal services ombudsman; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33066/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I propose to take Questions Nos. 635 and 650 together.

Arrangements are being made to facilitate the appointment by the Government of a Legal Services Ombudsman in the coming months.

Data Protection.

636. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform his plans to amend the Data Protection Act 1988 to enable the publication of specific house sale prices; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32953/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The compilation and publication of house price data is primarily a matter for the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and his Department. I am keeping the operation of data protection law in this area under review.

Irish Prison Service.

637. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the reason requested information in regard to health issues has not been supplied to a person (details supplied) in County Kildare in view of the fact that they need same to have their social welfare payments agreed to; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32957/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): It is Irish Prison Service healthcare policy to seek to facilitate any application by a prisoner for access to information regarding their personal medical treatment. This is in line with recommended practice by the relevant professional bodies.

The person referred to by the Deputy contacted the Irish Prison Service by telephone requesting medical certificates for the purpose of obtaining disability payments. As this prisoner has been on temporary release for a number of months and has not been under the care of the prison medical services, he was advised that he should contact his own GP in respect of the required medical certificates. He was also advised that his own GP could make contact with the prison surgery if any further information was required. The Irish Prison Service has received no subsequent communication from the person concerned or their GP.

Residency Permits.

638. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of non-European Economic Area students with stamp two permission who had been attending English language schools for more than two, three, four, five and six years as of March 2009. [32978/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): As of March 2009 this year there were a total of 10,379 non-EEA English language students registered with the immigration authorities. The table provides information on such students by reference to their year of first registration. While it cannot be said with absolute certainty that each student has remained in the language sector all of this time (in theory they could have attempted a different course before resuming their language studies) it is nevertheless a good indicator of the numbers who have maintained their residence in the State on the basis of their English language studies.

English Language by Year of first Registration (March 2009)

Year	Number
2001	147
2002	533
2003	622
2004	1,012
2005	481
2006	706
2007	1,441
2008	4,390
2009	1,047
Total	10,379

639. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of students with stamp two permission who originally registered as English language students but have since progressed to courses at national framework of qualification level five or above, in the three previous academic years. [32979/09]

640. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of non-European Economic Area students registered on a stamp two who downgraded the level of course they attended or moved from at least a level five at national framework of qualification to an English language course in the academic year 2008/2009. [32980/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I propose to take Questions Nos. 639 and 640 together.

The information sought by the Deputy is not readily available. Statistical data in relation to the movement of Non-EEA students between the qualification levels of the National Framework of Qualifications is not currently maintained by the immigration authorities. However, as the Deputy may be aware, the need for a greater focus on progression through the system has been highlighted in a consultation paper on the Immigration Regime for non-EEA students published by my Department at the beginning of September.

Citizenship Applications.

641. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of people refused naturalisation in the previous two years based on the fact that they accessed social welfare. [32981/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): Each application for a certificate of naturalisation is examined on its own merits and the Minister decides, at his discretion, whether to grant or refuse the application based on all the information provided. As a result, statistics are not compiled in such a manner as to provide data on the reasons for refusal of applications for certificates of naturalisation. However, I can advise the Deputy that the main reasons for refusal of naturalisation applications are failure to meet residency and/or good character requirements and/or a failure to be self-supporting.

642. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform his views on whether, in the context of a process as important as naturalisation, applicants should be made aware prior to applying that they can be refused based on having accessed social welfare in the three years prior to the application; and the steps he will take to make sure this information is more widely available. [32982/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Deputy will appreciate that a certificate of naturalisation is an exceptional and important document that facilitates a non-national becoming a citizen of Ireland. The granting of Irish Citizenship through naturalisation is a privilege and an honour and not an entitlement. Therefore, applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that the status of Citizenship is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria. The procedures involved have been developed and refined over a number of years and I am satisfied that they are necessary to maintain the integrity of the naturalisation process.

The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956, as amended, provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation. In accordance with the legislation I make decisions on naturalisation applications based on all of the information available to me. I have adopted a general policy that I will normally require an applicant for naturalisation, unless he/she is a refugee, programme refugee or Stateless person, to show that he/she has supported him or herself (and his or her family if appropriate) while residing in the State and, as far as can be determined, is in a position to continue that support into the future. I am, generally speaking, satisfied to accept that an applicant is self supporting if he or she has not availed of State support in the 3 year period prior to the date of application or subsequently has satisfied officials that they have supported themselves independently for that period.

The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service's website *www.inis.gov.ie* carries information relating to the main reasons why an application for a certificate of naturalisation might be refused. It also outlines how the financial status of an applicant is assessed in respect of their ability to support themselves in the State, and that enquiries with the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Social and Family Affairs may be necessary in this regard.

Asylum Applications.

643. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when a determination will be made in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Cork who has resided here since 2004 and has applied for asylum and refugee status; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32988/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 26 April 2004. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his appli-

cation for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 28 November 2008, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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*. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned. The case of the person concerned will be processed to finality as soon as possible.

Road Traffic Offences.

644. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of motorists who have been prosecuted for dangerous overtaking of cyclists by the Garda in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33009/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office, as the national statistical agency, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose. I have requested the CSO to provide the statistics sought by the Deputy directly to her.

Garda Deployment.

645. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform further to Parliamentary Question No. 342 of 7 July 2009, if he will instruct the Garda to provide an answer which has not yet been provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33013/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): Cars are placed at the disposal of former Taoisigh pursuant to long standing arrangements. I am informed by the Garda authorities that it is not possible to provide the information in the format requested by the Deputy in respect of the years prior to 2008. Prior to 2008, manual records were maintained in such a way that the extraction of detailed figures specifically for former Taoisigh would be very difficult and would place an inordinate burden on Garda resources. I have asked the Garda authorities to compile the information sought in respect of 2008 and this year, based on the available data, and I will communicate direct with the Deputy when that is to hand.

Citizenship Applications.

646. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will support the case of a person (details supplied). [33022/09]

724. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if a person (details supplied) will be supported. [33981/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I propose to take Questions Nos. 646 and 724 together.

Officials in the Citizenship Division of my Department inform me that there is no record of an application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question. The basic requirement for obtaining Irish citizenship by descent, through Foreign Births Registration is that an applicant's parent was an Irish citizen at the time of the applicants birth.

A person born outside of Ireland with a parent who was born in Ireland is automatically an Irish citizen by descent. A person born outside of Ireland with parents who were born outside Ireland and a grandparent who was born in Ireland may become an Irish citizen by Foreign Births Registration. If a person wishes to apply for Irish citizenship through a great grandparent born in Ireland, the position is more complex. Eligibility depends on one of the applicant parents, i.e. the grandchild of the person born in Ireland, being already entered in the Foreign Births Register, the date of that registration and the applicants date of birth.

Under the 1956 Act, an applicant who was entered in the Foreign Births Register between 17 July 1956 and 30 June 1986 acquired Irish citizenship from the date that the Act came into force (17 July 1956) or the applicants date of birth, whichever was later. Under the 1986 Act, a person is accorded Irish citizenship from the actual date of entry in the Foreign Births Register.

Asylum Applications.

647. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the status of an application under humanitarian grounds for a person (details supplied); the reason for the delay in processing same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33025/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 15 December 2003. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 18 July 2005, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. Representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned.

The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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*. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been

made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned. The case of the person concerned will be processed to finality as soon as possible.

Citizenship Applications.

648. **Deputy Bernard Allen** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding a naturalisation application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork in view of the fact that their application was submitted in October 2007. [33034/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in October 2007.

All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. 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. Officials in the Citizenship Division inform me that further supporting documentation was requested from the person concerned on 14 April, 2009 and to date this documentation has not been received. On receipt of the documentation requested further processing of the application will continue.

The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks. There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

649. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position of an application for citizenship by a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and when he expects this application to be decided on. [33064/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in March 2008. All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. Officials in the Citizenship Division inform me that processing of the application is in the final stages and the file will be submitted to me for a decision in due course.

The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks. There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the

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necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

Question No. 650 answered with Question No. 635.

Ministerial Travel.

651. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagements; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33086/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The annual cost of expenses paid directly to Ministers and Ministers of State in relation to foreign travel for each of the last ten years was €2,176 in 1999, €8,213 in 2000, €6,008 in 2001, €5,805 in 2002, €537 in 2003, €4,637 in 2004, €4,664 in 2005, €5,481 in 2006, €7,778 in 2007 and €10,403 in 2008. The expenses were incurred while abroad, on official Departmental and Government duties.

Garda Investigations.

652. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the reason a person (details supplied) in Dublin 22 must renew their Garda National Immigration Bureau card every month; if this matter could be reviewed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33142/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Deputy will be aware from my replies to PQs Nos. 31590/08, 42262/08 and my subsequent letter dated 29/9/08 that the person concerned is the subject of an investigation into immigration issues. Accordingly, he is required to renew his GNIB Card on a monthly basis for operational reasons. It is not intended to review this arrangement until the GNIB enquiries are completed and considered.

However, if this arrangement is causing difficulties, the person concerned should write to the Ministerial Decisions Unit of my Department at 13/14, Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 giving details of the difficulties being experienced and the matter will be given further consideration.

Deportation Orders.

653. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 24; if a review will be undertaken; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33143/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 15 July 2003. His application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

The person concerned was informed, by letter dated 18 August 2005, that the Minister proposed to make a Deportation Order in respect of him. He was given three options in accordance with Section 3(3)(b)(ii) of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as amended), to be exercised within 15 working days. Namely, to leave the State voluntarily, to consent to the making of a Deportation Order or to make representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why he should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State i.e. why he should not be deported.

By correspondence dated 28 February 2007, an application for Subsidiary Protection was made on behalf of the person concerned by his legal representative. Following consideration of the information submitted, the application was refused. The person concerned and his legal representative were notified of this decision by letter dated 23 July 2009.

His case was then examined 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*. Consideration was given to representations submitted on his behalf by his legal representative for permission to remain in the State. On 20 August 2009, I refused permission to remain temporarily in the State and instead signed a Deportation Order in respect of him. Notice of this order was served by registered post requiring the person concerned to leave the State by 25 September 2009 or failing that, present himself at the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 on Thursday 1 October 2009 in order to make travel arrangements for his removal from the State. He failed to present and was classified as evading his deportation. Should he come to the notice of the Gardaí, he would be liable to arrest and detention. He should, therefore, present himself to the GNIB without any further delay.

I am satisfied that the applications made by the person concerned for asylum, for temporary leave to remain in the State and for Subsidiary Protection, together with all *refoulement* issues, were fairly and comprehensively examined and, as such, the decision to deport him is justified. The effect of the Deportation Order is that the person concerned must leave the State and remain thereafter out of the State. The enforcement of the Deportation Order is an operational matter for the GNIB.

Residency Permits.

654. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Louth; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33144/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): There is currently no application pending in my Department for residency in the case of the person whose details were supplied. If an application for asylum has been made by the person concerned, the Deputy will of course be aware that it is not the practice to comment in detail on individual asylum applications.

Visa Applications.

655. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33145/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the person referred to by the Deputy made an application for Family Reunification in October 2008. The application was forwarded to the Refugee Applications Commissioner for investigation as required under Section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996. This investigation has been completed and the Commissioner has forwarded a report to my Department. My Department has recently contacted the legal representative of the person in question requesting further documentation.

Asylum Applications.

656. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

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the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 7; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33146/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to Parliamentary Question No. 133 of Thursday, 28 May, 2009 and the written Reply to that Question.

The person concerned applied for asylum on 16 July 2003. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until her application for asylum was decided. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of her asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 18 May 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against her. Representations were submitted by the person concerned at that time.

On 26 July, 2005, the Minister signed a Deportation Order in respect of the person concerned. Notice of this Order was served by registered post. This communication advised the person concerned of the legal requirement that she ‘present’ herself at the Offices of the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) on 18 August, 2005 in order to make arrangements for her deportation from the State. The person concerned ‘presented’ on this occasion but failed to ‘present’ on a subsequent occasion and was therefore classified as a person evading deportation.

This position continued to obtain until May 2008 when the legal representative of the person concerned enquired into the possible entitlement of the person concerned to make an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State. Arising from this enquiry, and in accordance with the Minister’s discretion under Regulation 4(2) of the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006, the person concerned was allowed to submit an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State which she duly did. This application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

The person concerned remains the subject of a valid Deportation Order. However, the Deputy may be assured that this Order will not be enforced pending the determination of the Subsidiary Protection application.

Citizenship Applications.

657. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for citizenship in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Laois; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33147/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy’s Question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in January 2009.

All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of

straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks.

There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

658. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33148/09]

687. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if a work permit is required in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33178/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I propose to take Questions Nos. 658 and 687 together.

I refer the Deputy to my reply to Parliamentary Question 685 on 16 September 2009. The position remains as stated. In general a non national requires a work permit issued by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in order to be employed in the State. There are circumstances whereby a non national, by virtue of the immigration status granted him or her, is exempted from this requirement.

659. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for citizenship in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33149/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in September 2006.

All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. Officials in the Citizenship Division inform me that processing of the application is in the final stages and the file will be submitted to me for a decision in due course.

The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks. There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

Visa Applications.

660. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 2; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33150/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that a letter issued from Family Reunification Section to the person in question on 27 August 2009 requesting further documentation. The application of the person in question will be considered further on receipt of the requested documentation.

Deportation Orders.

661. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency and family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33151/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): There is no record of an application for family reunification in connection with this Applicant.

The Applicant referred to has permission to remain in the State until the 13 February 2011. Her husband, whom she married on the 17 July 2008, claimed asylum on the 25 April 2005. His application was refused and a Deportation Order was signed in respect of him on the 23 November 2005. An application for revocation of the Deportation Order pursuant to section 3(11) of the Immigration Act, 1999 was submitted on behalf of the Applicant's husband on the 29 September 2008. On the 29 April 2009 I considered all representations on file before determining that the Deportation Order be affirmed. The Applicant's husband was deported on the 29 April 2009.

Judicial Review proceedings were instigated on the 11 June 2009 challenging this decision to affirm the Deportation Order. Accordingly, as this matter is *sub judice*, I do not propose to comment further.

Residency Permits.

662. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33152/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 28 October 2004. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until her application for asylum was decided. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

On 9 August 2007 the person concerned 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, a decision was made to refuse the application. The person concerned was notified of this decision by letter dated 30 September 2008. This decision was upheld on appeal.

Arising from the refusal of her asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 16 July 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against

her. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome. In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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*. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Asylum Applications.

663. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for leave to remain in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 24; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33153/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to Parliamentary Question No. 157 of Thursday, 21 May, 2009 and the written Reply to that Question. The person concerned applied for asylum on 15 April 2004. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until her application for asylum was decided. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of her asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 11 November 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against her. Representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned.

The person concerned was subsequently notified of her entitlement to submit an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with the provisions of the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 518 of 2006). She was also invited to update her earlier representations to the Minister. The person concerned did not submit an application for Subsidiary Protection, however, updated representations were submitted on her behalf.

The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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*. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

664. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33154/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 19 January 2006. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 12 February 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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). Representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned.

The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

665. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33155/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 5 February 2003. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 9 February 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Refugee Status.

666. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will consent to a new refugee application to be submitted by a person (details supplied) in County Kildare who was previously refused in 2005; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33156/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned was refused refugee status in the State following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. He made subsequent applications for both Subsidiary Protection and Leave To Remain which were unsuccessful, having taken into account all representations received on his behalf. On 7 November, 2008 a Deportation Order was made in respect of the applicant. As the Deputy is aware, the applicant has exhausted the asylum process. However, the applicant may apply in writing to my Department's Ministerial Decisions Unit, 13/14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2, to be re admitted to the asylum process under Section 17(7) of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended), setting out the reasons as to why he should be re-admitted to the asylum process. However, such applications are not suspensive of a Deportation Order.

667. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33157/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to my detailed reply to his recent Parliamentary Question, No. 686 of Wednesday, 16 September, 2009. The position in the State of the person concerned is as set out in that reply.

Asylum Applications.

668. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33158/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 7 April 2005. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 31 May 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. Representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned.

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The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Residency Permits.

669. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Carlow; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33160/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am advised by the Immigration Division of my Department that the application for residence in the State based on their marriage to an EU national made by the person in question is currently the subject of High Court proceedings and is therefore sub judice.

670. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency and leave to remain in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33161/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to Parliamentary Question No. 679 of Wednesday, 16 September, 2009 and the written Reply to that Question. The person concerned applied for asylum on 2 February 2006. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the individual concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 31 August 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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). No representations have been received on his behalf to date.

The case file of the person concerned now falls to 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 before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

671. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding documentation submitted by persons (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33162/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I wish to inform the Deputy that both persons referred to are illegally in the State. They were invited, by letters

dated 18 August, 2009, to submit representations to my Department outlining the reasons as to why Deportation Orders should not be made in respect of them. Correspondence from the applicants' legal representatives was received in my Department on 10 September, 2009 and will be assessed by the relevant officials in the context of Section 3 of the Immigration Act, 1999. The persons concerned will be contacted direct and notified of any decision made regarding their status in the State in due course.

Asylum Applications.

672. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Louth; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33163/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 11 February 2003. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 30 May 2008, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome. In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Residency Permits.

673. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33164/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): An application for long term residency from the person concerned was received in my Department on 22 September 2008. Officials in the long term residency section of my Department inform me that files received in February 2008 are currently being processed. It is likely, therefore, that further processing of the application will commence in the coming months. The person in question will be contacted as soon as a decision is reached on the application.

Asylum Applications.

674. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33165/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 6 October 2006. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until her application for asylum was decided. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of her asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 11 July 2007, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against her. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

675. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency and naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33166/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to Parliamentary Question No. 80 of Thursday, 9 April, 2009 and the written reply to that Question. The person concerned applied for asylum on 13 August 2002. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 29 August 2003, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. Representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned.

The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

The Deputy might wish to note that my Department wrote to the person concerned on 5 May 2009 seeking certain clarifications. This letter was sent to the last recorded address of the person concerned. The person concerned has not, to date, responded to my Department's letter. It is noted, however, that the address supplied in the Deputy's Question does not match the address currently on record in my Department. If, as it appears, the person concerned has changed address, he is legally obliged to communicate such an address change to my Department without delay. In any event, the position in the State of the person concerned will be considered further upon receipt of a response to my Department's letter dated 5 May 2009.

676. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33167/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 13 May 1997. The person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the then Asylum Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and, on appeal, by the then Asylum Appeals Unit of the Department. The person concerned was notified of this latter decision by letter dated 28 July 1999.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, the person concerned was given the options of making a written application to the Minister in support of his case to be allowed to remain in the State or of making arrangements to leave the State within fourteen days of the date of that letter. An application to be allowed to remain in the State was submitted on behalf of the person concerned at that time.

Also arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was further notified, by letter dated 21 March 2001, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. No further representations were received from, or on behalf of, the person concerned at that time.

On 10 October 2006, Regulations known as the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 518 of 2006) came into force. The person concerned was notified, by letter dated 1 June 2007, that he could, if he so wished, submit an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State. He was also invited to update his earlier representations to the Minister. He was requested to respond within 15 working days. Updated representations were received on behalf of the person concerned as was an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State. Following consideration of this application, it was determined that the person concerned was not eligible for Subsidiary Protection in the State. The person concerned was notified of this decision by letter dated 10 June 2008.

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The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Visa Applications.

677. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for citizenship and family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33168/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in June 2007. All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. Officials in the Citizenship Division inform me that further processing of the application is ongoing the file will be submitted to me for a decision in due course.

The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks. There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria. In the absence of more specific information, the Visa Office is not in a position to address the matter of Family Reunification as raised by the Deputy.

It is however, open to all persons resident outside the State, and who are visa required to apply through their nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate for the appropriate visa. Each visa application is considered on its individual merits the onus resting with the applicant to satisfy the Visa Officer as to why a visa should be granted. Comprehensive information when making a visa application is available on the website of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (www.inis.gov.ie).

Asylum Applications.

678. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33169/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): There is currently no application pending in my Department for residency in the case of the person whose details were supplied. If an application for asylum has been made by the person concerned, the Deputy will of course be aware that it is not the practice to comment in detail on individual asylum applications.

679. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will review the decision to deport in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 6 in view of the fact that circumstances have changed since the original decision; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33170/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 222 of Thursday, 3 April 2008. The status of the person concerned remains as set out in that Reply. The person concerned continues to meet the presentation requirements of the Garda National Immigration Bureau (G.N.I.B.) in accordance with Section 8(1)(b) of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended). He is due to present again on 15 October 2009. I am satisfied that the applications made by the person concerned for asylum and for temporary leave to remain in the State, together with all refoulement issues, were fairly and comprehensively examined and, as such, the decision to deport him is justified. The effect of the Deportation Order is that the person concerned must leave the State and remain thereafter out of the State. The enforcement of the Deportation Order is, and remains, an operational matter for the GNIB.

680. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33171/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum in the State on 3 February 1997. He subsequently withdrew his asylum claim on the basis that he was the parent of an Irish born child. He was granted permission to remain in the State on the basis of his parentage of an Irish born child in September 1997. This permission to remain has subsequently been renewed and was most recently valid up until 18 August 2009. It is not clear from my Department's file as to what difficulties the person concerned is experiencing regarding his position in the State. This being the case, it is recommended that the person concerned would write to my Department's Repatriation Division outlining any outstanding issues he may have and upon receipt of such a communication, officials in my Department will investigate any issues raised.

Residency Permits.

681. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33172/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Immigration Division of my Department that the person concerned made an application for residence in the State based on his marriage to a French national on 17 June 2009. The legal representative for the person concerned was informed of the decision to refuse this application on 20 August 2009. The decision to refuse this application is currently under review.

682. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when an application for residency and citizenship will be concluded in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33173/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to my detailed reply to his earlier Parliamentary Question, No. 392 of Tuesday, 9 June, 2009. As indicated in my earlier Reply, the position in the State of the person concerned falls to be considered in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act, 1999 (as

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amended). Work has commenced on this consideration and I expect a final decision to be made in the case of the person concerned within the next few weeks. When a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Asylum Applications.

683. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 8; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33174/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned arrived in the State on 26 January 2003 and applied for asylum on 27 January 2003. Her application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, and, on appeal, by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. The person concerned was informed, by letter dated 30 December 2003, that the Minister proposed to make a Deportation Order in respect of her. She was given three options in accordance with Section 3(3)(b)(ii) of the Immigration Act, 1999, (as amended), to be exercised within 15 working days, namely, to leave the State voluntarily, to consent to the making of a Deportation Order or to make representations to the Minister setting out the reasons why she should be allowed to remain temporarily in the State i.e. why she should not be deported.

Her case was then examined 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. Consideration was given to representations submitted on her behalf by her legal representative for permission to remain in the State. On 23 September 2009, I refused permission to remain temporarily in the State and instead signed a Deportation Order in respect of her. Notice of this order was served by registered post requiring the person to leave the State by 17 October 2009. I am satisfied that the applications made by the person concerned for asylum and for temporary leave to remain in the State, together with all refoulement issues, were fairly and comprehensively examined and, as such, the decision to deport her is justified. The effect of the Deportation Order is that the person concerned must leave the State and remain thereafter out of the State. The enforcement of the Deportation Order is an operational matter for the GNIB.

684. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency and subsidiary protection in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33175/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to Parliamentary Question No. 361 of Tuesday, 9 June, 2009 and the written Reply to that Question. The person concerned applied for asylum on 15 February 2005. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 21 November 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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).

The person concerned initiated Judicial Review Proceedings in the High Court, challenging the decision of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal in his case. On the 18 December 2008 the High Court refused the Judicial Review Leave application with the consequence that the earlier decisions of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal and the Minister stood. The person concerned has now submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 518 of 2006) and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

685. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding residency status in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Louth; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33176/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned arrived in the State on 13 August 2003 and applied for asylum. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. The person concerned initiated Judicial Review Proceedings in the High Court challenging the determination of the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner in his case. The resolution of these Proceedings resulted in the case of the person concerned being returned to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner for a fresh investigation in his case.

The asylum claims of the person concerned were again considered by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner who determined that the person concerned did not meet the criteria for recognition as a refugee. This refusal determination was upheld following an appeal to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 27 May 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome. In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused,

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the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

686. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33177/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 30 January 2006. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until her application for asylum was decided. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of her asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 30 June 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against her. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome. In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Question No. 687 answered with Question No. 658.

Visa Applications.

688. **Deputy Mary O'Rourke** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will review the case of a person (details supplied) in County Galway. [33259/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The visa application referred to by the Deputy was received in the Visa Office, Cairo on the 13 April 2009. Following consideration by a Visa Officer, it was refused for the following reasons:

1. The evidence of finances provided was deemed insufficient;

2. There was no evidence shown of a relationship having been in existence prior to the visa application/marriage.

The applicant submitted an appeal on the 10 June 2009. While the evidence of finances was addressed to the satisfaction of the Appeals Officer, evidence to support the existence of a prior relationship was not. As a result, the decision of the Visa Officer was upheld by the Visa Appeals Officer on 29 June 2009. Only one appeal per application is allowed. The only option available to the applicant is to make a fresh visa application. Where doing so the applicant should be in a position to address the refusal reason upheld at appeal stage.

Prison Building Programme.

689. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, further to Parliamentary Question No. 13 of 22 September 2009, the breakdown of the maintenance costs including landscaping maintenance; the income generated from lettings of the property; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33273/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The site for the new prison development at Thornton Hall, Kilsallaghan, County Dublin was acquired in October 2005. Subsequently the Council voted that the house known as “Thornton Hall” should be added to the record of protected structures in its administrative area. In the intervening period essential repair work has been undertaken, when necessary, in order to maintain and to protect the property. The cost of this work amounts to approximately €27,000. The work was undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 in relation to protected structures and was carried out under the supervision of a conservation architect.

The Deputy will also be aware that the Irish Prison Service undertook a major boundary planting scheme at Thornton which involved planting over 25,000 trees and shrubs along the boundary of the 150 acre site to a depth of 10 metres. The cost of boundary planting scheme and the maintenance of the planted zone including weed control is approximately €440,000. Approximately €30,000 of this sum relates to maintenance of the planted zone.

It should also be noted in this context that when granting development consent for the prison project at Thornton, the Oireachtas decided that the planted zone should be widened at certain areas across the site as part of a number of measures to mitigate the visual and aural impact of the development. I expect that the additional planting work will get underway later this year. The property is not leased and, therefore, no income is generated from it.

Citizenship Applications.

690. **Deputy Paul Gogarty** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when a decision will be made on an application for naturalisation by a person (details supplied) in County Dublin. [33293/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy’s Question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in April 2008. All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks. There is a

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limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

Garda Strength.

691. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of gardaí who retired from the Longford division since the commencement of this Government's term; if they have been fully replaced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33348/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Deputy will be aware that County Longford and County Westmeath formed the Longford/Westmeath Division until 1 January 2009 when, as part of the boundary realignment project, County Longford and County Roscommon became the Longford/Roscommon Division. County Longford never formed a Garda Division in its own right and accordingly the information requested by the Deputy is not readily available. As at 31 August 2009, the latest date for which figures are readily available, 298 members were attached to the Roscommon/Longford Division.

Legal Aid Service.

692. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the reason a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath was refused free legal aid; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33356/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I can inform the Deputy that under section 7(3) of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995, I am precluded from exercising any power or control in relation to any particular case with which the Legal Aid Board is or may be concerned. Furthermore, in respect of any queries regarding the provision of legal services to any person, please note that the solicitor/client relationship is protected by privilege in accordance with the terms of Section 32 of the Civil Legal Aid Act, 1995. The Legal Aid Board does not provide information to third parties regarding a person who may or may not be a client of the Board.

It should be noted that the Legal Aid Board is required to consider and make decisions on all applications received in its Law Centres for legal aid. I have had enquiries made in the Legal Aid Board and I have been informed that when deciding to grant legal aid, the Board issues a Legal Aid Certificate to the applicant setting out the services to be rendered on that particular matter. In the event that the Board decides not to grant a Legal Aid Certificate, the applicant would be directly informed of the decision and the reasons supporting the decision. In addition, the applicant would be advised as to their rights to have the decision reviewed and, if required, heard by the Appeals Committee of the Board. In that context, a decision arrived at by the Appeals Committee would be final.

Asylum Applications.

693. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will respond to correspondence in regard to a person (details supplied); if he will give favourable consideration to this person's request for leave to remain here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33426/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 21 June 2004. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 22 January 2008, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome. In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned. The Deputy might wish to note that the correspondence included with his Question represents communications sent to rather than received from the person concerned.

Garda Stations.

694. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if there are any plans to open a Garda station in Palmerstown, Dublin 20; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33504/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The formulation of proposals in relation to the opening and closing of Garda stations is a matter, in the first instance, for the Garda Commissioner in the context of the annual policing plan, as provided for in section 22 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005. I am advised by the Garda authorities that the opening of a new Garda Station would be incompatible with contemporary policing policy and would result in valuable Garda resources being diverted from outdoor, operational policing to indoor administration duties. In that context, I am informed that there are no plans to open a Garda Station at Palmerstown, Dublin 20.

Proposed Legislation.

695. **Deputy Joe Behan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the provision in Civil Partnership Bill 2009 for the rights of the children of parents who would have a registered civil partnership to be free from discrimination; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33514/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The law contained in the Guardianship of Infants Act 1964 (as amended) will apply to decisions affecting the

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welfare of a child of a civil partner and will not be affected by the Civil Partnership Bill 2009. The Deputy may wish to note that section 44(3) of the Bill provides that where a civil partner applies for maintenance from his or her civil partner, the court shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case including the financial and other responsibilities of each civil partner as a parent towards any dependent children, and the needs of any dependent children, including the need for care and attention. Section 127(2)(l) of the Bill provides that in making ancillary orders in civil partnership dissolution proceedings, the court must have regard to the rights of any child to whom either of the civil partners owes an obligation of support.

Citizenship Applications.

696. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33518/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I have been informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service that it has received an application for residency from the person mentioned by the Deputy. The service will contact the named person's legal representatives shortly.

Legal Services Ombudsman.

697. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the consideration given to the need to introduce an independent, statutorily appointed regulator of the legal profession; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33552/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Government's policy on the need for changes in the regulation of the legal profession is reflected in the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008 and the Legal Services Ombudsman Act 2009. The 2008 Act amended the Solicitors Acts to strengthen the Law Society's regulatory functions by providing, among other matters, for a lay majority on the regulatory committees of the society and for better enforcement of orders of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. The 2009 Act provides for the establishment of a Legal Services Ombudsman. When it is established, the Ombudsman will provide a form of review for clients of solicitors and barristers who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint made to the Law Society or Bar Council; oversee the complaints procedures of the Law Society and Bar Council by examining a selection of complaints files each year; and oversee admission to the legal profession, particularly with regard to the adequacy of numbers admitted. A Legal Costs Bill is included in the Government's legislation programme, which was published on 16 September 2009. Work is under way in my Department on the development of the details of the proposals.

Travel Documentation.

698. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will arrange for the issue of temporary travel documentation in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33580/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A person who has been granted full refugee status is entitled to apply for a travel document to enable him/her to travel outside the State. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service advises me that while the person in question was refused refugee status following appeal, permission to remain in the State was granted in 2007. An alternative travel document may sometimes be issued in

exceptional circumstances to a person who has been granted leave to remain in the State and does not have a passport. In such cases, the person concerned has to show that they have made reasonable and formal efforts to obtain a national passport and that it has been formally and unreasonably refused. Provision of original correspondence from the relevant consular authorities is an essential component when considering any temporary travel document application. A temporary travel document was issued to the person in question in May 2008 to help them obtain their national passport. In January 2009, a further request for a travel document was received, again with a view to procuring their national passport. The original travel document was renewed for a further nine months from 20 January 2009 to 19 October 2009. It remains open to the person in question to submit an application for a renewal of their temporary travel document accompanied with the relevant supporting documentation which should include original correspondence from the relevant consular authority outlining the steps necessary to be followed by the person to facilitate the procurement of a national passport if their presence is required outside the State. Any such application should be forwarded to the Travel Document Unit of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service which is located at 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2.

Visa Applications.

699. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in relation to the application for family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33581/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to my reply to Question No. 634 of 27 January 2009, in which the position with regard to family reunification was set out in the case of the son of the person concerned. The position with regard to applying for a visa to enter the State remains unchanged from that stated in previous replies.

700. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in relation to the application for family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33582/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to my answer to his previous Parliamentary Question. I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service that the person in question made a Family Reunification Application in March 2007. A decision was made on the applicant's Family Reunification application and issued to the applicant's legal representative on 2 September 2008. A letter issued from the Family Reunification Section to the person in question on 21 July 2009 but to date no response has been received.

Residency Permits.

701. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in regard to residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Longford; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33583/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 14 June 2004. In accordance with section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996, as amended, the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals

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Tribunal. Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999, as amended, the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 12 March 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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). Representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned. The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. When a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

702. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in relation to the application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33584/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 28 October 2005. In accordance with section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996, as amended, the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999, as amended, the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 25 July 2008, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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). The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome. In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

703. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in regard to the application for residency or family reunification in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 8; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33585/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to my reply to his previous Parliamentary Questions. I am informed by the Immigration

Division of my Department that the person in question was granted refugee status and made a Family Reunification application in respect of his wife in September 2008. This 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 be considered by my Department and a decision will issue in due course.

704. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position in relation to the application for residency or leave to remain in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33586/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 11 October 2007. In accordance with section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996, as amended, the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until her application for asylum was decided. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner. The person concerned was advised of her entitlement to appeal this determination to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal but did not do so within the specified time period. Arising from the refusal of her asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999, as amended, the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 28 January 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 a deportation order should not be made against her. 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). The person concerned did not submit an application for subsidiary protection in the State in accordance with these regulations. However, representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned. The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Citizenship Applications.

705. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when all documents submitted by a person (details supplied) in County Kildare when they made their application through his Department will be returned to them; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33587/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I wish to inform the Deputy that the Repatriation Unit file in relation to the person concerned contains no original documents received from him. I should add that the Citizenship Division of my Department, which is processing an application for naturalisation from the person in question, has advised me that there is no record of any original documentation being received from the applicant in this case.

Road Safety.

706. **Deputy Ciarán Cuffe** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the

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number of road traffic collisions which have taken place in the Dublin city area between cyclists and heavy goods vehicles in which cyclist fatalities have occurred during the period 2005 to date in 2009; the status of the Garda investigation in each case; if proceedings against the driver of the HGV have been instituted; the judicial outcome of each case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33591/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Garda authorities that 11 fatal road traffic collisions involving pedal cycles and heavy goods vehicles are recorded as having occurred in the Dublin Metropolitan Region between 2005 and to date in 2009. With respect to the seven collisions which occurred between 2005 and 2007, investigations were completed and investigation files submitted to the Law Officers. No prosecutions were directed. With respect to the two collisions which occurred in 2008, investigation files were submitted to the Law Officers. No prosecution was directed in one incident. A prosecution was directed in the other incident, and the driver was convicted of having no insurance, contrary to the Road Traffic Acts, as amended. Two incidents have occurred to date in 2009. Following the submission of an investigation file to the Law Officers in one of the incidents, a direction was issued to charge the driver with careless driving. The matter is before the courts. The other incident remains under investigation.

Residency Permits.

707. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the reason for the delay in having a passport stamped in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 11; and if, in view of the fact that documents were mislaid by his Department which has delayed the consideration of the application, he will ensure that a decision is taken in this case as soon as possible. [33606/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Immigration Division of my Department that an application by the person concerned for residence in the State based on EU treaty rights was received on 30 October 2008. The person concerned provided a Liberian passport in support of this application. The application was approved on 30 April 2009. The legal representative for the person concerned subsequently informed the Immigration Division that their client holds both Liberian and Nigerian citizenship and wished to be registered in his Nigerian passport. The legal representative for the person was asked to provide further original documentation regarding the identity of their client. This documentation is being authenticated by the Garda authorities. A decision will be taken on this case when the examination by the Garda authorities is completed.

Firearms Licensing Laws.

708. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding a matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33616/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): As the Deputy may be aware, with the enactment of the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, the remaining firearms related sections of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 have been commenced. As a result, a wide range of measures in relation to firearms licensing have been introduced such as the requirement that applicants will provide secure accommodation for their firearms, prove their identity, provide the names of two referees and give consent to medical enquiries being made where necessary. With the introduction of the new three-year licence comes a new,

more detailed, application form which is available on the Garda website and from Garda stations. I understand that the form itself is nine pages long, although the last three of these pages are for Garda use, making it six pages to be completed by the applicant. The Garda Commissioner has published “Guidelines as to the Practical Application and Operation of the Firearms Acts, 1925-2009” on the Garda website. That document, along with advice on how to complete the form, should prove invaluable in assisting members of the public in understanding the new licensing arrangements.

Departmental Staff.

709. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will confirm that a person (details supplied) in County Offaly is on the transfer list for his Department; their position on the list; the vacancies within his Department of this grade; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33649/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The individual concerned, who is a Clerical Officer in my Department in Dublin, is not on my Department’s Central Transfer List. However, I understand that she has applied on the Central Applications Facility to decentralise to the Department of Education and Science in Tullamore and that she is currently placed ninth on that list.

Citizenship Applications.

710. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position of an application for naturalisation by a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33660/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): Officials in the Citizenship Division of my Department inform me that there is no record of an application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy’s question. The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended, provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation provided certain statutory conditions are fulfilled. The conditions are that the applicant must be of full age; be of good character; have had a period of one year’s continuous residency in the State immediately before the date of application and, during the eight years immediately preceding that period, have had a total residence in the State amounting to four years; intend in good faith to continue to reside in the State after naturalisation; and have made, either before a Judge of the District Court in open court or in such a manner as the Minister for special reasons allows, a declaration in the prescribed manner, of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State. In the context of naturalisation, certain periods of residence in the State are excluded, including periods of residence in respect of which an applicant does not have permission to remain in the State; periods granted for the purposes of study; and periods granted for the purposes of seeking recognition as a refugee within the meaning of the Refugee Act, 1996. It is open to the person concerned to lodge an application for a certificate of naturalisation with the Citizenship Division of my Department if and when they are in a position to meet the statutory requirements.

Garda Recruitment.

711. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when the next intake of trainee Garda will take place at Templemore college, County Tipperary; the

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number of trainees who will be taken in; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33721/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): As the Minister for Finance has made clear, the moratorium on recruitment and promotions in the Public Service applies to the Garda Síochána, both sworn members and civilian support staff. By its nature, it does not apply to the Garda Reserve, whose members are unpaid volunteers who do not occupy public service posts. I intend to review the position during the course of 2010 in consultation with the Garda Commissioner and my colleague, the Minister for Finance.

Residency Permits.

712. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position regarding an application for residency in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33753/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to my detailed reply to his recent Question No. 235 of Tuesday, 22 September 2009, in this matter. The position in the State of the person concerned is as set out in that reply.

Citizenship Applications.

713. **Deputy Brendan Howlin** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the status of an application for naturalisation in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Wexford; if the application will be processed to completion in the near future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33762/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in July 2007. All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straightforward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. Officials in the Citizenship division inform me that processing of the application is at an advanced stage and the file will be submitted to me for a decision in due course. The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks. There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

Controlled Substances.

714. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the procedure in place to issue licences to hold narcotics for the purpose of training sniffer dogs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33810/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by my colleague, the Minister for Health and Children that Section 5 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations, 1988, as amended, provides for the issuing of licenses to persons for the purposes of production, supply, import, export and cultivation. Section 11 of the same regulation pro-

vides that certain categories of person, including members of the Garda Síochána, the Prison Service and Revenue officials may have possession of controlled substances when acting in the course of duty.

Refugee Status.

715. **Deputy Seán Power** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will provide temporary travel documents for a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33862/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service informs me that the person in question was refused Refugee Status in 1999 and is therefore not entitled to be issued with an Irish Travel Document. The person concerned was granted leave to remain in 2005 and was renewed in 2007 for a further three years until 12 May 2010. In exceptional cases an application for Irish temporary travel document may be considered. In all such cases, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service must be satisfied that there is no alternative open to the applicant before an Irish temporary travel document will issue. An application for an Irish temporary travel document will only be considered by the Immigration Services Section in the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service on receipt of a fully completed application form. Supporting documentation accompanying any such application should include original correspondence from the relevant consular authority outlining the steps necessary to be followed by the person to facilitate the procurement of a national passport if their presence is required outside the State. I am informed by the Immigration Services Section of the service that an application for a temporary travel document was refused on 16 September 2009 and again on 23 September 2009 in respect of the person in question as the application received was not accompanied by the requisite original correspondence from his own consular authorities. As well as the refusal letter, an email was sent on 23 September with an explanation for the refusal and advice regarding how to proceed. It remains open to the person in question to submit a new application for a temporary travel document accompanied with the relevant supporting documentation to the Travel Document Unit of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service which is located at 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2.

Citizenship Applications.

716. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the status of a person (details supplied) in County Cork who has been living here for ten years and who applied for naturalisation in 2003; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33863/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in April 2008. All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks. There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure

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that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

717. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the position of an application for naturalisation in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33875/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): Officials in the Citizenship Division of my Department inform me that there is no record of an application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question. The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1956, as amended, provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation provided certain statutory conditions are fulfilled. The conditions are that the applicant must be of full age; be of good character; have had a period of one year's continuous residency in the State immediately before the date of application and, during the eight years immediately preceding that period, have had a total residence in the State amounting to four years; intend in good faith to continue to reside in the State after naturalisation; and have made, either before a Judge of the District Court in open court or in such a manner as the Minister for special reasons allows, a declaration in the prescribed manner, of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State. In the context of naturalisation, certain periods of residence in the State are excluded. These include periods of residence in respect of which an applicant does not have permission to remain in the State; periods granted for the purposes of study; and periods granted for the purposes of seeking recognition as a refugee within the meaning of the Refugee Act, 1996. It is open to the person concerned to lodge an application for a certificate of naturalisation with the Citizenship Division of my Department if and when they are in a position to meet the statutory requirements.

Departmental Reports.

718. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33904/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I can inform the Deputy that research and reports which informed public policy proposals and development in areas such as Forensic Science, Youth Justice, Integration of Immigrants, Victims of Crime, European Arrest Warrants and so forth were commissioned by my Department in 2008. Nine such reports were commissioned in 2008 at costs varying from approximately €3,600 to €47,000.

Garda Recruitment.

719. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the reason Further Education and Training Awards Council qualifications equivalent to the leaving certificate are not recognised for garda and prison officer recruitment competitions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33920/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I have been informed by the Garda Commissioner that admission to the Garda Síochána is governed by the Admissions and Appointments Regulations 2004, which set out the educational qualifications and alternatives, for admission as a Garda trainee. Entrance to the Irish Prison Service is governed by administrative rules. Further Education and Training Awards Council qualifi-

cations equivalent to the leaving certificate may be acceptable to the Public Appointments Service, in relation to Garda and Prison Service recruitment, provided that they are of a standard not lower than those already specified. The National Qualification Authority of Ireland is the sole authority in the area of validating alternative qualifications. It advises the Public Appointments Service, which acts as agents for the Commissioner and the Irish Prison Service in the recruitment process.

Residency Permits.

720. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the reason an application for residency was refused in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33938/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I have been informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service that the person mentioned by the Deputy was granted a short term visa for the purpose of a short term visit to the State. He was allowed to enter the State on 22 February 2009 and was granted permission to remain until 19 May 2009. In accordance with the immigration laws of the State the person mentioned was required to leave the State on expiry of his C visit visa. However, once outside the State there was nothing to prevent him from applying for a further visit visa for the purposes of re-entering the State. The person in question has now re entered the State on foot of a further C visit visa . As a visitor to the State he is allowed to remain for 90 days. An application was received on 24 September 2009 for an extension of his leave to remain. This application is currently receiving attention.

Departmental Staff.

721. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33955/09]

722. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33970/09]

740. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34345/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I propose to take Questions Nos. 721,722 and 740 together.

No costs, in the nature of additional remuneration or compensation, were incurred by my Department in the period in question as a result of early retirements, termination of contracts or resignations. In relation to the question of pension top-up or discretionary payment, I assume the Deputy is referring to cases where inducements are offered to encourage/facilitate the retirement of an individual. No such arrangements have been made by my Department in the period in question.

International Agreements.

723. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [33980/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): During my time as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I was the first EU Minister to call for the closure of the Guantanamo detention facility. The Government has consistently called for its closure since then and has welcomed President Obama's decision to close Guantanamo. In response to US requests for assistance in resettling some of these detainees, EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers adopted a framework at the June Ministerial Council in relation to resettlement of former detainees. The resettlement in Ireland of the two individuals referred to in the Deputy's question is a humanitarian measure and a practical step towards the ultimate closure of Guantanamo Bay. The primary reason for agreeing to resettle them here is because, although they were cleared for release by the US authorities and were not to be prosecuted by the US, it was considered that, they could not, for compelling reasons, be returned to their home countries. I hope they will now be given the time and space to rebuild their lives here in Ireland.

Question No. 724 answered with Question No. 646.

Crime Levels.

725. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of cases in which there have been arrests and charges proffered in respect of drug related crimes in the Athy Garda district in each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34009/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office, as the national statistical agency, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose.

I have requested the CSO to provide the statistics sought by the Deputy directly to him.

Garda Deployment.

726. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the resources being deployed to combat drug related crime in County Kildare in 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34010/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Garda authorities that at present the Kildare Garda Divisional Drugs Unit has a staff complement of one Garda Sergeant and seven Gardaí.

The unit targets those suspected of possession of illicit substances for personal use, sale and supply and is assisted in this regard by all Garda personnel based in the Garda Division and, in particular, members of the district detective units.

In addition all members of An Garda Síochána are tasked with drug law enforcement.

Resource levels are constantly monitored, in conjunction with crime trends and other demands made on An Garda Síochána, and are kept under review.

The resource situation in Kildare will be kept under review and when additional personnel next become available the needs of the area will be fully considered by the Garda Commissioner within the overall context of the needs of Garda stations throughout the country.

727. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if a section within the Garda has been specifically proposed to deal with the use of illicit substances and those that seek to sell such substances in areas within the Kildare division (details supplied) but to date in 2009 has not been implemented; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34020/09]

728. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of gardaí in each station within the Kildare division who are assigned to the drug task force within their area; if there is specific training for such gardaí; if so, the number of gardaí within each station in the division who have or are in the process of receiving such training; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34033/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I propose to take Questions Nos. 727 and 728 together.

All members of An Garda Síochána are tasked with enforcing the criminal law, including the Misuse of Drugs Acts, 1977/1984, as amended and the Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996.

Currently the Garda Divisional Drugs Unit comprises one (1) Garda Sergeant and seven (7) Gardaí and is based across the Division in the Naas, Kildare (which covers the Athy area) and Leixlip Garda Districts. The unit targets those suspected of possession of illicit substances for personal use, sale and supply throughout the Division. The Unit is assisted in this task by all Garda personnel in the Division, in particular members of the District Detective Units.

All Gardaí receive drug training under the Student /Probationer training programme and where required further drug training is provided through the medium of the Continuous Professional Development process. All members of An Garda Síochána receive training in respect of the enforcement of the Misuse of Drugs Acts and the applicable law, procedures and presentation of Investigation Files, when enforcing same. Ongoing training, including updates on recently-enacted legislation, is also provided to all members of An Garda Síochána through the Continuous Professional Development School. Members of An Garda Síochána appointed as members of the Detective Branch also complete specialist detective training.

The Sergeant in charge of the Divisional Drug Unit represents An Garda Síochána on the local Drugs Task Force in Co. Kildare.

Crime Levels.

729. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of offences recorded in each Garda station within the Kildare division in regard to the use of illicit substances; the type and quantity of substance that was determined; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34034/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): In relation to the first part of the Deputy's question, the Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) as the national statistical agency. The CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose.

I have requested the CSO to provide the crime statistics sought by the Deputy directly to him.

With regard to the second part of the Deputy's question, it has not been possible to compile the detailed statistics requested in the time available. I will communicate further with the Deputy when the information sought is to hand.

Criminal Prosecutions.

730. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of court convictions for the use of illicit substances recorded in the Kildare division in respect of each station area in the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34035/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office, as the national statistical agency, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose.

I have requested the CSO to provide the statistics sought by the Deputy directly to him.

Residency Permits.

731. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the further documentation required for an application in respect of a residence card by a person (details supplied) in County Sligo. [34048/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Immigration Division of my Department that the further documentation required for the application for residency of the person referred to by the Deputy is evidence of her financial dependency on her EU citizen father, a receipt for college fees in her father’s name and a letter from the educational institution concerned giving the start date of her course as well as the expected completion date.

Garda Deployment.

732. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of members of the Garda Reserve who are working in areas (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34061/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): At 31 August 2009 a total of 19 Reserve members were assigned to Garda Stations which serve the areas concerned. Details of the assignments are as follows:

	Number
Lucan Station	8
Ronanstown Station	1
Clondalkin	6
Ballyfermot	4

Palmerstown is served by Clondalkin and Ballyfermot Garda Stations.

733. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of gardaí stationed in areas (details supplied); the number stationed in 2006, 2007 and 2008. [34062/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Garda authorities that the personnel strength of the Garda stations referred to by the Deputy as at 31 December 2006-2008 and 31 August 2009 was as set out in the table.

Station	31/12/06	31/12/07	31/12/08	31/08/09
Clondalkin	92	104	91	97
Ballyfermot	88	87	95	90
Rathcoole	23	24	27	26
Lucan	70	84	89	86
Ronanstown	92	87	85	91

Road Traffic Offences.

734. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of learner drivers who have been detected and charged for driving without a qualified accompanying driver and L plates in each Garda division; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34071/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office, as the national statistical agency, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose.

I have requested the CSO to provide the statistics sought by the Deputy directly to him.

Complaints Procedures.

735. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the legal and other associated costs incurred to date in 2009 by the commission in relation to Complaint no. EE/2008/034 lodged with the Equality Tribunal in the context of his Department's corporate governance responsibility for the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and the Equality Tribunal; if he has been informed by the Tribunal of any change in its long-standing practice to publish on its website details of all case decisions following determination; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34083/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I understand that the complaint referred to by the Deputy is still before the Equality Tribunal and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the matter.

There has been no change to the practice of the Equality Tribunal to publish all decisions on its website.

Criminal Prosecutions.

736. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of people, since 2005 to date in 2009, who have been convicted of drug offences and have re-offended in each court area in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34171/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 makes provision for the compilation and publication of crime statistics by the Central Statistics Office, as the national statistical agency, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose.

I have requested the CSO to provide the statistics sought by the Deputy directly to him.

Garda Operations.

737. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if a Garda vetting certificate will be issued in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick. [34178/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) provides employment vetting for a number of organisations in Ireland, registered with the Unit, which employ personnel to work in a full-time, part time, voluntary or student capacity with children and / or vulnerable adults.

I am informed by the Garda authorities that the organisation referred to is not at present registered with the Unit for Garda vetting. Therefore, no vetting application can be processed nor has been received by the Garda Central Vetting Unit in respect of the person referred to.

Asylum Applications.

738. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the status of the application of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 7 under the subsidiary protection under the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations Statutory Instrument No. 518 of 2006; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34226/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 1 June 2005. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until his application for asylum was decided. His asylum application was refused following consideration of his case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of his asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 8 January 2009, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against him. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Departmental Contracts.

739. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34318/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The mobile services for my Department are provided by Vodafone Ireland. The Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform currently has a contract with Vodafone Ireland for the provision of mobile voice and data services including hardware.

Question No. 740 answered with Question No. 721.

Departmental Staff.

741. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34360/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The number of staff in my Department who have been dismissed or had their contracts terminated in each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	Number
2004	4
2005	2
2006	2
2007	3
2008	1
2009 to date	5

Firearms Licences.

742. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if antique guns with no pin will be exempt from the gun licence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34373/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): Section 26 of the Firearms Act 1925 provides that 'Nothing in this Act relating to firearms shall apply to any antique firearm which is sold, bought, carried, or possessed as a curiosity or ornament'.

I understand, generally speaking, that firearms manufactured before the mid 19th Century which do not utilise modern type ammunition would be classed as antique firearms. Furthermore, deactivated or defective firearms, not capable of being fired, may be kept on the written authorisation of the local Garda Superintendent under Section 6 of the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1990, as amended.

The Superintendent must be satisfied that the firearm is actually permanently deactivated and may request certification of same from a recognised proof house and may have the firearm examined by a suitably qualified member of the Garda Síochána.

Visa Applications.

743. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the breakdown of the visa figures from the Moscow office in terms of English language teaching students, university students and junior students for 2007 and 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34467/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The following is a breakdown of the Visa figures for the categories requested. In order to ensure that there is an understanding of the categories involved, the following definitions shall apply.

English Language Students — This is taken to mean persons over 18 coming to Ireland for the expressed purpose of studying the English language in a recognised institution, whether it is a course of relatively short duration, (less than 3 months) or a longer term course (more than 3 months).

University Students — This is taken to mean somebody over 18 years who is studying a course (not English language), generally to at least a primary degree level in a recognised 3rd level institution in the state as recognised under the University Acts or Higher Education Acts. It includes the Universities, Institutes of Technology, and also recognised private 3rd level colleges.

Junior Students — This is taken to refer to persons under 18 years old, who may come to Ireland for the purpose of studying English and require parental consent in order to do so. It almost exclusively refers to “English Summer Camp” type arrangements. This category also refers to Juniors enrolled in private fee paying secondary or preparatory schools in the State.

Categories	2007	2008
English Language Students (>18)	287 (35%)	405 (24%)
Junior Language Students	444 (53%)	1,153 (69%)
Junior Secondary/Preparatory Students	36 (4%)	34 (2%)
University Students (>18)	68 (8%)	87 (5%)
Total	835	1,679

In the year to date (1 October 2009), 956 (97%) of study visa applications decided upon by the Visa Office, Moscow were approved.

744. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when travel documents will be renewed in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34484/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that a travel document for the person in question was renewed on 19 August 2009 and was issued to the address on the travel document. It was returned to the office on 3 September 2009 by the Returned Letter Branch of An Post stating that the person was unknown at the address. The person in question should contact the Travel Document Unit of INIS which is located at 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 to inform them of the new address and to arrange for delivery of their travel document.

Asylum Applications.

745. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the progress to date in the case of an application for residency or leave to remain by a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34485/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The person concerned applied for asylum on 30 July 2004. In accordance with Section 9 of the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), the person concerned was entitled to remain in the State until her application for asylum was decided. Her asylum application was refused following consideration of her case by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

Arising from the refusal of her asylum application, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, 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 a Deportation Order should not be made against her. Representations have been received on behalf of the person concerned.

The position in the State of the person concerned will now be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Citizenship Applications.

746. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform when certification of naturalisation will be forwarded to a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34486/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended provides that the Minister may, in his absolute discretion, grant an application for a certificate of naturalisation provided certain statutory conditions are fulfilled. One such condition is that the Minister must be satisfied that the applicant is of good character. In pursuance of this condition, the Citizenship Division of my Department routinely receive reports from an Garda Síochána on each applicant.

An application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division in June 2005 and the Minister decided to refuse the application on 8 October, 2008. The person concerned was informed of this in a letter issued to her on 9 October, 2008. A copy of the letter was re-issued to the person concerned on 2 September, 2009.

There is no appeals process under the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended.

It is open to the person concerned to lodge a new application for a certificate of naturalisation if and when she is in a position to meet the statutory requirements. However, in doing so she should bear in mind the reasons for refusal of her previous application.

Asylum Applications.

747. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the current or expected position in relation to the application for leave to remain or stamp four in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34487/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): I refer the Deputy to my detailed Reply to his earlier Parliamentary Question, No. 384 of Wednesday, 6 May, 2009, in this matter.

The person concerned applied for asylum on 4 March 2005. 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 16 January 2009, 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 not have a Deportation Order made against her. 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).

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection in the State in accordance with these Regulations and this application is under consideration at present. When consideration of this application has been completed, the person concerned will be notified in writing of the outcome.

In the event that the application for Subsidiary Protection is refused, the position in the State of the person concerned will then be decided by reference to the provisions of 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. All representations submitted will be considered before the file is passed to me for decision. Once a decision has been made, this decision and the consequences of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the person concerned.

Garda Recruitment.

748. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if a matter (details supplied) will be supported. [34511/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): Recruitment to An Garda Síochána is a matter in the first instance for the Public Appointments Service and then for the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána. I have been informed by An Garda Síochána that there is no scheme and there are no plans to introduce a scheme as referred to by the Deputy.

I have no role or function in the recruitment or training in Customs or Airport Services.

Proposed Legislation.

749. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if the proposal in the Civil Partnership Bill 2009 to fine and jail registrars who object to civil partnerships is incompatible with the principles of religious freedom; if the Bill protects registrars' right of conscience; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34531/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Civil Registration Act 2004 provides that it is an offence for a registrar to fail or refuse, without reasonable cause, to register a birth, stillbirth, marriage or death. It is also an offence under that Act to fail or refuse, without reasonable cause, to issue a marriage registration form to one of the parties to an intended marriage, or to purport to solemnise or to be a party to a marriage in respect of which the appropriate notice and advance formalities have not been completed. The Civil Partnership Bill amends the 2004 Act to replicate these provisions where appropriate with

respect to civil partnership registration. The Bill does not contain a “right of conscience” provision for registrars.

Crime Prevention.

750. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform the measures in place for the protection of citizens from sex offenders who enter the State; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34545/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): The Sex Offenders Act 2001 contains a comprehensive series of provisions aimed at protecting children and other persons and makes persons convicted of a range of sexual offences subject to notification requirements. These provisions extend to any offenders convicted abroad of the same range of sexual offences who enter the State.

An Garda Síochána has a system in place for the monitoring of all persons subject to these requirements. Its Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit monitors and manages the notification provisions, and maintains all information relating to persons who have obligations under the Act. There is a nominated Garda inspector in each Garda Division who has responsibility for the monitoring in their Division of persons subject to the requirements of the Act.

In November, 2006 the Government and the British Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the sharing between An Garda Síochána and British police forces, including the Police Service of Northern Ireland, of information on sex offenders. The MoU relates to information about persons travelling between this jurisdiction and the UK (including Northern Ireland) and who are subject to sex offender notification requirements in their own jurisdiction. Its purpose is the sharing of such information for the purposes of the protection of the public from the risks presented by sex offenders and the investigation of serious sexual offences and covers any information necessary to achieve these purposes. Such information sharing had been taking place informally at police level for some time.

In September, 2008 An Garda Síochána and the PSNI signed an agreement on the sharing of personal data in relation to the investigation of sexual offences and the monitoring of sex offenders. Under the Agreement, the information to be shared relates to persons who are subject to the notification requirements of the Sex Offenders Act and the equivalent UK legislation.

Information exchanged under the agreement is used for the prevention and detection of crime of a sexual nature and the prosecution of offenders. It has improved communication channels between An Garda Síochána and the PSNI and enhanced child protection on the island of Ireland. The agreement formalises the exchange of information which has always taken place and sets out procedures under which this will now take place. The information is exchanged in accordance with data protection legislation in force in both parts of Ireland.

An Garda Síochána is notified by the PSNI when it becomes aware that a convicted sex offender is travelling or has travelled from Northern Ireland to this jurisdiction. Likewise, An Garda Síochána notifies the PSNI when it becomes aware that a convicted sex offender is travelling or has travelled from this jurisdiction to Northern Ireland.

Citizenship Applications.

751. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform if he will expedite an application for naturalisation by a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34558/09]

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Deputy Dermot Ahern): A valid application for a certificate of naturalisation from the person referred to in the Deputy's Question was received in the Citizenship Division of my Department in July 2007.

All valid applications are dealt with in chronological order as this is deemed to be the fairest to all applicants. The average processing time from application to decision is now at 24 months. More complicated cases can at times take more than the current average, while an element of straight forward cases can be dealt with in less than that timescale. Officials in the Citizenship Division inform me that processing of the application is at an advanced stage and the file will be submitted to me for a decision in due course.

The length of time taken to process each application should not be classified as a delay, as the length of time taken for any application to be decided is purely a function of the time taken to carry out necessary checks.

There is a limit to the reduction in the processing time that can be achieved as applications for naturalisation must be processed in a way which preserves the necessary checks and balances to ensure that it is not undervalued and is only given to persons who genuinely satisfy the necessary qualifying criteria.

International Agreements.

752. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs if it is his intention to sign the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; if not, the reason for not signing; his plans for the signing of the optional protocol in the future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33562/09]

753. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs if the Government will sign the optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights when it opened for signature on 24 September 2009; if not, the reason for same; if there are plans for signing the optional protocol in the future; if the Government sign the optional protocol, if it will also ratify it on the same day; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34542/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 752 and 753 together.

As I have already indicated in response to a number of Parliamentary Questions answered on 16 and 23 September, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) was ratified by Ireland on 8 December 1989.

The Optional Protocol to this International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OP-ICESCR) will, when it comes into force, set up a mechanism that will make it possible for individuals or groups of individuals to submit a complaint to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in regard to violations of their economic, social and cultural rights by a State Party to that Protocol. It does not create any new substantive rights.

Discussions on the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR took place in a Working Group which held its first session in 2004. In June 2006, the UN Human Rights Council mandated the Working Group to negotiate the text of an Optional Protocol, and requested the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group to prepare a draft to serve as the basis for negotiations.

Following consideration by the UN Human Rights Council, the text of the Optional Protocol was presented last year to the UN General Assembly, which adopted the text by consensus on 10 December 2008, the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Officials of this Department were actively engaged at all stages of negotiation on the Optional

Protocol, in consultation with other relevant Government Departments, our EU partners and other UN member States.

Inter-Departmental consultations on the possibility of Ireland's signature and ratification of the Optional Protocol are continuing, with this Department playing a co-ordination role. As this process has not yet been completed, Ireland was not in a position to sign the Optional Protocol when it opened for signature in New York on 24 September.

Seven States parties signed the Optional Protocol at the opening ceremony. Since then, a further 22 States have signed. I arranged for Ireland to be represented at the opening ceremony, even though we were not in a position to sign. No State has yet ratified the Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol can only come into force three months after the deposit with the UN Secretary-General of the tenth instrument of ratification or accession.

I can assure the Deputy that I will make every effort to ensure that the consideration of Ireland's signature and ratification by relevant Government Departments is completed as quickly as possible.

Visa Applications.

754. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of people who have applied for the intern work and travel programme which provides for a 12 month visa for Irish citizens to work in the USA; and the number of same who have been successful since its inception. [32983/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): The working holiday agreement which was concluded between the Irish and US governments in September last year became operational in January of this year. This agreement allows those enrolled in or recently graduated from, post secondary education to apply for a visa to work and live in the United States for a period of one year.

This reciprocal programme is also open to US citizens wishing to spend a year in Ireland. The agreement represents the successful completion of one strand of the government's three pronged strategy to address migration flows between Ireland and the USA. We continue to work with the US Administration to agree a reciprocal long term working visa and to find a solution for the undocumented Irish in America.

For Irish citizens the working holiday agreement is administered in two stages. In the first instance an application must be made to an authorised sponsoring organisation who take the decision to issue a DC-2019 form which applicants must then present to the American Embassy in Dublin who take the final decision to issue the visa. The largest sponsoring organisations are currently USIT Travel and the Boston Irish Immigration Centre (BIIC). These organisations have received 231 applications. While precise details of approvals are not available, I understand that the vast majority have been approved.

For American citizens, applications must be lodged through the embassy in Washington or one of our Consulates General throughout the USA. To date 102 visas have been issued, 15 applications have been approved but not yet issued and a further 5 are currently pending approval, subject to further documentation. There have been 10 refusals issued to American citizens who were not eligible for the programme.

The working holiday agreement has proved positive to date and the government will continue to work with the US authorities and other organisations to ensure its continuation.

Middle East Peace Process.

755. **Deputy Michael D. Higgins** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs his views on whether it is consistent policy for Ireland to oppose the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank while at the same time allowing goods originating from those illegal settlements to be sold in the market here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33061/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): Ireland's position on settlements is very clear, and has been consistently stated on many occasions in the Oireachtas, most recently in reply to Question 784 of the 16th September. Israeli settlement building, whether in East Jerusalem or in the West Bank, is illegal under international law and represents a primary obstacle to the two-State solution. Continued expansion of these settlements undermines the viability of a Palestinian State and makes the realisation of that goal harder to achieve.

The daily and cumulative injustices and humiliations which the whole settlement process entails for the Palestinian population serve to increase the risk of another large scale descent into violence. Within the EU, Ireland has worked hard to keep a sharp focus on this issue, and to ensure that the EU's concerns about settlement expansion are made known to the Israeli Government at every opportunity. I have also personally raised my deep concerns about the issue directly with Israeli leaders and officials, both here and in Israel.

Trade relations with Israel are governed by the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which provides for preferential rates of duty on imports, in the same way as with many other countries. It is clear, however, that goods originating in settlements outside Israel proper are not entitled to avail of these preferential rates or exemptions, and full customs duties should be paid on them. This has been a subject of discussion between the EU Commission and Israel, and various measures have been established to make it possible to distinguish between Israeli and settlement goods. There are obvious difficulties in ensuring that this is 100% effective, and there is ongoing consideration of how this might be improved.

Control of imports into Ireland, including the identification of point of origin, are matters in the first instance for the Irish Customs Service.

Ministerial Travel.

756. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33084/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): I have detailed as follows in tabular form the annual cost of Ministerial travel, which includes accommodation, commercial flights and travel subsistence incurred for each year from January 2004 to August 2009. The electronic accounting system currently in operation at my Department has only been in place since 2004 and it therefore has only been possible in the time available to obtain comprehensive figures since this date. As the Deputy will appreciate, the role of Minister for Foreign Affairs includes an obligation to undertake a significant amount of official travel overseas.

My Department is fully compliant with the Department of Finance guidelines on foreign travel. My Department also operates its own detailed internal travel guidelines and practises which ensure cost effective travel practises, both in Headquarters and throughout our network of 75 diplomatic missions abroad. The central aim of the Departmental travel policy, which embraces both Ministers and officials, is to minimise official travel costs and to achieve value for money for expenditure necessarily incurred, consistent with the effective discharge of official duties.

Annual Ministerial Travel Costs

	2004*	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (January– August)
	€	€	€	€	€	€
Minister Cowen	34,250					
Minister Ahern	4,767	36,461	20,132	8,092	18,738	
Minister Martin					4,875	2,896
Total:	39,017	36,461	20,132	8,092	23,614	2,896
<i>Accommodation</i>						
Minister Cowen	21,580					
Minister Ahern	980	16,064	16,447	9,517	5,271	
Minister Martin					8,010	4,358
Total:	22,560	16,064	16,447	9,517	13,280	4,358
<i>Subsistence</i>						
Minister Cowen	3,126	1,340				
Minister Ahern	1,119	11,041	5,619	4,975	1,942	
Minister Martin					3,928	1,802
Total:	4,246	12,381	5,619	4,975	5,870	1,802
Overall Total:	65,822	64,906	42,198	22,584	42,764	9,056

*2004 figures include all travel taken as a result of Ireland's Presidency of the European Union.

Human Rights Issues.

757. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs his policy on a matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33615/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): The Government is very concerned about the recent reports of violent incidents in Camp Ashraf, the situation of those detained and also the more general predicament of its residents.

Camp Ashraf is home to over three thousand members of the People's Mujahideen of Iran (PMOI), an Iranian opposition group that established itself in Iraq in 1986 at the invitation of Saddam Hussein. However, following the war in 2003 and the collapse of the previous regime, Iraq's new Government have made clear their unhappiness at the continued presence in Iraq of the PMOI. This is due both to the importance of improving relations with Iran, and to the past actions of the PMOI in support of Saddam Hussein's regime, including its involvement in attacks on Iraqi civilians.

Camp Ashraf and its inhabitants were afforded protection by the US military when the US occupied Iraq in 2003. Earlier this year the Iraqi Government resumed full control of responsibility for security in Iraq from the US military. It is therefore incumbent upon the Iraqi authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of those still living in the Camp and to prevent the recurrence of violence such as that which took place recently (after residents had clashed with Iraqi police following an attempt to establish a police station in the Camp).

The determination of the Iraqi authorities to establish sovereign control throughout their territory and to resist the establishment of any "no-go" areas is understandable. The critical

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point, however, is that there must be no question of a forcible return to Iran of the residents of the Camp. The Iraqi authorities have so far stated that they have no intention of doing this.

This year the Government, through Irish Aid, provided €200,000 in support to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for its programming in Iraq. This includes emergency assistance to those affected by the conflict as well as the promotion of international humanitarian law and protection activities, such as visits to detainees. The ICRC regularly visits Camp Ashraf in fulfilment of its protection mandate, and has regularly reminded the authorities of their obligation to ensure that those living in the Camp have access to such basic necessities as food, water and medical care.

I can assure you that the Government will continue to follow developments closely, both regarding the future of the Camp and the wider security situation in Iraq itself.

Overseas Development Aid.

758. **Deputy Charlie O'Connor** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs his plans to increase Ireland's policy coherence for development following the critical remarks about Ireland's level of policy coherence for development in the recent OECD-DAC review of Ireland; his further plans to address this issue by increasing the regularity of meetings of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development which he chairs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33730/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Deputy Peter Power): The report of the review of Ireland's aid programme by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD was published in May. It provided a strong, independent endorsement of the programme and of the Government's development policies. The OECD praised Ireland's focus on the fight against global poverty and hunger, and the strong focus of the aid programme on the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It described Ireland as a champion in making aid more effective.

The OECD also noted the Government's commitment to an integrated policy approach to development across Departments, in line with the broad political consensus in Ireland that the fight against poverty is not merely a matter of providing overseas development assistance. It welcomed the establishment of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development and recommended that it address inconsistencies and potential policy conflicts among key Government Departments.

The Government established the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development in April 2007, with the objective of strengthening coherence in our approach to development and making best use of the expertise and skills available across the public service. As the current Chair of the Committee, I am pleased that it has become the key forum for the sharing of knowledge and views on development issues across Departments, and that it has intensified the work of ensuring that a strong development perspective is integrated into Government decision-making in all relevant areas.

At the ninth meeting of the Committee, in July, we reviewed the findings and recommendations of the OECD peer review. I also welcomed the publication of a scoping report commissioned by Irish Aid which makes a series of recommendations, across Departments, on possible areas in which the coherence of development policy might be improved. This report, and the statements being prepared by a number of Departments on their contribution to the improvement of policy coherence on development issues, will be further considered at the next

meeting of the Inter-Departmental Committee later this month. As Chair of the Committee, I am committed to ensuring that Government Departments work together more closely so that the full range of our policies in areas including trade, the environment and agriculture support the long term objective of eradicating poverty and hunger among the world's poorest people.

International Co-operation.

759. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs his plans to encourage further co-operation with Argentina following the recent conference at Farmleigh House; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33878/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): I am pleased to report that two participants from Argentina attended the Global Irish Economic Forum. The Government is determined to build on the positive momentum generated at the Forum and to take forward the wide range of ideas suggested during the discussions.

I will shortly bring a comprehensive report of the Forum discussions and suggested outcomes to Government. This will include details of how the Government can continue to develop a more strategic relationship with the global Irish, including those living in Argentina.

The Government values its long-standing bilateral relationship with Argentina. It remains an important trading partner for Ireland and several major Irish companies have significant operations there. Earlier this year, I met with representatives of the State Agencies and the private sector to assess how the Government can provide increased support to advance the State's economic interests in Latin America, including in Argentina.

Since 2006, the Government has, through the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP), been able to provide almost €140,000 in financial support to Irish-Argentine community associations to strengthen the links between these communities and Ireland. Further grant applications from Argentina are being considered as part of the current round of ESP funding and will be decided on over the coming weeks.

Departmental Reports.

760. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33902/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): The Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for two Votes — Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs) and Vote 29 (International Cooperation). The following table sets out, for both Votes, the details of experts and consultants commissioned to produce reports by the Department in 2008 and the costs in each case.

My Department, through Irish Aid (Ireland's official development assistance programme), occasionally commissions outside expertise where the specialised knowledge and/or skills are not available within the Department and where the effective management and evaluation of the programme necessitates the presence of such skills. During the course of their engagements these consultants/experts may prepare reports and other documentation. However, as they would not have been commissioned specifically to furnish a report, these details have not been included in the table.

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Vote 28: Experts/Consultants commissioned to produce reports in 2008.	Matter Reported On	Cost
		€
Millward Brown	Research Project to establish reasons underlying the result of the Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.	138,061
Communications Clinic	The preparation of a detailed Communication Action Plan to be used to direct spending under the Department's Communicating Europe Initiative (CEI) in 2009.	48,000
Richard Sinnott, Johan A Elkind, Kevin O'Rourke and James McBride	Report on Attitudes and Behaviour in the Referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon	11,800
Mr Jim O'Leary	Assessment of Value for Money Review of the Passport Service.	7,260

Vote 29: Experts/Consultants commissioned by Irish Aid to produce reports in 2008	Matter Reported On	Cost
		€
Copenhagen Development Consulting A/S.	Evaluation of Irish Aid Support to Primary Education in the Rwenzori Region, Uganda	96,665
Desam International Consultants — Uganda	Evaluation of Irish Aid Civil Society Programme — Uganda	19,500
Debebe — Ethiopia	Civil Society Fund Audit	3,000
Pricewaterhouse Coopers Ltd	Develop Irish Aid Tanzania Private Sector Support Strategy	36,414
National Forestry Authority Uganda	Environmental impact assessment of the construction improvement component of the post primary education and training programme (PPET) in Karamoja.	21,666
J Fitzpatrick Assoc	External Review of Irish Aid Support to Kimmage Development Studies Centre	66,550
Paud Murphy	Evaluation of Global e-Schools & Communities Initiative (GeSCI)	33,200
FSG Social Impact Advisors	Evaluation of International Partnership for Microbicides	139,000 ¹
Helen O'Neill	Assessment of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) as potential partner for Irish Aid	4,000
Dr.Larry Adupa — Uganda	Documenting the process of establishing the civil society fund for HIV/AIDS response in Uganda	11,257
Prof Amon Z Mattee — Tanzania	Assessment of the performance of extension services delivery under ASDP in Tanzania	19,235
ITAD Ltd	Evaluation of Ireland's Timor Leste Country Strategy 2004-2008	130,000
The IDL Group — Mozambique	Analysis of Opportunities to Support Rural Livelihood Security and Pro-poor Growth through the Public Sector	£30,851
Alicia da Silva Calane — Mozambique	Analytic Study on process and indicators to address gender related obstacles to achieving PROAGRI goals	10,000

Vote 29: Experts/Consultants commissioned by Irish Aid to produce reports in 2008	Matter Reported On	Cost
		€
Dr Barry Ryan	Review of the role of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in the Partnership Programme for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (PPECA)	15,000
Economics for the Environment Consultancy Ltd (eftec)	Review of Irish Aid's Strategic Partnership's Environment Programme 2006-2008:	30,000
Development Research Training (DRT) — Uganda	The Status of Chronic Poverty and Vulnerability in Karamoja	2,857
J Fitzpatrick Associates	Evaluation of Traidlinks	30,250
FRR/ IDL Group	Review of Irish Aid Programme in Zimbabwe	18,351
Dr. Joseph Oonyu — Uganda	Mid Term Review of Irish Aid Support to Human Resources Development for Increased Access to Primary Health Care.	\$9640
Ishmaels K. B. Kabanukye and others	Mapping exercise of Gender Based Violence (GBV) Programme in Uganda	20,000
Mary Jennings	Copper Belt Government Programme Evaluation	15,770
Albert Malama	Copper Belt Government Programme Evaluation	\$10,800
Dr. Henk J.W Mustsaers	Review Operational Research for Food Security and Capacity Building and Evaluate Joint Mekelle and Cork Universities MSc Degree in Rural Development	30,600
John O' Regan	Financial Assessment Component of an organisational Assessment on partner NGOs for Multi-Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS), Civil Society Fund, Block Grants & other Civil Society Funding Schemes	22,400
Declan O Neill	Foreign Currency Transaction Review for Embassy in Tanzania	15,000
Elim Serviços Lda-	Evaluation of Irish support to Technoserve	19,369
Health Tech Consulting — Mozambique	Evaluation of the Provincial Investment Plan 2004-2008 (PIPS) in Niassa Province (Mozambique)	25,000
John O' Regan	Audit of Multi-Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS) Partnership grants awarded to Self Help Development International	22,500
ITAD Ltd	Evaluation of the Uganda Country Strategy Paper 2007 -2009	88,760
Catherine Butcher	Review of HIV/AIDS programme in Northern Province (Zambia)	18,600
AGEMA — Mozambique	Vulnerability & Agriculture Extension Study	42,000
Jane Salvage	Feedback on evaluation of Irish Aids support to Health Rehabilitation Project for Marsh Arabs of Southern Iraq	1,650
Integra Economic Development Consultants Ltd	Report to Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD) on development of skill sets	18,300
Petrus Consulting Ltd	Quality review of draft HIV and AIDS Value for Money Report	3,400
Prof. Ronan Conroy	Independent assessment of issues arising from review of a local HIV and AIDS Programme in Tanzania.	5,000

¹The Department of Foreign Affairs paid 139,000 towards the cost of this report. The remainder of the total cost of 342,000 was borne by other donors.

In addition, the Advisory Board for Irish Aid (ABIA) commissioned two research programmes in 2008. These were *Policy Coherence for Development and Agriculture* which cost €199,608

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and *Policy Indicators Project* which cost €69,840. Both contracts were awarded to the Institute for International Integration Studies (IIIS) at Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

Departmental Staff.

761. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33953/09]

762. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33968/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 761 and 762 together.

The following tables set out the numbers of staff in my Department who have availed of early retirement, whose contracts have been terminated or who have resigned since 2006, as well as the associated costs.

There are no Government agencies under the remit of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Early Retirement

Year	Number of staff	Scheme
2006	1	Cost Neutral Early Retirement
2007	0	Not applicable
2008	0	Not applicable
2009 to date	16	Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement

The calculation of the pension benefits payable to retired members of my Department, including the appropriate lump sum due, is a matter for the Department of Finance. Accordingly, my Department is not in a position to provide information on the costs arising as a result of pension payments to individual officers who have availed of early retirement.

Contract Terminations

Year	Number of staff	Associated costs
		€
2006	189	0
2007	140	73,262
2008	104	0
2009 to date	82	1,890

In 2007, payments were made to four individuals whose contracts were terminated. These payments were in accordance with contractual and legal obligations and comprised:

- statutory redundancy;

- a severance payment, based on a package sanctioned by the Department of Finance in 1994; and
- pay in lieu of notice, as per the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973-2001.

In 2009, statutory redundancy payments were made to three officers upon termination of their contracts.

Resignations

Year	Number of staff
2006	14
2007	14
2008	8
2009 to date	6

Apart from the appropriate statutory pension entitlements that might arise, there were no costs associated with any of the resignations listed above.

Passport Applications.

763. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs if a person (details supplied) will be supported. [33982/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): The person concerned applied for citizenship, through the foreign births registration process, which allows the grandchildren of Irish born citizens to obtain citizenship. The application was made at the Office of the Consul General in New York. Her certificate of citizenship was provided to her on September 30 and a passport application was then submitted on October 1. The passport application is being processed and arrangements have been made for the person to collect her passport at the passport office in Dublin on October 7.

Departmental Contracts.

764. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34316/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): My Department avails of the Department of Finance Central Framework for mobile telephony services. Under this procurement framework, my Department has contracts with both O₂ and Vodafone, in place since October 2008, for the provision of all mobile telephony requirements, including for Ministers.

Departmental Staff.

765. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34343/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): The calculation of the pension benefits payable to retired members of my Department, including the appropriate lump sum

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due, is a matter for the Department of Finance, in accordance with the regulations governing these arrangements.

During the past three years, my Department has not sanctioned or applied for payment of any pension top-ups or discretionary pension-related payments outside the terms of those regulations.

There are no Government agencies under the remit of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

766. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34358/09]

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Deputy Micheál Martin): No civil servants were dismissed from my Department during the period in question.

However, the Deputy may wish to note that, during this period, the Department initiated disciplinary proceedings in a very small number of cases where serious misconduct was alleged. In the cases concerned, the relevant officers resigned from the Civil Service before the disciplinary process was completed.

In light of legal and data protection considerations and the small number of officers involved, it is not possible to provide any further information about the cases in question, as to do so might identify the individuals concerned.

Overseas Development Aid.

767. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs if he will observe the commitment to spend 0.7% of GDP on overseas aid by 2012; if he will commit to maintaining the current level of expenditure on overseas aid between 2009 and 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34540/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Deputy Peter Power): In 2008, Ireland spent €920 million on Official Development Assistance (ODA). This represented approximately 0.59 % of our Gross National Product (GNP).

For 2009 the total budget for ODA is expected to reach €696 million. Based on current projections this will represent at least 0.48% of GNP. This means that Ireland will remain one of the most generous donors in the world on a per capita basis.

The Government has established a target of spending 0.7% of GNP on ODA by 2012. Achieving this target will be a challenge in the current economic circumstances. The Government will make a full assessment of our capacity to achieve it in the context of the preparation of the 2010 Budget.

The estimates process for 2010 is now underway leading to the Budget in December. As the Deputy is aware there are many competing demands for scarce resources. Our aim is to protect the aid programme to the maximum extent achievable within the context of the current difficult fiscal environment.

As the Deputy will appreciate I cannot give an undertaking in relation to the exact figure for development assistance for 2010 in advance of the Budget. This is ultimately a matter for the Minister for Finance. However, I can state that both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and I will make the best possible case in support of the aid budget.

Decentralisation Programme.

768. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the cost associated with temporary accommodation that was required to facilitate the decentralisation of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism to Killarney, County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33486/09]

769. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the cost of the new building acquired to accommodate the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism's relocation to Killarney, County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33487/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): I propose to take Questions Nos. 768 and 769 together.

The breakdown of the property expenditure for the Department's relocation to Killarney under the Decentralisation Programme is a matter for the OPW. However, I understand that the total expenditure to date in this respect is €20.96m.

The total non-property expenditure to date for the Decentralisation Programme for the Department is €1.16m.

Arts Council.

770. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the number employed in the Arts Council in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32935/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): Details of the numbers employed in the Arts Council are shown in the following table.

Year	Number employed in whole time equivalents
2009	58.5
2008	61.0
2007	49.0
2006	45.0
2005	45.0

Arts Funding.

771. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the total amount expended in the per cent for art scheme in each year since 2000; the amount of funding from the scheme that went towards the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and not into public art; if the figures supplied are the total final costs and not the initial estimate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33003/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): The per cent for art scheme does not operate on the basis of a fund from which monies are drawn to undertake works of an artistic nature. Such works are instead factored into, and funded from, the budgets of the capital project in question by the relevant organisation undertaking the project and each department and agency may retain details of such expenditure. No funding is received by Department of Arts Sport and Tourism from the Per Cent for Arts Scheme.

In respect of my own Department, a total of €64,000 was spent on the scheme in 2008. All of this amount was expended on the commissioning of art in relation to the Department's new

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headquarters in Killarney. There was no expenditure by the Department under the scheme in the other years.

Sports Capital Programme.

772. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism when he will reopen the Sports Capital Programme; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that building tender costs are down 40% in most cases and developments should go ahead at a greatly reduced cost, which would help to provide construction employment; if his further attention has been drawn to the fact that many facilities are required to provide somewhere for young and unemployed people to exercise or socialise to prevent anti-social behaviour and to combat potential health problems of a physical and mental state; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33010/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): The Sports Capital Programme, which is administered by my Department, is the primary vehicle for Government support for the provision of sports facilities and equipment in this country.

Since 1998, through the Sports Capital Programme, the Government has invested over €725 million in over 7,400 separate sporting projects. This investment has transformed the Irish sporting landscape with improved facilities in virtually every village, town and city. The facilities funded range from basic sports facilities and new equipment for the smallest clubs, to regional integrated multi-sport centres and national centres of sporting excellence.

This investment is evidence of the importance that this Government places on sport. Sports facilities that are well-planned, built and managed have the ability to act as focal points for a community and allow more people to get involved in healthy activities. Participation in sport is important for many reasons. For individuals, participation has health benefits, builds confidence and gives people a sense of their worth. For society as a whole, sport can reduce anti-social behaviour while sporting success has the ability to lift the spirits of whole counties and even the whole country.

€56 million has been provided in my Department's Vote in 2009 out of which grants are paid for the provision of sports and recreation facilities. I expect that all of this funding will be drawn down by grantees by the end of year. It can be expected that many of the grantees drawing down this funding are benefiting from the reduction in construction costs this year.

No decision has been taken on the next round of the Programme.

Ministerial Travel.

773. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33076/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): I am presuming that the Deputy is referring to expenses paid to Ministers in accordance with the Department of Finance travel and subsistence regulations. In this context the annual cost to the Department of expenses paid to Ministers related to overseas travel engagements from 2002, the date of establishment of the Department, to date is as follows:

Number	€
2002	1,336.33
2003	3,596.72
2004	2,977.47

Number	€
2005	3,141.60
2006	3,603.97
2007	1,216.46
2008	5,241.83
2009	2,762.71

These amounts relate to expenses incurred by Ministers while overseas in the course of their official duties.

Sports Capital Programme.

774. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism if it is planned to have a new capital sports programme in 2010; the level of funding in the programme that is committed to projects but not drawn from previous announcements; the length of time available to a club to draw down funds once approved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33568/09]

779. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism his budgetary plans in relation to the national lottery funded sports capital development programme for 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33867/09]

785. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the position regarding the sports capital funding for community groups; if funding will be made available for 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34180/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): I intend to answer Questions Nos. 774, 779 and 785 together.

The Sports Capital Programme, which is administered by my Department and part funded from the proceeds of the National Lottery, is the primary vehicle for Government support for the provision of sports facilities and equipment in this country.

No decision has been made on the timing on the next round of the Sports Capital Programme.

The total level of outstanding commitments on hand at the end of 2008 was just over €175m. It is anticipated that outstanding commitments on hand at the end of 2009 will be below €120m.

When provisional allocations are made under the Sports Capital Programme grantees must comply with all the terms and conditions of the Programme and have completed a substantial amount of progress on their project to facilitate the draw down of the grant within 15-18 months. However, the Department adopts a flexible approach and tries to give clubs every opportunity to draw down grants. Where delays are excessive, or the project has ceased, the Department seeks to withdraw allocations.

Tourism Industry.

775. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism further to Parliamentary Question No. 153 of 25 March 2009, his plans to increase funding for regional marketing; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33593/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): Operational responsibility for tourism marketing rests with the tourism agencies. In terms of the future funding for such

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campaigns, this will be considered as part of the normal discussions on the forthcoming Budget and the Departmental Estimates for 2010.

There is no doubt that the period to date in 2009 has been very difficult for tourism globally with all major international tourism destinations showing decreased numbers of visitors. Latest figures from the Central Statistics Office show a reduction of 10.4% in the number of overseas visitors to Ireland for the first seven months of 2009 compared with the corresponding period of 2008. While any reduction in the number of overseas visitors is disappointing, it must be seen in context. Ireland enjoyed several years of successive growth in visitor numbers, reaching a record of just over 8 million in 2007. In terms of the 2009 figures, Ireland is actually maintaining its position, or performing better than some other competitor destinations.

In terms of marketing campaigns, Tourism Ireland is keeping its programmes under constant review, to ensure necessary flexibility and responsiveness. It front-loaded its campaigns across all markets to secure as much business as possible for the peak and shoulder season and has now intensified its tactical and cooperative marketing activity for the second half of the year with an €18 million autumn campaign. An intensive marketing campaign is currently underway in the North American market. The campaign focuses mainly on the 8 gateways which offer direct services to the island, including those to Shannon. The “*Ireland’s Wonderful West Awaits You*” campaign is continuing and throughout September and October, Tourism Ireland is carrying out a five-week “*Ireland’s Wonderful West Awaits You*” online advertising campaign.

On the domestic front, Fáilte Ireland committed to its largest ever campaign to promote home holidays in 2009, with in excess of €3 million being invested in a year-round marketing programme promoting awareness of, and interest in, taking a home break. The Autumn Initiative, co-ordinated and implemented by Fáilte Ireland with additional funding from members of the tourism industry, was launched last month and is intended to boost business in September and October 2009.

While I know that our businesses and tourism agencies are responding positively to current challenges, it is just as important that the strategic framework for tourism development responds to the changing environment. Accordingly, I established the Tourism Renewal Group, which has been tasked with reviewing and, where appropriate, renewing the current tourism strategy to ensure that it is focused for the short term and, looking further ahead, that the tourist industry is well placed to benefit from the upturn when it comes. The Group has finalised its report, which contains recommendations in the form of a Framework for Action for the period to 2013 and it will be published very shortly.

Sports Capital Programme.

776. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the position regarding grants (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33817/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): The Sports Capital Programme, which is administered by my Department and part funded from the proceeds of the National Lottery, is the primary vehicle for Government support for the provision of sports facilities and equipment in this country.

No decision has been made on the timing on the next round of the Sports Capital Programme.

Since 1998, through the Sports Capital Programme, the Government has invested over €725 million in over 7,400 separate sporting projects. Included in this figure is over €120m in funding to soccer clubs.

This investment has transformed the Irish sporting landscape with improved facilities in virtually every village, town and city. The facilities funded range from basic sports facilities and new equipment for the smallest clubs, to regional integrated multi-sport centres and national centres of sporting excellence.

777. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism further to Parliamentary Question No. 41 of 24 September 2009, the timeframe on the progress of the review of the sports capital programme; when he expects the review to be completed and published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33852/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): Work on the National Sports Facilities Strategy, which will provide an improved policy platform for any future rounds of the Programme, is at an advanced stage of preparation in my Department. It is my intention to publish the strategy once it has been completed and considered by the Government.

778. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism further to Parliamentary Question No. 41 of 24 September 2009, the projected direct Exchequer funding for the Horse and Greyhound Fund; the progress made on the review of the funding structure of the Horse and Greyhound Fund; when he expects to publish this financial review; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33853/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): As outlined in my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 41 of 24 September 2009, a review of the Horse & Greyhound Fund has been completed and is currently being considered in the context of deciding on the future funding options for these industries.

The level of funding to the horse and greyhound racing industries in 2010 will be dependent on overall budgetary conditions taking into account the significant contributions that these industries make to the economy in general and the rural economy in particular.

Question No. 779 answered with Question No. 774.

International Co-operation.

780. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism his plans to encourage sport co-operation with Argentina; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33880/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): I recently met with the Ambassador of Argentina to discuss the possibility of sport cooperation between the two countries. It was an informative and interesting exchange. Officials in my Department are currently examining ways of maintaining and enhancing the sporting links that currently exist between the two countries.

Departmental Reports.

781. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33894/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): During 2008, the Department commissioned four reports from experts and/or consultants. The cost of each report is as set out in tabular form as follows.

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Title/Purpose of Commissioned Report	Cost
	€
Review of the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund	19,465
Church Records Microfilm and Records Numbers Survey (to identify and provide estimates of the record numbers of non-digitised Church registers)	5,808
Evaluation of Irish Sports Council Value for Money and Policy Review	3,267
Update of the Cost-Benefit Analysis for the National Museum at Collins Barracks	3,146

Sports Capital Programme.

782. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the position regarding the payment of a sports capital grant to a club (details supplied) in County Cork. [33941/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): The organisation in question was provisionally allocated a grant of €200,000 for the development of an all-weather training pitch under the Programme in 2006. A provisional grant allocation is subject to the terms and conditions of the Programme, which include the execution of a Deed of Covenant and Charge. A Deed provides, inter alia, for a refund of the grant in the event of the facility not continuing to be used for the purpose for which the grant was allocated. The Department's legal adviser, the Chief State Solicitor's Office (CSSO), deals with the grantee's solicitor in executing this Deed. The Department has been advised by the CSSO that, at the close of business yesterday, there are a number of legal matters outstanding in this regard and further documentation is awaited from the grantee's solicitors.

This documentation relates both to a Deed of Covenant and Charge for a portion of the site and to a Priority Agreement. Priority agreements are used to ensure that, where the club or organisation has debts to lending institutions, the Minister's investment and any other debts are listed in order of rank or priority.

Departmental Staff.

783. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33945/09]

784. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33960/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): I propose to take Questions Nos. 783 and 784 together.

There were no persons who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in the Department in the years in question.

The information as requested by the Deputy in respect of the agencies under the aegis of the Department where early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations occurred is set out in the following tables.

Details for Tourism Ireland Ltd have not been included since they are a North / South body whose terms and conditions of employment are subject to agreement by the North South Ministerial Council.

Organisation: National Gallery of Ireland

	Early Retirement		Termination of Contracts		Resignations	
	No. Staff	Cost €	No. Staff	Cost €	No. Staff	Cost €
2006	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
2007	nil	nil	nil	nil	1	**10,000
2008	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
2009 (to date)	nil	nil	1	*20,000	nil	nil
Total	nil	nil	1	20,000	1	10,000

*The above cost represents a settlement in the context of an EAT appeal against a dismissal. Additional costs in this case covering legal and stenographer fees amounted to €25,000 approx. The year reflects that year where the payments were incurred.

**This was an ex-gratia payment made, with the approval of the Department of Finance, to a staff member who was on a rolling contract which was not renewed.

Organisation: National Concert Hall

	Early Retirement		Termination of Contracts		Resignations	
	No. Staff	Cost €	No. Staff	Cost €	No. Staff	Cost €
2006	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
2007	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
2008	nil	nil	1	11,604	nil	nil
2009 (to date)	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total	nil	nil	1	11,604	nil	nil

This was a net redundancy payment.

Organisation: National Sports Campus Development Authority

	Early Retirement		Termination of Contracts		Resignations	
	No. Staff	Cost €	No. Staff	Cost €	No. Staff	Cost €
2006	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
2007	nil	nil	nil	nil	1	nil
2008	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
2009 (to date)	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total	nil	nil	nil	nil	1	nil

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Organisation: Fáilte Ireland

	Early Retirement (VER/VR)		Termination of Contracts		Resignations	
	No. Staff	Cost	No. Staff	Cost	No. Staff	Cost
		€m		€		€
2006	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
2007	20	1.560	nil	nil	nil	nil
2008	4	0.525	nil	nil	nil	nil
2009 (to date)	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total	24	2.085	nil	nil	nil	nil

The Department, with the sanction of the Department of Finance, authorised a targeted voluntary early retirement scheme in Fáilte Ireland in July 2007. The scheme provided for 24 departures from the organisation. It also provided for the creation of 8 new posts. The initial up-front cost of the scheme was estimated at €2.5m but with the reduction in numbers the scheme will be cost neutral over the period 2007 to 2012.

Question No. 785 answered with Question No. 774.

Departmental Contracts.

786. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34309/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): The Minister's current mobile phone contract is with O₂ Communications (Ireland) Limited in. The pricing plan currently in effect is the O₂ CORPORAT5 Plan. This pricing plan is subject to regular review to ensure the most cost-effective service is achieved.

Departmental Staff.

787. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under its remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34335/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): There have been no occasions on which the Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or of any agency under its ambit in the years 2006 to 2008, inclusive.

788. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34350/09]

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism (Deputy Martin Cullen): Over the past five years no civil servants in my Department have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract.

Departmental Programmes.

789. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number and location of volunteering centres here under active citizenship; the number of volunteers participating in each of the centres; and the amount of funding available to each of the centres in 2009. [33188/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): My Department provides annual funding to twenty one volunteer centres across the country. A list of the Volunteer Centres and the funding allocated by my Department in 2009 is set out below.

To date in 2009 over 7,600 individuals have registered to volunteer across the network of Volunteer Centres. This represents an increase in registrations on last year of more than 115%. In excess of 2,000 individuals have already been placed in volunteering opportunities that will generate more than 190,000 hours of volunteering this year.

In addition, the Volunteer Centres provide a wide range of services in supporting community & voluntary organisations and in promoting active citizenship events such as 'Give it a Swirl Day', the national day of volunteering, which this year took place on 25 September.

Name of Volunteer Centre	Funding 2009
	€
Carlow	135,907.20
Cork	106,015.68
Drogheda	135,599.04
Donegal	118,406.40
Dublin City North	210,240.00
Dublin City South	189,745.92
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	80,643.84
Fingal	134,287.68
Galway	118,275.00
Kerry	124,800.00
Kildare	125,270.40
Limerick City	41,273.28
Mayo	60,768.00
Meath	116,923.88
Monaghan	70,204.80
Sligo	122,789.09
South Dublin County	196,032.00
South Tipperary	129,312.00
West Limerick	108,617.28
Westmeath	123,782.40
Wicklow	113,354.88
Total	2,562,248.77

790. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the net effect of his proposed integration of the local development social inclusion programme and the community development programme with regard to counties Monaghan and Cavan; when the review of the community development programme will conclude; his plans for publishing the report arising therefrom; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33048/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): The LDSIP and the CDP are my Departments two main social inclusion/community development programmes. Both have a community development element and both are delivered through separate local delivery structures.

I have already indicated that my strong view is that a single focussed programme with a single integrated delivery structure is now needed in order to maximise the impact of these two programmes which serve disadvantaged communities. The Centre for Effective Services is currently preparing proposals for me in this regard, which will draw on good international practice and independent advice. I hope to receive this in the near future with a view to rolling out a new programme early next year.

In advance of proceeding to establish a single programme across CDPs and Partnerships, my Department has initiated an evaluation of individual Community Development Projects. Many of these projects span across two decades with quite diverse activities. Again, I hope to have proposals from my Department in the near future.

While I cannot be specific at this stage about the impact on specific bodies in the Cavan Monaghan area, disadvantaged communities will benefit from a more focussed programme with clear objectives and simplified and streamlined delivery structures.

Ministerial Travel.

791. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagements; and the events and their expense for each of the past ten years. [33078/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The annual cost, including relevant flights, subsistence and other expenses paid, of overseas travel in my official capacity as Minister for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 to date is set out in the table below. The primary purpose of each trip is also indicated.

It has not been possible within the time available to collate all of the information sought by the Deputy back to June 2002 when my Department was established. Relevant details for the period from June 2002 to end-2006 are being compiled and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Table: 2007-2009 (to date)

Year	Destination	Purpose	Amount
			€
2009	London	Attended Waterways Ireland (WI) exhibition at the London Boat Show with John Martin, CEO WI	473
	Cardiff	Attend British Irish Council Summit Meeting	171
	Australia	State Representative at St. Patrick's Day events; meeting with Australian Premier Kevin Rudd; meetings with NSW Minister Tony Kelly; meetings with IDA clients; attended Enterprise Ireland events; visits to Irish Australian Welfare Bureaus	9,364
	Canada	State Representative at the National Famine Commemoration events in Toronto and Quebec (also attended by Federal Minister Jim Prentice); visited Celtic Studies Department and delivered lecture on Great Famine in University of Toronto	3,788
Total			13,796
2008	London	Attended Waterways Ireland (WI) exhibition at the London Boat Show with Edwin Poots MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, and John Martin, CEO WI	2,101
	Brussels	Meeting with EU Commissioner for Rural Development; attended Conference on Multilingualism	1,652
	Boston, USA	Meetings with Department of Celtic Studies and Department of Celtic Languages & Literatures, Harvard University; delivered lecture on membership of European Union; attended event for Irish community in Boston; meetings with faculty and students in Boston College; visited Irish Centre in Canton.	6,008
	India	State Representative at St. Patrick's day events. 400+ guests in Delhi and 850+ guests in Mumbai comprising Irish community, business and diplomatic guests. Undertook range of interviews supporting all-island agencies (e.g. Tourism Ireland, IDA and Enterprise Ireland); visited projects funded by Irish Aid in slum areas.	6,802
	New York, USA	Delivered Barra Ó Donnabháin lecture in New York University; launch of Fulbright Irish Language Programme 2008-11 in Lehman College; visited NY Irish Arts Centre	6,822
	Brussels	Meeting with EU Commissioner Fischer Boel	628
	Milwaukee, USA	Meetings with Chancellor of University of Wisconsin Milwaukee and members of Faculty of Celtic Studies; speaker at Irish Fest Milwaukee attended range of Irish promotional events; meeting with Mayor of Milwaukee and Chamber of Commerce; attended commemoration of Omagh bombing.	7,603
	Scotland	Meeting Scottish Government representatives, including Rt. Hon Mr. Alex Salmond, MSP, First Minister of Scotland, Linda Fabiani MSP, Minister for Europe, External Affairs & Culture, Richard Lochhead, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs & the Environment, John Swinney, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Sustainable Growth; meetings with Rural Development Council, Inverness, Norman Gillies of Sabhal Mor Ostaig; Scottish National Access Forum/NGOs in relation to Rural Recreation and Walkways	2,559

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Year	Destination	Purpose	Amount
	Isle of Man	Meeting with Hon Allan Bell MHK, Treasury Minister; visit to Tynwald; meeting regarding rural development issues chaired by Hon Phil Gawne, MHK; visit to Bunscoil (Manx language primary school); tour of Cregneash, including meeting with native Manx speakers	€ 467
	Boston/New York/Portland, USA	Guest of honour at 100 year celebration of the Mayo County Association; unveiling of plaque in honour of Éamon de Valera; visit to exhibition by Irish artist Joseph Walsh, attend Inter-county football match in Gaelic Park; visit Catholic Memorial High school to meet students in Irish language programme; official opening of Maine Irish Heritage centre; presentation with key to City by Mayor of Portland	7,097
Total			41,739
2007	London	Attended Waterways Ireland (WI) exhibition at the London Boat Show with CEO WI; launched new WI publication “Ireland: Waterways Map & Directory”	1,047
	Phoenix, USA	State Representative at St. Patrick’s Day events in Phoenix; meeting with Bob Walkup, Mayor of Tucson; meeting with Office of Economic Development in University of Arizona; meeting with Irish Business Network; meeting with Mayor of Phoenix, Phil Gordon; tour of Irish Art Collection in Phoenix Art Museum; visit to Irish Cultural Centre	15,528
	Bonn, Germany	Attended and gave lecture at the International Congress on Celtic Studies	722
	Cleveland, USA	Guest of Honour at Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland; meeting with Mayo people living in Cleveland; radio interviews	7,396
Total			24,693

Security of the Elderly.

792. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if, in view of the high risk to older people living alone, he has reconsidered the interruption to the elderly reassurance community scheme formerly operated by him in conjunction with voluntary groups. [33116/09]

793. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he will ensure that funding is released for the community support for older people scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33119/09]

797. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the position regarding the suspension of the scheme of community support for older people; if his Department officials have concluded their review of the scheme’s operation, which began in May 2009; if a report will be made available outlining his Department’s findings; and when the scheme is expected to recommence. [33300/09]

803. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs when he expects to re-establish the scheme of community support for older people; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33669/09]

809. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if there are plans to re-introduce the personal alarm security pendants for older persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33750/09]

820. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs when he expects that the personal alarm scheme will be re-introduced; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34457/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): I propose to take Questions Nos 792, 793, 797, 803, 809 and 820 together.

I refer the Deputies to my answer to Questions Nos. 125, 161 and 165 from earlier today.

Departmental Funding.

794. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs his views on the lack of funding for youth and community groups to engage in media training, in view of the fact that such funding is available in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33239/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I am not aware of any significant demand in this area. If the Deputy has a specific instance in mind, I am happy to consider whether there is any appropriate action that I can take.

National Drugs Strategy.

795. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the action he will take in relation to the selling of a substance called snow, a legal substance being sold as bath salts but which is being compared to cocaine. [33262/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): While I have responsibility for the co-ordination of the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy, my colleague, Mary Harney T.D., Minister for Health and Children, has responsibility for the implementation of the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977 and 1984. Regulations made under these Acts control the import, export, production, supply and possession of a range of named narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances listed in the schedules to the Acts. Substances are scheduled under the Acts in accordance with Ireland’s obligations under international conventions and/or where there is evidence that the substances are causing significant harm to public health in Ireland.

As the Deputy points out “snow” is not currently scheduled under Misuse of Drugs legislation and I understand that it is being sold in so-called headshops and through the internet.

As part of its work, the National Advisory Committee on Drugs looks at information exchange and risk assessment in regard to new synthetic drugs within EU Member States. The NACD is aware of the substance in question and I understand that it will be considered at the next meeting of its Early Warning and Emerging Trends Sub-committee.

Meanwhile, through an action under the new National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016, led by the Department of Health & Children, it is proposed to monitor the activities of headshops, and

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all businesses involved in the sale of psychoactive substances, with the objective of ensuring that no illegal activity is undertaken.

Harbours and Piers.

796. **Deputy Pádraic McCormack** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the harbour dues owed from late 2003 and early 2004 to date in 2009; the grant moneys paid for the same period; if there have been prosecutions for non-payment of dues; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33284/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Responsibility for matters relating to harbour dues rests with my colleague, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

I can confirm that my Department has paid subsidies in respect of passenger and cargo ferry services on the route referred to by the Deputy in his “details supplied” and I am arranging to have the relevant information forwarded directly to him.

Question No. 797 answered with Question No. 792.

Stráitéis Fiche Bliain don Ghaeilge.

798. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil moladh an nGrúpa Speisialta ar Uimhreacha na Seirbhíse Poiblí agus Cláir Chaiteachais maidir le scéimeanna tacaíochta d’áiseanna spóirt, pobail agus cultúrtha á meas ina Roinn faoi láthair agus an bhfuil sé ar intinn aige iad a choinneáil; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [33626/09]

799. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cad é an tionchar a bheidh ag an mholadh ón nGrúpa Speisialta ar Uimhreacha na Seirbhíse Poiblí agus Cláir Chaiteachais laghdú de €1 mhilliún a dhéanamh ar chiste na Gaeilge agus cén tionchar a bheidh ag laghdú dá leithéid ar na heagraíochtaí Gaeilge. [33627/09]

800. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil na moltaí ón nGrúpa Speisialta ar Uimhreacha na Seirbhíse Poiblí agus Cláir Chaiteachais maidir le deireadh a chur le scéimeanna bóthair, céanna, oileán agus soláthair uisce á meas ag a Roinn; an bhfuil sé ar intinn na scéimeanna a choinneáil nó cuid acu a chur ar ceal; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [33628/09]

801. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil an moladh ón nGrúpa Speisialta ar Uimhreacha na Seirbhíse Poiblí agus Cláir Chaiteachais maidir le scéim na bhfoghlaimoírí Gaeilge, agus scéim dheontais na mban tí, á scrúdú ag a Roinn faoi láthair; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [33629/09]

802. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Dinny McGinley** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta cad é an ceangal idir Údarás na Gaeltachta agus Fiontar Éireann chomh fada is a bhaineann le fostaíocht Ghaeltachta; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [33630/09]

819. D’fhiafraigh **Deputy Brian O’Shea** den Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta féidir leis gealltanais a thabhairt nach gcuirfear scéimeanna Labhairt na Gaeilge agus na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge ar ceal (sonraí iniata); agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [34366/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Tógfaidh mé Ceisteanna Nos. 798 go dtí 802, agus 819 le chéile.

Beidh na hábhair atá luaite ag na Teachtaí le breithniú ag leibhéal an Rialtais, ní hamháin i gcomhthéacs na Cáinainéise 2010, ach freisin i gcomhthéacs na hoibre atá idir lámha ag an gCoiste Rialtais don Ghaeilge agus don Ghaeltacht i ndáil leis an Straitéis 20 bliain don Ghaeilge.

Question No. 803 answered with Question No. 792.

Community Workers.

804. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of people who are employed as community workers, family resource centre workers, community action network staff, partnership staff, outreach workers, community project workers, child care staff and local employment scheme workers in the Dublin 6W area whose wages are paid with funds from his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33710/09]

805. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of people who are employed as community workers, family resource centre workers, community action network staff, partnership staff, outreach workers, community project workers, child care staff and local employment scheme workers in the Dublin 8 area whose wages are paid with funds from his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33711/09]

806. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of people who are employed as community workers, family resource centre workers, community action network staff, partnership staff, outreach workers, community project workers, child care staff and local employment scheme workers in the Dublin 10 area whose wages are paid with funds from his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33712/09]

807. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of people who are employed as community workers, family resource centre workers, community action network staff, partnership staff, outreach workers, community project workers, child care staff and local employment scheme workers in the Dublin 12 area whose wages are paid with funds from his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33713/09]

808. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of people who are employed as community workers, family resource centre workers, community action network staff, partnership staff, outreach workers, community project workers, child care staff and local employment scheme workers in the Dublin 20 area whose wages are paid with funds from his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33714/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I propose to take Questions Nos. 804 to 808, inclusive, together.

As the Department is not the employer in any of the instances above (and indeed in some cases may not provide any funding to sponsoring groups) all issues relating to those employees are matters for the individual organisations and should be addressed directly to them.

Question No. 809 answered with Question No. 792.

Departmental Reports.

810. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33896/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): My Department commissioned 10 reports from consultants during 2008, details of which are set out in the table below.

I should add that my Department has made available on its website details regarding consultancies (excepting those of minor value, i.e., less than €5,000, excluding VAT) relating to the period since its establishment in June 2002 up to the end of August 2009.

Consultancies (excepting those of a value less than €5,000, excluding VAT) commissioned by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in 2008

Consultancy Description	Consultant	Start Date	End Date	Estimated Cost	Paid to 31 August 2009
				€	€
Audit of assessment process for Funding Scheme for National Community & Voluntary Organisations	Goodbody Economic Consultants	01-Apr-08	22-Oct-08	9,619	9,620
Quantifying economic value of non-profit sector in Ireland	Centre for Non-profit Management, TCD	01-Apr-08	14-Nov-08	17,000	17,000
Professional assistance relating to PEACE II and INTERREG IV Programmes	Robert Browne	25-Feb-08	11-Apr-08	14,376	14,376
Advice on formulation of 20 year Strategic Plan for Irish	Fiontar DCU	08-Feb-08	08-Feb-09	299,281	299,280
Provision of HR services to Local Development Companies — Cohesion Process	Mazars	01-Jun-08	30-May-09	85,818	85,818
Technical advice in relation to procurement process	Achilles Procurement Services Ltd	01-May-08	Contract cancelled 12 Jan 09 as tender competition no longer proceeding	9,287	3,999
Assistance with tender process for provision of management services to airstrips on or serving offshore islands	Air Transport Group, Cranfield University	01-Oct-08	28-Feb-09	33,880	25,152
Support to Steering Group for new National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016	PA Consulting	07-Apr-08	08-Aug-08	183,582	189,939 (incl expenses)
Report on employment needs and development potential of islands	FGS Consulting	19-Nov-08	31-Mar-09	50,787	39,243
Audit of contracts awarded for passenger ferry services to Aran Islands	Goodbody Economic Consultants	03-Oct-08	14-Apr-09	6,094	6,094

Departmental Staff.

811. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department of early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33947/09]

812. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33962/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I propose to take Questions Nos. 811 and 812 together.

I enclose the information requested by the Deputy in the table below.

In cases of retirement from my Department, there is no direct cost as the cost of retirement benefit for retired civil servants is met from the Superannuation Vote 7.

Additional costs as they relate to early retirement lump sums are indicated in the attached.

2006

	Number of Early Retirements	Additional Lump sum costs of Early Retirements	Number of Terminations of Contracts	Cost of Termination of Contracts	Number of Resignations	Cost of Resignations
		€		€		€
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	4	24,000	0	0	3	0
Office of the Commission of Charitable Donations and Bequests	0	0	0	0	0	0
An Choimisinéir Teanga	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waterways Ireland	0	0	0	0	7	0
Western Development Commission	0	0	1	0	1	0
Údarás na Gaeltachta	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>An Foras Teanga, comprising:</i>						
Ulster Scots Agency	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foras na Gaeilge	0	0	0	0	2	0

2007

	Number of Early Retirements	Additional Lump sum costs of Early Retirements	Number of Terminations of Contracts	Cost of Termination of Contracts	Number of Resignations	Cost of Resignations
		€		€		€
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	0	0	2	90,792	4	0
Office of the Commission of Charitable Donations and Bequests	0	0	0	0	0	0
An Choimisinéir Teanga	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waterways Ireland	0	0	1	15,000	6	0
Western Development Commission	0	0	1	0	3	0
Údarás na Gaeltachta	1	26,663	0	0	0	0
<i>An Foras Teanga, comprising:</i>						
Ulster Scots Agency	0	0	0	0	1	0
Foras na Gaeilge	1	0	0	0	5	0

2008

	Number of Early Retirements	Additional Lump sum costs of Early Retirements	Number of Terminations of Contracts	Cost of Termination of Contracts	Number of Resignations	Cost of Resignations
		€		€		€
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	1	0	3	0	2	0
Office of the Commission of Charitable Donations and Bequests	0	0	0	0	0	0
An Choimisinéir Teanga	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waterways Ireland	1	11,747	0	0	6	0
Western Development Commission	0	0	0	0	1	0
Údarás na Gaeltachta	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>An Foras Teanga, comprising:</i>						
Ulster Scots Agency	0	0	0	0	2	0
Foras na Gaeilge	0	0	1	4,240	0	0

2009 — Date

	Number of Early Retirements	Additional Lump sum costs of Early Retirements	Number of Terminations of Contracts	Cost of Termination of Contracts	Number of Resignations	Cost of Resignations
		€		€		€
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	1	0	7	62,632	1	0
Office of the Commission of Charitable Donations and Bequests	0	0	0	0	0	0
An Choimisinéir Teanga	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waterways Ireland	0	0	0	0	2	0
Western Development Commission	1	0	1	0	0	0
Údarás na Gaeltachta	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>An Foras Teanga, comprising:</i>						
Ulster Scots Agency	0	0	0	0	1	0
Foras na Gaeilge	1	0	0	0	3	0

National Drugs Strategy.

813. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the resources committed by him in each of the past three years in combatting drugs in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34011/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): Funding for Local and Regional Drugs Task Force areas in 2009 will be approx €32m. Of this amount, over €22m is being allocated to the Local Drugs Task Forces while over €10m is being earmarked for the Regionals.

In relation to Co. Kildare, which is part of the South West RDTF area, the following allocations have been made:

Project Details	2007	2008	2009
	€	€	€
*Drug Prevention Education Initiative	105,106	146,634	104,954
Raising Capacity	50,000		
*Community Addiction Team — Kildare West Wicklow	203,000	340,112	175,000
The Abbey Project		66,301	35,223
*ARAS (Abbey and KWWCAT)			250,000
Counselling Pool — Kildare focused areas	15,000		110,750
*Under 18's Service — Kildare, West Wicklow	20,000	58,221	104,459
Innovation Fund — Kildare areas funded	50,000	40,850	41,080
Harm Reduction Study		40,000	
Project Information Management System (PIMS)		40,000	
<i>Once-off Initiatives</i>			
Dial 2 stop drug dealing		20,000	
Cocaine Drug Awareness Campaign		20,000	
Newbridge Family Resource Centre	22,354		
Family Support Funding			63,700
	625,460	876,118	981,182

*The Drugs Prevention Education Initiative, ARAS and the Under 18's are projects that cover the region.

In addition, some of the other funding provided to the South West RDTF provides broader benefits across their region of operation, including Co. Kildare. Approx. €170,000 has also been made available to Teen Challenge, a rehabilitation project at Shechem House, Richardstown, Co. Kildare, arising from applications through the South Inner City LDTF in Dublin.

Finally, as the Deputy is aware, the National Drugs Strategy is based on a co-ordinated effort across many Government Departments and Agencies and my Department's allocation is only part of a much bigger investment programme in drugs services by these other bodies. In 2008, it was estimated that expenditure on drugs programmes across all the bodies was in the region of €275m and initial indications are that this level will be broadly maintained in 2009.

Departmental Programmes.

814. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the amount of rural development funding paid out here the years 2006, 2007 and 2008; the proportion of this money which went to County Mayo; the bodies administering these funds; and the proportion of the funding was administered by each body. [34049/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): Within my Department, the main programmes delivering rural development funding include the CLÁR Programme, the Rural Social Scheme and the LEADER Programmes (now part of the Rural Development Programme 2009-2013).

The funding provided under these programmes, both nationally and for County Mayo for the years in question, is set out in the following tables:

CLÁR Programme

Year	Total CLÁR funding	CLÁR funding in Co.Mayo
	€	€
2006	23,015,541.33	3,478,687.64
2007	21,329,361.58	5,434,527.33
2008	24,178,471.46	4,297,180.68
Total	68,523,374.37	13,210,395

Rural Social Scheme

Groups covering Mayo	2006	2007	2008
South West Mayo Development Ltd.	2,743,129.00	3,385,251.00	3,474,941
Western Rural Development Ltd	3,687,910.00	4,479,785.00	4,654,117.00
Comhar Iorrais LEADER Teo	313,890.00	428,151.00	408,982.00
Meitheal Forbatha NA Gaeltachta Teo (MFG)	3,076,364.00	3,804,270.00	3,942,854.00
*Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann	286,300	319,473.00	334,317.00
*Údarás na Gaeltachta	2,970,464.00	3,427,883.00	3,570,523.00
Total funding for groups covering Co. Mayo	13,078,057.00	15,844,813.00	16,385,734.00
Total National Funding	38,604,429.00	46,955,606.00	48,576,974.00

LEADER Programmes

	2006		2007		2008	
	LEADER +	NRDP	LEADER +	NRDP	LEADER+	NRDP
South West Mayo Development Company Ltd.	N/A	487,979	N/A	325,577	N/A	117,384
**Western Rural Development Ltd.	808,612	263,018	401,014	94,838	39,879	46,794
Comhar Iorrais Leader Teo.	N/A	379,835	N/A	347,246	N/A	449,747
**MFG	N/A	56,492	N/A	53,360	N/A	5,043
**Comhdhail Oileáin na hEireann	N/A	141,054	N/A	51,872	N/A	0
Total for Mayo	808,612	1,328,378	401,014	872,893	39,879	618,968
National Programme Total	17,120,696	15,952,742	10,024,280	6,818,114	2,902,834	3,047,894

N/A= Not applicable. LEADER+ was only delivered by Western Rural Development in Co Mayo. NRDP = National Rural Development Programme.

*Údarás na Gaeltachta, MFG and Comhdhail Oileáin na hEireann cover areas both inside and outside of Mayo; the funding indicated for these Groups is the full funding provided, covering both Co. Mayo and other areas.

**Under the LEADER Programmes, the amounts in respect of Western Rural Development Ltd, MFG & Comhdhail Oileáin na hEireann relate to Mayo only.

Departmental Schemes.

815. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of people currently working on rural social schemes on a county basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34222/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): There are 2,600 participant places available under the Rural Social Scheme (RSS) and 130 supervisor positions (Full-time equivalent).

As the number of participants on the Scheme varies from week to week, the attached table sets out the number of participants and supervisors on the Scheme for week ending 2nd October 2009.

At present, there are vacancies for 8 participants and 1 supervisor.

Participant and Supervisor Breakdown at end of week 39 of 2009 (W/E 2/10/09)

County	Participant	Supervisor	Total
Co. Carlow	18	1	19
Co. Cavan	84	5	89
Co. Clare	115	6	121
Co. Cork	165	9	174
Co. Donegal	227	12	239
Co. Galway	282	13	295
Co. Kerry	283	16	299
Co. Kildare	23	1	24
Co. Kilkenny	18	1	19
Co. Laois	23	1	24
Co. Leitrim	98	4	102
Co. Limerick	77	4	81
Co. Longford	54	3	57
Co. Louth	11	0	11
Co. Mayo	561	29	590
Co. Meath	14	0	14
Co. Monaghan	40	2	42
Co. Offaly	47	2	49
Co. Roscommon	148	7	155
Co. Sligo	130	5	135
Co. Tipperary	66	5	71
Co. Waterford	13	0	13
Co. Westmeath	36	2	38
Co. Wexford	41	2	43
Co. Wicklow	18	1	19
	2,592	131	2,723

Note: there are 129 full-time equivalent supervisor positions filled under the RSS as two of the posts are being filled on a job-sharing basis (2 positions = 4 people).

Departmental Contracts.

816. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34311/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I can confirm that following a tender competition for the provision of the services referred to by the Deputy, my Department awarded a three-year contract to a company in December 2008. All of the services in question to my Department, including those supplied to me as Minister and to the Minister of State, are provided for under that contract.

The Deputy will appreciate the difficulty in being more specific in my reply, given the ‘details supplied’ format adopted by him. However, if he requires any further information, I will be glad to provide it to him.

Departmental Staff.

817. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34337/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): I can confirm to the Deputy that no such occasions have arisen in 2007, 2008 or 2009 to date.

818. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34352/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): One civil servant in my Department was dismissed earlier this year due to the person’s failure to fulfil the terms of their probationary contract. There were no cases of the nature referred to by the Deputy during the period 2005-08.

Question No. 819 answered with Question No. 798.

Question No. 820 answered with Question No. 792.

National Drugs Strategy.

821. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the extent to which he proposes to increase or improve funding to community based groups involved in the fight against drugs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34563/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy John Curran): As the Deputy will be aware, the majority of expenditure allocated to community groups through my Department for drugs initiatives is channelled through the Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces.

The current allocation for the Drugs Task Forces for this year is in the order of €32m.

Capital funding of around €4.5m was also allocated in 2009. This allocation will fund existing and some new initiatives under the Premises Initiative Fund and it will also complete the outstanding commitments under the once-off 2008 Regional Youth Initiative Fund.

Overall, I am satisfied that the funding being provided in 2009 by my Department will continue to facilitate the delivery of valuable community-based initiatives to help address problem drug use.

The Deputy will be aware that the Drugs Strategy is based on a co-ordinated approach across many Government Departments and Agencies and my Department's allocation is part of a much bigger investment programme in drugs services by these other bodies. In 2008, it was estimated that total expenditure on drugs programmes was over €275m and initial indications are that this level will be broadly maintained in 2009.

Dormant Accounts Fund.

822. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the amount of funding accruing to his Department on a monthly basis in each of the past five years to date from the Dormant Accounts Fund; if this represents the total receipts to Government from the fund; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34564/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The Dormant Accounts Fund Acts provides for an annual transfer by credit institutions and insurance undertakings of monies in accounts determined to be dormant into the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF). Section 12 of the Dormant Accounts Act 2001 provides that financial institutions transfer the moneys in account determined as dormant before the 30th April each year. In generally, all transfers to the Dormant Accounts Fund occur in the months of March and April each year. Reclaims by account holders may be made at any time during the year.

Since its establishment in May 2003, the net transfers to the Dormant Accounts Fund have been just over €334.1m. Net transfers to the end of August 2009 totalled some €41.3m. The comparable figures for previous years are set out below:

Year	€m
2003	196.2
2004	56.0
2005	40.8
2006	80.1
2007	66.3
2008	33.0

The value of the Fund at the end of August 2009, net of liabilities, was some €49.1m. This figure excludes around €48.5m maintained in a Reserve Account to meet future reclaims by account holders and to cover expenses associated with the operation of the Fund.

Community Development.

823. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the cost of the RAPID programme in each year since its inception; the extent to which the various activities under the programme are expected to be affected by budgetary cutbacks on a county and regional basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34565/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The RAPID Programme aims to ensure that priority attention is given to tackling the spatial concentration of poverty and social exclusion within 51 designated RAPID areas nationally. As I have indicated to the House on a number of occasions, it is a matter for individual Departments to report on the provision of funding, the progress on delivery with respect to projects under their responsibility in the RAPID areas and associated costs involved in support and delivery of the Programme.

My Department, supported by Pobal, co-ordinates the implementation of the RAPID Programme and funds the cost of this support.

I initiated the RAPID leverage schemes in 2004 in order to support small-scale projects identified locally by the Area Implementation Teams in each of the RAPID areas. These schemes are co-funded by the relevant agencies and fund projects that focus on estate enhancement, graffiti removal, traffic calming, community closed-circuit television, health and sports facilities, and the provision of playgrounds and multi-use games areas.

The following table shows the expenditure under these headings since 2004.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009*
	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
Co-ordination	1.3	0.993	1.333	1.557	1.494	1.4
Leverage	1.978	4.516	4.545	5.316	8.083	7.09
Total	3.278	5.509	5.878	6.873	9.577	8.49

*Estimated 2009 outturn.

My Department continues to fund the co-ordination of the Programme and to process claims lodged under the different Leverage Schemes under the 2009 voted allocation.

In effect although funding for some programmes operated by my Department has been reduced, I still expect that a sufficient spend will be made in order to ensure continued positive impact across RAPID areas.

Question No. 824 answered with Question No. 136.

825. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the extent of the effect of budgetary cutbacks on the CLÁR programme on a county and regional basis here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34567/09]

Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív): The CLÁR Programme continues to provide valuable support for infrastructural investment in disadvantaged rural areas. Under the Programme, expenditure of €15.86m has been provided for in 2009 and as a result, a high number of projects will continue to be implemented throughout the country.

CLÁR is demand driven and is operated as a single national Programme for areas that have suffered significant depopulation, rather than by way of allocations on a county or regional basis. Accordingly, expenditure will always vary year-on-year under the Programme between counties and regions, depending on the projects identified by those Government Departments/Agencies and Local Authorities with which the CLÁR Programme co-funds.

Questions Nos. 826 to 830, inclusive, answered with Question No. 136.

National Carers Strategy.

831. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason she will not publish the National Carers' Strategy; the total cost of same; the reason for not publishing the strategy even if it cannot be implemented; if her attention has been drawn to the money saved in the health system by carers looking after dependents; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33000/09]

852. **Deputy Pat Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when the National Carers Strategy will be published; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33056/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 831 and 852 together.

The Government is acutely aware and appreciative of the contribution made by carers to people needing ongoing care and support. In recognition of this, considerable improvements have been made in recent years in services and supports for carers.

Over the past decade, weekly payment rates to carers have greatly increased, qualifying conditions for carer's allowance have significantly eased, coverage of the scheme has been extended and new schemes such as carer's benefit, half-rate carer's allowance and the respite care grant have been introduced and extended.

In Budget 2009, the rate of carer's allowance for those aged 66 or over increased by €7 to €239 per week and for those aged under 66 by €6.50 to €220.50 per week. These increases took effect from January 2009. Recipients of carer's allowance are also eligible for household benefits and free travel and the respite care grant.

It is estimated that the combined expenditure on carer's allowance, carer's benefit, the respite care grant and half-rate carer's allowance will be €650 million in 2009.

During 2008 an interdepartmental group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, with secretariat support provided by my Department, undertook work, including a public consultation process to develop a National Carers' Strategy. However, because of the prevailing economic situation, it was not possible to set targets or time lines which could be achieved. In that context, rather than publishing a document which did not include any significant plans for the future, the Government decided not to publish a strategy. This position remains unchanged.

All work on the development of the strategy including research, the management of the public consultation process and the preparation of draft material was carried out by officials in my Department in conjunction with the members of the interdepartmental working group. The public consultation process undertaken between February and April 2008 was advertised in all regional and national newspapers at a cost of €128,000. The work carried out by the interdepartmental group and the submissions made to it have been useful and will of course contribute to the development of carers policy in the future.

Equal Opportunities Employment.

832. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will apply the disability criteria on employment to the new decentralised public offices that will open at a location (details supplied) in County Donegal in 2009; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33091/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The disability criteria will apply to the new decentralised public office in County Donegal as one of many locations in the Department, to which the employment criteria on staff with disabilities applies.

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

The target of 3% for the employment of people with a disability under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 is an overall target for the Department. It is not a requirement for individual offices. Within this Department the target is currently exceeded. Recruitment to the Department is through the Public Appointments Service who adheres to a Code of Practice for the Appointment of Persons with Disabilities to Positions in the Civil Service and Certain Public Bodies.

Social Welfare Benefits.

833. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when an application for exceptional needs payment will be awarded in the case of persons (details supplied) in County Dublin; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33140/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Under the supplementary welfare allowance scheme, which is administered on behalf of the department by the community welfare division of the Health Service Executive, an exceptional needs payment may be made to help meet an essential, once-off cost which the applicant is unable to meet out of his/her own resources. There is no automatic entitlement to this payment. Each application is determined by the Executive based on the particular circumstances of the case.

The Dublin/ Mid Leinster area of the HSE has advised that it made an exceptional needs payment to the persons concerned on 26 August 2009. There is no record of a more recent claim for an exceptional needs payment. If the people concerned wish claim such a payment, they should contact their local community welfare officer.

834. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason a person (details supplied) in County Cork was deemed not to qualify for domiciliary care allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33297/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): In order to qualify for Domiciliary Care Allowance a child must have a disability so severe that they require care and attention and/or supervision substantially in excess of that normally required by a child of the same age. This care and attention must be provided by another person, effectively full time, so as to allow the child deal with the activities of daily living. The child must be likely to require this level of care and attention for at least 12 months.

An application for Domiciliary Care Allowance was received from the person in question on 21st July 2009. This application was referred to one of the Department's Medical Assessors who found that the child did not satisfy the medical criteria pertaining to the scheme.

A letter issued to the person in question on 21st September 2009 advising of the decision to refuse Domiciliary Care Allowance on the basis that the medical criteria had not been satisfied. In the case of an application which is refused on medical grounds, the applicant may submit additional information and/or request that the case be reviewed by a different Medical Assessor.

Where a person is not satisfied with the decision of a Deciding Officer, they may appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

835. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will ensure the retention of the dental treatment benefit scheme on behalf of the dental profession, their staff and the two million people here who are eligible for treatment benefits that they have paid for in good faith through PRSI contributions; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33358/09]

842. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs her plans to abolish the dental treatment benefit scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33888/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 835 and 842 together.

The proposal to discontinue the Dental Treatment Benefit Scheme will be considered as part of the Estimates and Budget process for 2010. This will include consideration of the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, and the decisions on all of the issues arising will be a matter for the Government. It would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage pending the outcome of these deliberative processes.

836. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5 in receipt of social welfare payments will receive their Christmas bonus in 2009. [33529/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Christmas Bonus payment was introduced in December, 1980, for social welfare pensioners and people in receipt of long term social welfare payments. There have been a number of developments in this scheme since its inception, including upward and downward adjustments in the level of the bonus payment.

Each year the Government makes a decision on the payment of the Christmas Bonus having regard to the prevailing economic circumstances. This year it has been necessary for the Government to take steps to reduce overall public expenditure so as to restore order and stability to the public finances.

In this context, the decision was made that the Christmas Bonus would not be paid in 2009. The decision was announced in the April 2009 Supplementary Budget.

Tax and Social Welfare Codes.

837. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by abolishing the employee PRSI ceiling in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33767/09]

843. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the amount that would be raised by abolishing the ceiling on PRSI. [34434/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 837 and 843 together.

Current estimates indicate that the abolition of the PRSI ceiling would yield some €119.5 million additional contribution income in a full year.

Under the PRSI system, social insurance contributions are compulsorily payable by employers and employed and self-employed workers. In relation to employee's contributions, the amount payable is determined by reference to reckonable earnings in a weekly period, and is subject to a range of thresholds and an annual ceiling. The PRSI exemption on low earnings stands at €352 per week. People with incomes at that level or below are exempt from PRSI. Once a person earns above this level their total income, up to the annual ceiling, is chargeable to PRSI but they are entitled to a PRSI-Free Allowance of €127 per week.

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

The employee PRSI ceiling is reviewed annually in accordance with the legislative stipulations of the Social Welfare (Consolidation) Act, 2005 and is currently €75,036. Any future changes to the PRSI ceiling would have to be considered in a budgetary context.

838. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by subjecting employees unearned income, such as investment income and rental income, to PRSI in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33768/09]

839. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the amount of tax revenue which would be raised on a 2010 and full year basis by subjecting share based remuneration, including share options, to PRSI in view of the relevant recommendation set out in the Commission on Taxation Report 2009. [33769/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 838 and 839 together.

Pay related social insurance is not a tax. Therefore additional revenue raised from any change to the PRSI system goes directly to the social insurance fund rather than the Exchequer.

The payment of PRSI primarily relates to income derived from reckonable earnings from employment or self-employment. The Commission on Taxation has recommended a further widening of the PRSI base so that both unearned income such as investment income and rental income and share-based remuneration should be subject to PRSI.

In regard to unearned income at present, self-employed contributors pay PRSI on rental income. In addition while employed contributors are not generally subject to PRSI on investment income and rental income there is a liability where the individual concerned also has trade, professional or partnership income in which case they are chargeable to PRSI as a self-employed contributor on rental income. Therefore, a significant amount of rental income is already subject to PRSI.

Share base remuneration is currently not included in the PRSI base as it is not considered as reckonable earnings, reckonable emoluments or reckonable income under the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005.

It is not possible therefore, to estimate of the potential yield for rental income and share based remuneration which is currently not subject to PRSI.

Social Welfare Benefits.

840. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when persons (details supplied) in County Cork will receive a decision on their application for rent allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33825/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The supplementary welfare allowance scheme, which includes rent supplement, is administered on behalf of the Department by the community welfare division of the Health Service Executive.

The Executive has advised that the persons concerned made an application for rent supplement but no decision has been made on the application to date. An industrial dispute involving some of the Community Welfare Officers in the Cork/Kerry region, which had disrupted processing of rent supplement applications, has recently been resolved and the Executive has advised that the application of the persons concerned is now being processed.

841. **Deputy Sherlock** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the status of an application for rent allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33837/09]

859. **Deputy Sherlock** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the status of an application for rent allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33109/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 841 and 859 together.

The supplementary welfare allowance scheme, which includes rent supplement, is administered on behalf of the Department by the community welfare division of the Health Service Executive.

The Executive has advised that the person concerned was in receipt of rent supplement until 1 August 2009. She has made a new application for rent supplement but no decision has been made on the application to date. An industrial dispute involving some of the Community Welfare Officers in the Cork/Kerry region which had disrupted processing of rent supplement applicants has recently been resolved and the Executive has advised that this persons application is now being processed.

Question No. 842 answered with Question No. 835.

Question No. 843 answered with Question No. 837.

Departmental Expenditure.

844. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the cost of the social welfare bill in each month since January 2008 to September 2009. [34580/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Monthly gross expenditure under the Department's Vote 38 and the Social Insurance Fund from January 2008 to July 2009 is set out in the table at Appendix 1. Expenditure figures for August and September 2009 have not yet been finalised.

Appendix 1

Month	Gross expenditure under Vote 38	Gross expenditure under Social Insurance Fund	Total
	€	€	€
<i>2008</i>			
Jan	758,849,445	620,300,407	1,379,149,852
Feb	739,951,824	726,043,372	1,465,995,196
Mar	707,259,897	648,438,672	1,355,698,569
Apr	745,486,811	641,513,897	1,387,000,708
May	798,546,841	725,798,954	1,524,345,795
Jun	821,398,105	638,076,715	1,459,474,820
Jul	802,999,359	670,136,312	1,473,135,671
Aug	754,835,508	718,509,481	1,473,344,989
Sep	763,939,426	685,052,899	1,448,992,325
Oct	857,674,226	770,745,020	1,628,419,246
Nov	782,934,332	699,442,242	1,482,376,574
Dec	984,215,074	855,688,963	1,839,904,037
Total	9,518,090,848	8,399,746,934	17,917,837,782

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

Month	Gross expenditure under Vote 38	Gross expenditure under Social Insurance Fund	Total
	€	€	€
<i>2009</i>			
Jan	804,557,487	770,762,488	1,575,319,975
Feb	830,836,609	732,042,993	1,562,879,602
Mar	841,730,736	796,890,905	1,638,621,641
Apr	888,001,083	780,586,095	1,668,587,178
May	847,751,115	785,207,572	1,632,958,687
Jun	1,017,015,367	887,356,954	1,904,372,321
Jul	940,550,388	883,261,550	1,823,811,938

Note: Vote 38 figures for 2009 and Social Insurance Fund figures for 2008 and 2009 are provisional pending completion of audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Social Welfare Benefits.

845. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will be approved and awarded their jobseeker's allowance. [32938/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The person concerned has been awarded jobseeker's benefit from 1 September, 2009. She is a short-time worker and qualifies for a weekly rate of €81.70. Her first payment issued to her on 18 September, 2009.

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.

Social Welfare Appeals.

846. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a decision will be made in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 24) who recently lodged an appeal; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32948/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The requirement to be habitually resident in Ireland was introduced as a qualifying condition for certain social assistance schemes and child benefit with effect from 1 May 2004.

All applicants — regardless of nationality — for the following payments are required to be habitually resident in the State:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- State Pension (Non-Contributory for persons aged over 66)
- Blind Pension
- Widow's, Widower's and Orphan's Non-Contributory Pensions
- One-parent Family Payment
- Carer's Allowance
- Disability Allowance

- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (including Rent Supplement)
- Domiciliary Care Allowance
- Child Benefit

In the first six months of 2009, the number of Irish citizens disallowed welfare payments, based on failure to satisfy the habitual residence condition was 215.

The following table sets out the breakdown by social assistance scheme.

Scheme	1st January to 30th June 2009
Jobseeker's Allowance	158
State Pension (Non-Contributory)	2
Blind Pension	0
Widow's, Widower's and Orphan's Non-Contributory Pensions	0
One-parent Family Payment	6
Carer's Allowance	10
Disability Allowance	20
Domiciliary Care Allowance	0
Child Benefit	19
Total	215

Statistics on the number of Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) claims that do not satisfy the habitual residence condition are not maintained by the various HSE areas. However, it is estimated that approximately 1.5% of all SWA claims are disallowed for HRC reasons.

It is open to any customer who is not satisfied with the decision on their claim to appeal that decision.

847. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when an appeal for the non-contributory State pension will be finalised for a person (details supplied) in County Mayo. [32962/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that the relevant Departmental papers and comments of the Department have been received and the case has been referred to an Appeals Officer for consideration.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

848. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the status of an application in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32966/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the Department was asked for the documentation in the case and the Deciding Officer's comments on the grounds of the appeal. In that context, an examination by another Medical Assessor will be carried out. The person concerned will be notified when arrangements for the examination have been completed.

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

849. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when an oral hearing will be arranged in respect of an old age pension application for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny in view of the fact that they are waiting since 15 April 2009; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32969/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): An application for state pension (non contributory), by the person concerned, was disallowed by a Deciding Officer of the Department on 05 January 2009 on the grounds that he did not satisfy the statutory means assessment.

An appeal was opened on 03 March 2009 and, I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that this case 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.

As regards waiting times, I am advised that the average time taken in 2008 to process all appeals (i.e. those decided summarily and by way of oral hearing) was 22 weeks. However, if allowance is made for the 25% most protracted cases, the average time fell to just over 14 weeks. Those average processing times replicate those for 2007 notwithstanding the fact there was an increase of 27% in the number of appeals received during 2008.

There has been an increase of 32% in the number of appeals received so far this year compared to last year and, having regard to the current volume of appeals awaiting determination, two additional Appeals Officers were appointed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office earlier this year. Furthermore, I am advised that the Chief Appeals Officer is keeping current processes under continuous review with a view to achieving a more effective throughput of appeals having regard to due process in terms of the rights of appellants and adherence to the requirements of natural justice.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Code.

850. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of Irish citizens refused welfare payments in the first six months of 2009 based on failure to satisfy the habitual residence condition. [32984/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The requirement to be habitually resident in Ireland was introduced as a qualifying condition for certain social assistance schemes and child benefit with effect from 1 May 2004. All applicants — regardless of nationality — for the following payments are required to be habitually resident in the State:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- State Pension (Non-Contributory for persons aged over 66)
- Blind Pension
- Widow's, Widower's and Orphan's Non-Contributory Pensions
- One-parent Family Payment

- Carer's Allowance
- Disability Allowance
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (including Rent Supplement)
- Domiciliary Care Allowance
- Child Benefit

In the first six months of 2009, the number of Irish citizens disallowed welfare payments, based on failure to satisfy the habitual residence condition was 215.

The following table sets out the breakdown by social assistance scheme.

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Carer's Allowance	10
Disability Allowance	20
Domiciliary Care Allowance	0
Child Benefit	19
Total	215

Statistics on the number of Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) claims that do not satisfy the habitual residence condition are not maintained by the various HSE areas. However, it is estimated that approximately 1.5% of all SWA claims are disallowed for HRC reasons. It is open to any customer who is not satisfied with the decision on their claim to appeal that decision.

851. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if Irish nationals are entitled to social welfare payments in other EU jurisdictions; the conditions that apply to such payments; the way these payments compare to those of Irish Nationals here; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33011/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The social security rights of people living and working in the EU are governed by EU Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72. The Regulations co-ordinate social security systems and are designed to ensure that people are not disadvantaged by moving within the EU to take up work.

The Regulations are also intended to guarantee equality of treatment, under various national legislation, to workers living in the Member States and their dependants and survivors. Accordingly, persons residing in a Member State to whom the Regulation applies are subject to the same obligations and enjoy the same benefits as the nationals of that State. Therefore, Irish nationals may indeed be entitled to social welfare payments in other EU jurisdictions, providing they satisfy the qualifying criteria adopted by that Member State, in exactly the same way as nationals of that State are required to do. In meeting these qualifying conditions, under EU Regulations, a person can generally aggregate their Irish contributions with those made in other EEA states.

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

The basis on which payments are made, the qualifying conditions which must be satisfied and the rates of social welfare payments vary greatly from State to State and reflect the income replacement requirements and the manner in which the different States address social needs in their jurisdiction. As you will appreciate, due to the large number of countries affected by these Regulations, i.e. the twenty seven Member States, three EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway), and Switzerland, it is not possible to include a comprehensive comparison of the schemes of each State here. However, such a comparative list exists on the MISSOC (Mutual Information System on Social Protection)

website http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/missoc_tables_en.htm

Question No. 852 answered with Question No. 831.

Social Welfare Appeals.

853. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position of an appeal application for a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33062/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, an Appeals Officer, having considered all the available evidence, including that adduced at an oral hearing, disallowed the disability allowance appeal of the person concerned.

Following the submission of additional medical evidence the case has been forwarded to the Chief Medical Advisor for his opinion. On receipt of his response the case will be referred back to the Appeals Officer for further consideration. The Deputy will be notified of the result of the Appeals Officer's review.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Benefits.

854. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will withdraw the directive to community welfare officers that they must wait until after a local authority has fully assessed an applicant's housing application before they will grant rent supplement to deserving applicants. [33068/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The purpose of the rent supplement scheme is to provide short-term support to eligible persons living in private rented accommodation, whose means are insufficient to meet their accommodation costs and who do not have accommodation available to them from another source.

The 2009 Supplementary Budget introduced new arrangements for applications for rent supplement. In order to qualify for rent supplement, from the 27th July 2009, a person must have been residing in private rented accommodation or accommodation for homeless persons (or any combination of these) for a period of 183 days within the preceding 12 months of the date of claim for rent supplement. A person may also qualify for rent supplement where an assessment of housing need has been carried out within the 12 months preceding the date of claim and the person is deemed by the relevant local authority to be eligible for and in need of social housing support.

In all other cases, a person who wishes to apply for rent supplement is referred, in the first instance, for an assessment of eligibility for social housing support by the local housing authority in the area where claim to rent supplement is made (and the person intends to reside). Only when the person has been assessed as being eligible for and in need of social housing support, does the person become eligible for consideration for rent supplement.

The aim of this restriction on entitlement to rent supplement and the new working arrangements is to ensure that housing authorities remain the principal agents both for assessing housing need and for meeting the long-term housing needs of people.

Detailed guidelines on the operation of the restrictions on access to rent supplement were issued simultaneously by the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to community welfare staff and local housing authority staff respectively. The guidelines which issued to the local housing authorities advised that they should deal with those presenting with an immediate housing need, by way of social housing accommodation or, where none is available, emergency accommodation until such time as a housing needs assessment is completed. Where emergency accommodation is deemed not appropriate by the relevant local authority, the authority can prioritise the housing needs assessment for this household so that rent support can be provided sooner, where applicable.

These procedures, where operated by local housing authorities, should ensure that those with an urgent housing need have their needs met in the most appropriate manner.

Social Welfare Appeals.

855. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason for the delay in having applicants' appeals in the cases of refusal of applications for various allowances administered by her Department dealt with in a timely fashion, including being examined or heard in the first instance and the time afterwards to inform the applicants of the decision; and the steps being taken to reduce the waiting time. [33069/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am informed by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that during 2008 the average time taken to process all appeals (i.e. those decided summarily and by way of oral hearing) was 22 weeks. However, if allowance was made for the 25% most protracted cases, the average time fell to just over 14 weeks. Those processing times replicate those for 2007 notwithstanding the fact that there was an increase of 27% in the number of appeals received during 2008. I am advised that there has been a further increase of 39% in the number of appeals received for the first nine months of this year over the corresponding period in 2008 and, while average processing times for 2009 are not yet available, it is anticipated that they will have deteriorated on the 2008 position.

I should say that the processing time for appeals covers all phases of the appeal process including the submission by the Department of its comments on the grounds for the appeal, further examination by the Department's Medical Assessors in certain illness related cases and further investigation by Social Welfare Inspectors where required. Circumstances may also arise, normally outside of the control of the Social Welfare Appeals Office, which have the effect of unduly prolonging the time taken to process appeals. For example, delays can occur where the appellant submits new information or evidence, often at an advanced stage in the appeal proceedings. In addition, adjournments may be sought by the appellant or his/her representative which would have the effect of prolonging the appeal process.

In the vast majority of cases, decisions are made by Appeals Officers within four weeks of an oral hearing. However, a longer period may be required in more complex cases where further submissions may be awaited or complex issues of law may need to be researched.

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

I am anxious there should be no further deterioration in appeals processing times especially in the light of the 39% increase in the number of appeals received so far this year. In that connection, two additional Appeals Officers were appointed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office in January. Since then, however, four Appeals Officers have retired and I am advised that every effort is being made to have these vacancies filled as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, I am assured by the Chief Appeals Officer that he is keeping current processes under continuous review with a view to achieving a more effective throughput of appeals. Given the quasi-judicial nature of the social welfare appeals process, progress in that regard must be achieved in a manner which is not in conflict with due process in terms of the rights of appellants and adherence to the requirements of natural justice.

Social Welfare Benefits.

856. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the length of time it is taking to process applications for allowances and benefits administered by her Department; the reason for the delay; and the steps being taken to reduce it to ensure applicants receive their entitlements in a timely fashion. [33070/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The current average processing times for the schemes referred to by the Deputy are as follows:

Scheme	Processing time
Bereavement Grant	3 weeks
Disability Allowance	17 weeks
Disability Benefit	1 week
Domiciliary Care Allowance	8 weeks
Family Income Supplement	8 weeks
Jobseeker's Allowance	4 weeks
Jobseekers Benefit	8 weeks
One-Parent Family Payment	13 weeks
Widows Pension Contributory	4 weeks
Widows Pension Non Contributory	7 weeks

More than 95% of Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance applications are decided on and paid within the week.

In regard to the Guardians (Contributory and Non Contributory) Payment Scheme, a specific processing target is not set. This is because factors outside of the Department's control can impinge on claim processing times. These factors include the need to liaise with outside bodies to obtain the required information to determine entitlement.

In compiling statistics to determine average processing times for the various schemes in the Department, the parameter dates are the date the claim was made by the customer (i.e. the registration date) and the date the decision was given by the deciding officer.

The Department is committed to processing claims as expeditiously as possible having regard to the eligibility conditions which apply. These conditions vary from scheme to scheme. In some cases there is an unavoidable time lag involved in making the necessary enquiries to enable decisions to be made. Time can also elapse where the applicants do not supply all the necessary information in support of their claim. The processing of claims may involve, among other things, the need to establish the customer's social insurance record, verify medical con-

ditions, establish a customer's identity or their place of habitual residence and assess means where appropriate.

Additional information or indeed information originally sought but not provided may also have to be requested from the customer. The figures for pension schemes include claims where a person's date of entitlement has not yet been reached.

The Department aims to process claims quickly and efficiently. In this regard there is a continued emphasis on providing staff with the necessary training and development to ensure they have the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out their work. Operational procedures, the organisation of work, and the allocation of staff resources continue to be reviewed and restructured to maximise the processing capability of the scheme areas. All aspects of claim processing are kept under constant review and improvements are implemented on a continuous basis.

Social Welfare Offices.

857. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the steps being taken to ensure that persons seeking to access social welfare offices here can have shelter while queuing; since it is a public office, that there is a toilet available for use by the public in the building; and the reason there is no external post box in some offices which would allow sick certificates to be hand delivered outside the limited office hours by working siblings of people confined to bed who have a claim to be processed. [33071/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Live Register has increased to unprecedented levels as a result of the economic downturn that the country is currently experiencing. This in turn has led to large numbers attending at our offices and the consequent delays that claimants are experiencing.

While it is not feasible in most cases to provide shelter for customers queueing outside our offices, a number of initiatives have been introduced to address the extensive queuing problem. An appointment system for taking claims has been introduced in a number of offices with high volumes. Under this initiative, when a person first attends at a local office to claim, they are given details of the supporting documents required together with an appointment to make their claims. The appointment system has been introduced in 16 local offices to date and will be extended to a number of other offices over the coming months having regard to the volume of new claims at particular offices.

The signing arrangements for people who are already on the live register have been reviewed at a number of offices and additional signing days have been introduced where necessary. In addition, at some offices specific signing times have been allocated to claimants to reduce queuing times.

The Department has instituted a number of process improvement measures in order to improve the claim taking process. In addition, it is reviewing the processes involved in administering claims for those who are working reduced hours i.e. part-time, casual and systematic short time. The existing arrangements are very labour intensive and it is envisaged that more streamlined arrangements which will benefit both customers and the Department will be introduced in the near future.

The provision of public toilets is now a standard feature in specifications for new local offices however there are many offices which do not have public toilets. Where this is the case, staff toilets can be made available to customers such as pregnant women, on request.

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

External post boxes are a standard feature in local offices. However in some cases these may be inaccessible after hours due to shutters which close over the main entrance door and the letter box. This issue is currently being examined with a view to resolving it without delay.

Ministerial Travel.

858. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the annual cost to her Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33087/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Details of overseas travel costs incurred by my predecessors and me from 1999 to September 2009 are set out in the following table:

Year	Total
	€
1999	44,375
2000	30,149
2001	19,802
2002	33,141
2003	22,957
2004	19,902
2005	30,114
2006	38,922
2007	9,312
2008	24,280
1/1/2009 – 1/9/2009	11,318
Total:	284,272

These expenses related to a number of events such as EU Presidency engagements, attendance at British-Irish Council and EU Council of Ministers meetings, bilateral discussions with Ministerial counterparts in other countries, attendance at the OECD and the UN, meetings with Irish emigrant groups in the US and the UK and other similar engagements. The totals shown include the cost of flights paid directly to the relevant travel company and the cost of accommodation paid directly to hotels.

Question No. 859 answered with Question No. 841.

Social Welfare Appeals.

860. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position in relation to a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33123/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the Department was asked for the documentation in the case and the Deciding Officer's comments on the grounds of the appeal. In that context, an examination by another Medical Assessor will be carried out. The person concerned will be notified when arrangements for the examination have been completed.

I am further advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that the back to education allowance is not a statutory scheme and decisions on applications for the allowance cannot be appealed to that office.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Question No. 861 withdrawn.

Pension Provisions.

862. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs her view on the possibility for inclusion of the pension scheme of a company (details supplied) under the pensions insolvency payment scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33192/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Pensions Insolvency Payments Scheme (PIPS) is being established by the Minister for Finance on a pilot basis for a three year period.

This scheme is intended as an option of last resort and a social protection measure to assist pension schemes where the sponsoring employer is insolvent and the pension scheme is being wound up in deficit. The PIPS is intended to make it cheaper to pay for the pensions of retired pension scheme members, so that more money is available for the pension benefits of those who have not yet retired.

This scheme uses the definition of insolvency which applies to the insolvency payments scheme administered by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and as set out in the Protection of Employees (Employers Insolvency) Act 1984.

The company mentioned by the Deputy will not qualify for the scheme as it is not an insolvent company as defined in the 1984 Act.

As the Deputy knows, some 90% of defined benefit schemes are currently in deficit. Under the Pensions Act, trustees of these schemes must submit a funding proposal to the Pensions Board to ensure that the financial position of the scheme recovers over time. The vast majority of underfunded schemes are working with the Pensions Board to comply with the pensions legislation in this regard. I have no plans, therefore, to extend the qualification criteria for PIPS to cover companies which do not meet the definition of insolvency.

863. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the justification for the €53.20 difference between the amount that is awarded to the spouse of a pensioner depending on whether they are under or over 66 years of age. [33240/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The increase for a qualified adult (under 66 years) on a full rate state pension contributory is €153.50 per week, compared to €206.30 for a qualified adult aged 66 and over, which is a difference of €52.80 per week.

Traditionally, an additional increase has been paid for qualified adults who have reached state pension age, in recognition of the fact that these persons are no longer of working age. The difference between the level of under-66 and over-66 increases for qualified adults has grown in recent years on foot of a Government commitment to raise the increase for a qualified adult for spouses and partners (age 66 and over) of contributory pensioners to the level of the state pension (non-contributory). A number of special increases were given over several Budgets in pursuit of this aim. The increase for a qualified adult now stands at over 94% of the target.

Family Support Services.

864. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if a centre (details supplied) in County Leitrim will be supported. [33270/09]

867. **Deputy Pat Rabbitte** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if her attention has been drawn to the work carried out by family resource centres (details supplied) in Dublin 24 and the concerns that their modest budgets may be cut back; if she will provide an undertaking that there will be no reduction in the financial provision for these centres; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33305/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 864 and 867 together.

The Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes made a range of recommendations relating to the Department of Social and Family Affairs including recommendations relating to the Family Support Agency and its programmes. The Department will consider, as part of the Estimates and budgetary process for 2010, the Report's recommendations and decisions on all of the issues arising will be a matter for Government. It would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage pending the outcome of these deliberative processes.

Social Welfare Payments.

865. **Deputy Jim O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of applicants awaiting jobseeker's benefit for more than five weeks, more than 10 weeks and more than 15 weeks in the local social welfare offices in Bantry, Skibbereen, Clonakilty, Bandon and Kinsale, County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33288/09]

866. **Deputy Jim O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of applicants awaiting jobseeker's allowance for more than five weeks, more than 10 weeks, more than 15 weeks and more than 20 weeks in the local social welfare offices in Bantry, Skibbereen, Clonakilty, Bandon and Kinsale, County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33289/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 865 and 866 together.

The numbers of persons awaiting Jobseeker's Allowance and Jobseeker's Benefit in some Branch Offices in County Cork are set out hereunder as requested.

JA Claims	Awaiting weeks 20+	15-20 weeks	10-15 weeks	5-10 weeks
Bandon	30	23	63	46
Bantry	0	3	11	33
Bantry Co	0	1	2	10
Clonakilty	35	22	49	51
Kinsale	15	20	32	30
Skibbereen	1	1	14	34

JB Claims	15+ weeks	10-15 weeks	5-10 weeks
Bandon	28	17	12
Bantry	1	1	2
Bantry Co	0	0	1
Clonakilty	10	56	45
Kinsale	15	26	48
Skibbereen	0	2	2

Question No. 867 answered with Question No. 864.

868. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs her views on the proposals contained in the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure report to reduce or means test child benefit; her views on these proposals; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33317/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): As Deputy will be aware, the rates of child benefit have increased significantly since 2001 having trebled for the first two children and increased by over 185% for the third and subsequent children. Partly as a result of this and partly as a result of an increase in the number of eligible children, overall expenditure on child benefit grew from just €965 million in 2001 to nearly €2.5 billion in 2008. The Government is proud to have been able to direct such substantial increases in financial support to all Irish families in recent years. However, given the scale of the current economic crisis, it is necessary to address all aspects of the public finances so as to ensure that they are sustainable and to ensure that fairness exists in the allocation of resources.

It is in this context that the Minister for Finance announced at the time of the Supplementary Budget in April that the Government's intention to either subject child benefit to income tax or means-test it from 2010. In this regard, the Commission of Taxation was requested to examine the implications of taxing child benefit.

The Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, The Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, was appointed with a mandate to examine all current Exchequer spending across all Departments and agencies, to see where savings might be made. The reports of the special Group and the Commission on Taxation contain a wide range of proposals relating to my Department's schemes and services, including the child benefit scheme and decisions in relation to these will be made in the context of the forthcoming Budget and subsequent Budgets. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on individual proposals at this stage.

The Government will be mindful of the needs of families, particularly those on lower incomes when deciding on the various options in the forthcoming Budget.

Social Welfare Appeals.

869. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position regarding a claim for disability allowance by a person (details provided) in County Tipperary. [33318/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): An application for disability allowance, by the person concerned, was refused following an assessment by a Medical Assessor of the Department who expressed the opinion that she was medically unsuitable for the allow-

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ance. An appeal was opened and in the context of that appeal, her case was reviewed by a second Medical Assessor who also expressed the opinion that she was medically unsuitable.

I am informed by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in the light of this second medical opinion, that office decided to afford her an opportunity of setting out the complete and up to date grounds of her appeal. In addition to her grounds of appeal the person concerned has submitted additional medical evidence which has been forwarded to the Chief Medical Assessor for his opinion.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Pension Provisions.

870. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs her proposals to introduce a pension protection fund; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33319/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The pension rights of scheme members are protected through trust law and by provision in the Pensions Act 1990 as amended.

As supplementary pension schemes are usually established under irrevocable trust, the assets of the scheme are legally separate from the assets of the employer and are not available to any other creditors where the employer becomes insolvent. Under trust law, trustees of occupational pension schemes have the principal responsibility for ensuring that the entitlements of the members are adequately protected and that they receive the pensions due to them.

In addition to the safeguards provided by trust law, the Pensions Act 1990 also provides for the regulation of pensions schemes in Ireland. Under the Pensions Act, defined benefit pension schemes must meet a minimum funding standard which requires that schemes maintain sufficient assets to enable them discharge accrued liabilities in the event of the scheme winding up.

Where schemes do not satisfy the Funding Standard, the trustees must submit a funding proposal to the Pensions Board to restore full funding, normally within three years. However, the Pensions Board can now allow a scheme more than ten years to meet the standard in certain circumstances.

Should a scheme be wound up by its trustees, the Pensions Act 1990 (as amended) specifies how scheme assets are prioritised. Proposals to address the overall security of pensions are being considered as part of the long-term framework for pensions which the Government will announce shortly.

Social Welfare Appeals.

871. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a person (details supplied) in County Clare will be facilitated with a date and time for an oral hearing; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33331/09]

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 on 15 October 2009 at 11.15 am. The person concerned has been notified of the arrangements.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Payments.

872. **Deputy Olwyn Enright** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a mortgage interest supplement application for persons (details supplied) in County Westmeath will be decided; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33335/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The supplementary welfare allowance scheme, which includes mortgage interest supplement, is administered on behalf of the Department by the community welfare division of the Health Service Executive.

Under Article 10 of the Social Welfare (Consolidated Supplementary Allowance) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 412 of 2007), a supplement towards mortgage interest may be payable where the residence in respect of which the loan is payable is not offered for sale, the Executive is satisfied that the amount of mortgage interest payable by the claimant does not exceed such amount as it considers reasonable to meet his or her residential and other needs and where the Executive considers it is reasonable to award a supplement having regard to the amount of any arrears outstanding on the loan.

The Executive has advised that mortgage interest supplement has been refused to the people concerned as the qualifying conditions, as outlined above, are not satisfied. Notification of this decision issued on 29 September 2009. It is open to the people concerned to appeal against this decision to an appeals officer of the HSE and thereafter to the Social Welfare Appeals Office, if necessary.

Social Welfare Appeals.

873. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a carer's allowance appeal will be finalised for a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33437/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the relevant Departmental papers and comments of the Department have been sought in this case. On receipt of its response the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer for early consideration.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

874. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will take steps to expedite an application for an appeal hearing by a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33446/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the Department was asked for the documentation in the case and the Deciding Officer's comments on the grounds of the appeal. In that context, an examination by another Medical Assessor will be carried out on 12 October 2009.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Payments.

875. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if a person (details supplied) in County Cork is entitled to widows pension; if so, if this entitlement arises from social welfare contributions paid; the reason she is unwilling to pay them the pension at

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the address they have provided her with; and if she will make a statement on the matter.
[33458/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The person concerned was in receipt of a Widow's Contributory Pension from 6 January 1995 to 3 April 2003. Payment of pension ceased on 4 April 2003 as the Department was unable to establish the whereabouts and continuing eligibility of the customer. The Department has now received communications from agents on behalf of the customer and is in the process of making enquiries to establish her entitlement.

Social Welfare Appeals.

876. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a decision on an invalidity pension appeal will be made in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary. [33482/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that an appeal, by the person concerned, was registered by that Office on 15 September 2009 and in accordance with statutory requirements, the relevant Departmental papers and comments of the Department have been sought in this case. On receipt of its response the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer for early consideration.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Payments.

877. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if payments will be restored in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; if the benefit owed to them will be awarded; if she will expedite the matter. [33492/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Rent supplement is administered on behalf of the Department by the Community Welfare Service of the Health Service Executive, as part of the supplementary welfare allowance scheme.

The purpose of the rent supplement scheme is to provide short-term support to eligible people living in private rented accommodation, whose means are insufficient to meet their accommodation costs and who do not have accommodation available to them from another source.

The Executive has advised that payment of rent supplement was suspended when it came to the attention of the Executive that the person concerned has undeclared income. An appeal against the decision to suspend payment of rent supplement was made by the person concerned to an Appeals Officer of the Executive. No decision has been made on the appeal to date.

Social Welfare Appeals.

878. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason for the delay in considering an appeal by a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if she will ensure that the appeal is heard and processed as soon as possible. [33515/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the relevant Depart-

mental papers and comments of the Department have been sought in this case. On receipt of its response the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer for early consideration.

As regards waiting times, I am advised that the average time taken in 2008 to process all appeals (i.e. those decided summarily and by way of oral hearing) was 22 weeks. However, if allowance is made for the 25% most protracted cases, the average time fell to just over 14 weeks. Those average processing times replicate those for 2007 notwithstanding the fact there was an increase of 27% in the number of appeals received during 2008.

There has been an increase of 32% in the number of appeals received so far this year compared to last year and, having regard to the current volume of appeals awaiting determination, two additional Appeals Officers were appointed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office earlier this year. Furthermore, I am advised that the Chief Appeals Officer is keeping current processes under continuous review with a view to achieving a more effective throughput of appeals having regard to due process in terms of the rights of appellants and adherence to the requirements of natural justice.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

879. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason for the delay in considering an appeal by a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if she will ensure that the appeal is heard and processed as soon as possible. [33516/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the relevant Departmental papers and comments of the Department have been sought in this case. On receipt of its response the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer for early consideration.

As regards waiting times, I am advised that the average time taken in 2008 to process all appeals (i.e. those decided summarily and by way of oral hearing) was 22 weeks. However, if allowance is made for the 25% most protracted cases, the average time fell to just over 14 weeks. Those average processing times replicate those for 2007 notwithstanding the fact there was an increase of 27% in the number of appeals received during 2008.

There has been an increase of 32% in the number of appeals received so far this year compared to last year and, having regard to the current volume of appeals awaiting determination, two additional Appeals Officers were appointed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office earlier this year. Furthermore, I am advised that the Chief Appeals Officer is keeping current processes under continuous review with a view to achieving a more effective throughput of appeals having regard to due process in terms of the rights of appellants and adherence to the requirements of natural justice.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

880. **Deputy Paul Connaughton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position of a carer's allowance appeal by a person (details supplied) in County Galway; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33571/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that an appeal, by the person concerned, was registered by that Office on 26 September 2009 and in accordance with statutory requirements, the relevant Departmental papers and comments of the Department have been sought in this case. On receipt of its response the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer for early consideration. The Social

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Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

881. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a person (details supplied) in County Kildare first became resident in the State; when they will be deemed resident in the State; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33574/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The person concerned applied for Disability Allowance on 27 November 2008. His claim was disallowed on 30 January 2009 on the grounds that he was not habitually resident in the State. He was notified of this decision in writing and of his right to appeal to the independent Social Welfare Appeals Office. He subsequently appealed this decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. On 2 September 2009, a Social Welfare Appeals Officer found the person concerned to be not habitually resident in the State for the purpose of qualifying for Disability Allowance.

Habitual Residency is a condition which a person must satisfy in order to qualify for certain social welfare assistance payments including disability allowance. This condition took effect from 1 May 2004 and affects all applicants regardless of nationality. Satisfying the Habitual Residency condition is just one of the conditions for receiving certain social welfare assistance payments. A person must also satisfy the other conditions that apply in order to get a payment. The legislation underpinning Habitual Residence is Section 246 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005, as amended by Section 30 of the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2007.

The 2007 amendment to Section 246 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005, incorporates into Irish law 5 factors that have been set down in judgements given by the European Court of Justice as relevant to determining whether a person is habitually resident. These 5 factors are; a person's main centre of interest; the length and continuity of their presence in the Common Travel Area; the length and reason for any absence from the Common Travel Area; the nature and pattern of their employment, if any, in the Common Travel Area and their future intentions to live in the Republic of Ireland as it appears from their particular situation.

The list is not exhaustive, no single factor is conclusive and some factors may have more influence than others, depending on a persons' particular circumstances. It is necessary to weigh up all the information and balance the evidence for and against an applicant satisfying the Habitual residence condition and reach a decision based on the law.

Social Welfare Benefits.

882. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when unemployment assistance or benefit will be awarded in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33576/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The person concerned submitted an application for jobseeker's allowance on 1 May 2008. He failed to attend for interview with an inspector on 28 May 2008 and as there was no further contact from him his claim was closed on 11 June 2008. The person concerned submitted a further application on 27 June 2008. An interview with an inspector was arranged for 1 August 2008 and he again failed to attend. A further interview was arranged for 24 September 2008, which he attended. He failed to furnish documentation requested by the inspector at the interview and as a result his claim could not be processed. He last signed on 18 November 2008. It is open to the person concerned to re-apply for jobseeker's allowance and to furnish the necessary documentation.

Social Welfare Appeals.

883. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if an appeal against a decision not to grant mortgage interest relief in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny will be granted. [33594/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The supplementary welfare allowance scheme, which includes mortgage interest supplement, is administered on behalf of the department by the community welfare division of the Health Service Executive (HSE). As previously advised, payment of a mortgage interest supplement was refused in this case on the grounds that the household income is sufficient to meet the mortgage interest repayment when account is taken of the minimum contribution payable by the person concerned and the non-dependent household member, towards the mortgage repayment. The Executive has confirmed that it has received the appeal and has advised that a decision on the matter will be made in due course by an Appeals Officer of the HSE.

884. **Deputy Deirdre Clune** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will review the application of a person (details supplied) in County Cork for mortgage interest supplement; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33619/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The supplementary welfare allowance scheme, which includes mortgage interest supplement, is administered on behalf of the Department by the community welfare division of the Health Service Executive.

Article 10(2) of the Social Welfare (Consolidated Supplementary Welfare Allowance) Regulations 2007, provides that it shall be a condition of a person's entitlement to mortgage interest supplement that the Executive is satisfied that the amount of mortgage interest payable by the person does not exceed such amount as the Executive considers reasonable to meet his/her residential and other needs. The Executive has advised that the person concerned was refused mortgage interest supplement on the basis that the amount of mortgage interest payable by him exceeded such amount as was considered reasonable by the Executive to meet his residential and other needs.

The person concerned appealed the decision to refuse mortgage interest supplement to an Appeals Officer of the Executive. The Appeals Officer upheld the decision of the Executive to refuse mortgage interest supplement. A further appeal has been made to the Social Welfare Appeals Office but no decision has been made on this appeal to date.

885. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason a person (details supplied) in County Louth was refused domiciliary care allowance and child benefit; if the decision can be appealed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33722/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): In order to qualify for a range of Social Welfare payments, including Child Benefit (CB) and Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA), applicants are required to satisfy the Habitual Residence condition (HRC), which was introduced on 1st May 2004.

The HRC requires the applicant to satisfy the deciding officer that they meet certain conditions. These include proving that their centre of interest is now in Ireland and their future intentions, as demonstrated, are to remain in Ireland. Their residency status and their eligibility to work in Ireland and be self-supporting are also factors which are considered. The person referred to applied for both CB and DCA in April 2009. The Deciding Officers dealing with

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the relevant applications were not satisfied that the person referred to satisfied the Habitual Residency condition. As a result her application for both payments was refused.

Decision letters outlining the refusals and the reason for same issued to the person concerned in July and she was given the right of appeal. To date, no appeal has been received in either case.

Social Welfare Benefits.

886. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if rent allowance will be approved for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny, who has been in rented accommodation for the past three years and is seeking assistance; and if the matter will be expedited. [33748/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Rent supplement is administered on behalf of the Department by the Community Welfare Service of the Health Service Executive as part of the supplementary welfare allowance scheme. The Executive has advised that the person concerned was refused rent supplement in May 2009 as the local housing authority deemed that he had “not demonstrated a long-term housing need.” The person concerned did not provide evidence to the community welfare office that he has been in private rented accommodation for three years prior to the date of claim. The person concerned appealed the decision to refuse rent supplement to an Appeals Officer of the Executive who has upheld the decision of the Executive. If the person concerned is not satisfied with the decision of the HSE Appeals Officer, it is open to him to appeal further to the Social Welfare Appeals Office and to provide documentary evidence that he has been renting in the private sector.

887. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when rent support will be awarded to a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33755/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Rent supplement is administered on behalf of the Department by the Community Welfare Service of the Health Service Executive as part of the supplementary welfare allowance scheme. The Executive has advised that the person concerned has made an application for rent supplement and she has been asked to provide further documentary evidence regarding her financial position.

Rent supplement is subject to a limit on the amount of rent that an applicant may incur. Rent limits are set at levels that enable the different types of eligible household to secure and retain basic suitable rented accommodation, having regard to the different rental market conditions that prevail in various parts of the State. The objective is to ensure that rent supplement is not paid in respect of overly expensive accommodation having regard to the size of the household. The person concerned has been advised to seek accommodation within the relevant prescribed maximum rent limits.

Pension Provisions.

888. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will reconsider her decision not to allow a company (details supplied) to be included in the pension insolvency payment scheme in view of the fact that it would be cost neutral to the State; if not, her reason for not including this company in the scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33850/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Pensions Insolvency Payments Scheme (PIPS) is being established by the Minister for Finance on a pilot basis for a three year period.

This scheme is intended as an option of last resort and a social protection measure to assist pension schemes where the sponsoring employer is insolvent and the pension scheme is being wound up in deficit. The PIPS is intended to make it cheaper to pay for the pensions of retired pension scheme members, so that more money is available for the pension benefits of those who have not yet retired.

This scheme uses the definition of insolvency which applies to the insolvency payments scheme administered by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and as set out in the Protection of Employees (Employers Insolvency) Act 1984. A change to eligibility criteria for PIPS to include an employer that is not insolvent could have an adverse influence on other employers' decisions with regard to the future sustainability of their DB pension schemes. It is also likely that such a change would have implications in terms of EU competition rules.

I have no plans therefore to extend the qualification criteria for PIPS to cover companies which do not meet the definition of insolvency.

Social Welfare Appeals.

889. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if her attention has been drawn to the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 1 who applied for disability benefit in August 2008; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33874/09]

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 a medical assessment, a means test and a habitual residency test.

The person concerned applied for Disability Allowance on 28 July 2008. His claim was assessed by a Medical Assessor and he was deemed not medically suitable for Disability Allowance. He was refused Disability Allowance on 26 August 2008 and he was formally notified of this decision by letter and of his right of appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. The person concerned appealed the decision on 2nd September 2008. A second medical assessment was then undertaken and again he was deemed not medically suitable for disability allowance.

Papers were returned to the appeals office on 23rd September 2008. The person concerned was then afforded the opportunity of setting out his detailed grounds for appeals and he replied on 10th November 2008. The case was listed for oral hearing which was heard on 24th April 2009. Normally, a decision is issued within 4-6 weeks, however in this case this is not the situation. The appeals officers report was received in disability allowance section on 28th September 2009. The delay involved is being investigated by the chief appeals officer and will write to the Deputy when this investigation is complete.

The person concerned has been awarded a Disability Allowance with effect from 30 July 2008 at the maximum personal rate, which is currently €204.30, plus an increase for a qualified child of €26.00 and a Fuel Allowance of €23.90 which gives a weekly total of €254.20. His first payment will be available to be collected at his Post Office on 28 October 2009. The person concerned is currently in receipt of One Parent Family Payment at exactly the same rates as mentioned above in respect of Disability Allowance. As he is only entitled to receive one of these payments arrears will not arise.

890. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when an oral hearing will be heard for a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33890/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that the relevant Departmental papers and comments of the Department have been received and the case has been referred to an Appeals Officer for consideration. 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 Reports.

891. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of experts' and consultants' reports her Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [33905/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Details of experts' and consultants' reports commissioned by the Department during 2008 are set out in the following table.

Reports commissioned during 2008

Name of Reports	Date Finalised (or state ongoing if not yet complete)	Cost/Estimated Cost
		€
Internal Penetration and Social Engineering Project	May 2008	23,500
Strategic Review of the Client Eligibility Services (CES) of the Department of Social and Family Affairs	September 2008	368,573
Strategic Review of Customer Facing Services	December 2008	183,781
Review of the Activation and Family Support Programme	March 2009	96,751
Review of IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) processes in IS Services	December 2008	19,965
Report of the Expert Medical Group on Domiciliary Care Allowance	December 2008	8,517
Report on Green Paper Consultation Process	September 2008	13,552
Impact of Pension Reform Options	October 2008	3,448
Quality Assessment on VFM Review of Information Services	May 2009	8,334
Report on Indoor Air Quality in Government Building in Dundalk	July 2008	5,445
Air Quality in Goldsmith House	July 2008	6,159
Family Income Supplement Uptake Research	November 2008	65,606
National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) Evaluation	On going	*104,000
Measurement of Consistent Poverty	On-going	*240,933

*Expected Costs — Reports to be finalised.

Social Welfare Benefits.

892. **Deputy Jim O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if changes have been introduced to the habitual residence clause whereby persons claiming social welfare payments and child benefit are required to satisfy habitual residence even though they previously

resided in the United Kingdom or Northern Ireland; and if so, the reason her Department's website in relation to family benefits states that the habitual residence clause does not apply in such circumstances. [33943/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The habitual residence condition applies to all claimants for certain social welfare payments, regardless of nationality. Any person who makes a claim for jobseeker's allowance, child benefit, one parent family payment, disability allowance, State pension non-contributory, carer's allowance, widow's non-contributory, guardian's non-contributory payment, blind pension or supplementary welfare allowance must be habitually resident in the State. People who previously resided in the United Kingdom or Northern Ireland are not exempt from being subject to the habitual residence condition except in certain specific circumstances in which the EU Regulations apply. Nevertheless, a person who has been residing in Northern Ireland and moves residence to this State may find it easier to satisfy this residence condition than people coming from other countries, because of the freedom of movement within the Common Travel Area between Ireland and the United Kingdom, and the relative ease of transferring one's centre of interest across the Border.

The EU Regulations, which provide for the protection of the social security rights of migrant workers exercising their right to freedom of movement between EU countries, include provisions which can override national legislation. The Regulations provide that family benefits (including child benefit) are payable by the State in which the claimant is employed, or by the State which is paying certain benefits, including jobseeker's benefit, following a period of employment in that State. This applies even where the children are resident in another State. A person who is currently employed in the Republic of Ireland by an Irish employer is therefore entitled to child benefit even if that person and/or his/her children are residing in Northern Ireland. A person who was last employed in the Republic and, for example, is entitled to Irish jobseeker's benefit (which can be exported for up to 3 months) will be similarly entitled to child benefit for that 3 months period. Similar EU provisions apply to supplementary welfare allowance which may also be paid in certain circumstances to a person who was last employed in Ireland. These arrangements do not apply to other payments like jobseeker's allowance or disability allowance which remain subject to the habitual residence condition.

Departmental Staff.

893. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the cost to her Department and each agency under the aegis of her Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33956/09]

894. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of persons in her Department and each agency under the aegis of her Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33971/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 893 and 894 together.

Officers who retire from my Department before the minimum retirement age of 60 can only do so either on grounds of ill health, which is subject to the approval of the Chief Medical Officer, under the terms of the Cost Neutral Early Retirement Scheme, which was introduced in 2004 or under the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER) introduced in 2009.

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The total cost of the early retirement pensions from 2006 to 2 October 2009 is €2,215,306.90 and the total cost of the early retirement lump sums is €5,295,179.30 (as set out in Table A).

The details of the numbers of retirements, termination of contracts and resignations in respect of my Department are set out in the Table B.

The Agencies that operate under the aegis of the Department are the Pensions Board, the Citizens Information Board, the Family Support Agency and the Office of the Pensions Ombudsman.

With effect from 1st July 2009 the Combat Poverty Agency has been subsumed into the Department.

In respect of these agencies, the total cost of the early retirement pensions from 2006 to 2 October 2009 is €78,373.91 and the total cost of the early retirement lump sums is €258,600.07 (as set out in Table C).

The details of the numbers of retirements, termination of contracts and resignations in the Agencies are set out in the Table D.

Table A

Year	Cost Neutral Early Retirement		Ill Health Retirement		Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement	
	Pension	Lump Sum	Pension	Lump Sum	Pension	Lump Sum
	€	€	€	€	€	€
2006	100,094.97	367,716.33	196,116.54	564,462.34		
2007	101,533.13	345,233.31	285,666.75	794,894.61		
2008	66,509.86	213,119.33	485,991.42	1,449,803.99		
2009	280,970.36	943,131.62	147,518.53	450,546.27	550,905.34	166,271.50

Table B

Year	Early Retirement	Termination	Resignation
2006	22	2	32
2007	23	5	49
2008	26	4	21
2009	44	2	12

Table C

Year	Cost Neutral Early Retirement		Ill Health Retirement		Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement	
	Pension	Lump Sum	Pension	Lump Sum	Pension	Lump Sum
	€	€	€	€	€	€
2006	Nil	Nil	42,255.56	145,219.77		
2007	Nil	Nil	12,034	34,362		
2008	24,084.35	79,018.30	Nil	Nil		
2009	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Table D

Year	Early Retirement	Termination	Resignation
2006	2	Nil	20
2007	1	Nil	26
2008	2	Nil	29
2009	Nil	Nil	8

Social Welfare Appeals.

895. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if an oral hearing for a jobseeker's allowance appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick will be provided as soon as possible. [33993/09]

898. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when an oral hearing will be heard in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34023/09]

907. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position regarding an appeal of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 7; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34227/09]

913. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the status of the jobseeker's allowance appeal for a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34479/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I propose to take Questions Nos. 895, 898, 907 and 913 together.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that each of the appeals from the persons concerned have been referred to an Appeals Officer who proposes to hold an oral hearing in each case. The persons concerned will be notified when the necessary 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.

896. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason the farm profit figures submitted to and accepted by the Revenue Commissioners were not acceptable to her when assessing persons (details supplied) in County Mayo for farm assist; the reason they were calculated as earning a notional income from a property which has a mortgage on it but earns no rental income; if the gift of €10,000 towards the purchase of a house will be taken into consideration; if this case will be reviewed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34008/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): All claims for social welfare benefit and assistance payments are decided by statutory deciding officers under the relevant legislation. I have no function in these decisions. The person concerned has been in receipt of a reduced rate farm assist with effect from 2 June 2009. Farm income is assessed in accordance with statutory provisions for the assessment of means as provided for under the Social Welfare Act. Under these provisions, capital (including savings and investments) and the value of property owned but not personally used and enjoyed are assessed as means. The farm means of the

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person concerned were assessed by the social welfare inspector using receipts supplied with the exception of some items which were estimated, that is, farm electricity/ phone/ car and depreciation. The value of property assessed was based on a letter of valuation provided. Outstanding mortgage was deducted from the overall property valuation figure.

At present, a revised means review is being carried out in this case and the person concerned will be informed of the outcome. The question of whether the gift of €10,000 should be taken into account will be considered as part of this review.

897. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position of an appeal by a person (details supplied) in County Clare against the decision to refuse their application for illness benefit; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34018/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Payment of illness benefit to the person concerned was discontinued following an examination by a Medical Assessor of the Department who expressed the opinion that she was capable of work. An appeal was opened and in the context of that appeal, her case was reviewed by a second Medical Assessor who also expressed the opinion that she was capable of work.

I am informed by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in the light of this second medical opinion, that office decided to afford her an opportunity of setting out the complete and up to date grounds of her appeal. On receipt of her response the relevant papers will be requested from the Department and the appeal will then be referred to an Appeals Officer for consideration. The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Question No. 898 answered with Question No. 895.

Social Welfare Benefits.

899. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the length of time it takes to process an application for jobseekers allowance and jobseekers benefit in areas (details supplied); the length of time claimants wait for their first payment; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34058/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The maintenance and upgrade of Social Welfare offices is the responsibility of the Office of Public Works (OPW). The Department has been actively working with OPW regarding the renovation and upgrading of the Social Welfare office in Clondalkin. This work is due to commence in December next and is expected to be completed within 2 months of commencement.

Departmental Offices.

900. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when renovation and upgrade works will take place at a Social Welfare office (details supplied) in Dublin 22; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34059/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The maintenance and upgrade of Social Welfare offices is the responsibility of the Office of Public Works (OPW). The Department has been actively working with OPW regarding the renovation and upgrading of the Social Welfare office in Clondalkin. This work is due to commence in December next and is expected to be completed within 2 months of commencement.

901. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will consider opening a Social Welfare office in an area (details supplied) in County Dublin to facilitate the people in that community who need to sign on for unemployment benefit and other assistance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34060/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Office of Public Works (OPW) has responsibility for the acquisition and maintenance of office accommodation for the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The Department is currently in discussions with the OPW with regard to seeking accommodation to serve the Lucan area.

Jobseeker claims for people living in the Lucan area are administered by the Social Welfare Local Office in Clondalkin. The majority of jobseekers are required to sign the Live Register once in any 4-week period. However, to avoid the necessity for people in Lucan to travel to Clondalkin, they may sign-on at a signing centre in Lucan village. The signing centre in Lucan is now open 4 days per month an increase on the two days which previously applied. The Department is keeping this arrangement under review. The Department is giving priority to the provision of a local office in Lucan and efforts are ongoing to secure suitable accommodation there as soon as possible.

Social Welfare Benefits.

902. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position regarding a matter (details supplied). [34077/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Since its introduction, the underlying objective of the back to education allowance (BTEA) scheme has been to equip people on social welfare payments with qualifications that will enable them to obtain employment in the labour market. It is a second chance educational opportunities scheme for people on certain social welfare payments who wish to participate in full time education and who would not otherwise be able to do so. Qualifying payments include the Department's jobseeker payments, disability allowance and lone parent allowance. There are two study options available under the back to education allowance scheme; second level option (SLO) and third level option (TLO). Under the second level option, a person may attend a second level course of education at any publicly funded Community, Comprehensive, Secondary, Vocational school or Institute of Technology. The course being pursued must be a full-time day course of study and lead to a qualification that is recognised by the Department of Education & Science and awarded by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) or the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC). Under the third level option, a person may attend an approved full-time third level course of education at any university or third level college or institution. Third level courses up to and including those conferring a Higher Diploma in any discipline or a Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary & Secondary Teaching) are covered by the scheme.

In general, an applicant must be at least 21 years of age prior to commencing an approved course of study. However, lone parents and recipients of jobseekers' payments who are out of formal education for at least 2 years can qualify at 18 years of age. Changes to facilitate earlier access to the scheme came into effect from 1st May, 2009. In order to qualify for participation, an applicant must now be in receipt of a relevant social welfare payment for 3 months if pursuing a second level course or 12 months if pursuing a third level course. The qualifying period for access to third level courses is reduced to 9 months for those who are participating in the National Employment Action Plan process or engaging with the Department's facilitator programme. People who are awarded statutory redundancy may access the scheme immedi-

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ately, provided an entitlement to a relevant social welfare payment is established prior to commencing an approved course of study.

The back to education allowance has an important role to play in enhancing the employability skills of jobseekers. The conditionality of the scheme will continue to be monitored in the context of the objectives of the scheme and changes in the economic climate.

903. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the documentation not received by her Department during the processing of a jobseeker's allowance application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo in view of the fact that they sent in the requested information twice. [34174/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The person concerned applied for jobseeker's allowance on 20 October, 2008 while he was living in Cork. Documents in relation to proof of address were requested on 24 October 2008. He was again written to on 9 December 2008 regarding proof of address and the need for further documentation relating to casual employment. This included a form UP14b to be completed and returned by his employer. This form provides information on the hours worked for the purpose of determining entitlement to jobseekers payments. His claim was closed on 23 January 2009 because he failed to provide the documents requested.

The person concerned later provided some of the required documents. Documentation in respect of proof of address was received on 16 April 2009. Requested weekly docketts signed by his employer were received on 28 April 2009. However, a completed form UP14b was not provided. The person concerned has since relocated and applied for jobseeker's benefit in Claremorris employment office. He qualified for and was awarded jobseekers benefit and has been in receipt of this payment since 6 July 2009.

904. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a one parent family allowance will be awarded in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34182/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The person concerned reapplied for One Parent Family Allowance on 17 September 2009. Applications for One Parent Family Allowance are means tested and require an investigation by a Social Welfare Inspector. The investigation in this case has now been completed and a report has been forwarded to the Local Office in Newbridge today Monday 5 October 2009. A decision on this application will be made shortly and the person concerned will be advised immediately thereafter.

905. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the progress in approving an illness benefit claim in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if the claim will be expedited and a response issued. [34218/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Payment of illness benefit to the person concerned was discontinued following an examination by a Medical Assessor of the Department who expressed the opinion that she was capable of work. An appeal was opened and in the context of that appeal, her case was reviewed by a second Medical Assessor who also expressed the opinion that she was capable of work. I am informed by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in the light of this second medical opinion, that office decided to afford her an opportunity of setting out the complete and up to date grounds of her appeal. On receipt of her response the relevant papers will be requested from the Department and the appeal will then be referred to an Appeals Officer for consideration. The Social Welfare Appeals Office

is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

906. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs further to previous parliamentary questions, the progress in approving carer's allowance for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if the new medical evidence with help to expedite a decision. [34220/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): An application for carer's allowance, by the person concerned, was disallowed by a Deciding Officer of the Department on the grounds that she was not providing full-time care. The issue in the appeal relates to whether the person concerned provides full time care and attention as provided for in the Social Welfare Acts and the medical condition of the care recipient is not at issue.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that her appeal has been referred to an Appeals Officer who proposes to hold an oral hearing in the case. The person concerned will be notified when the necessary 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.

Question No. 907 answered with Question No. 895.

Departmental Contracts.

908. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will respond to a query (details supplied). [34319/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Department avails of the central framework negotiated by the Department of Finance for mobile phone services. Contracts under this framework are currently in place with O2 and Vodafone.

Social Welfare Appeals.

909. **Deputy Bernard Allen** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when the one parent family payment appeal by a person (details supplied) in County Cork will be heard in view of the fact that they have been waiting since February 2009. [34323/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that the appeal from the person concerned has been referred to an Appeals Officer who proposes to hold an oral hearing in the case. The person concerned will be notified when the necessary arrangements have been made.

As regards waiting times, I am advised that the average time taken in 2008 to process all appeals (i.e. those decided summarily and by way of oral hearing) was 22 weeks. However, if allowance is made for the 25% most protracted cases, the average time fell to just over 14 weeks. Those average processing times replicate those for 2007 notwithstanding the fact there was an increase of 27% in the number of appeals received during 2008.

There has been an increase of 32% in the number of appeals received so far this year compared to last year and, having regard to the current volume of appeals awaiting determination, two additional Appeals Officers were appointed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office earlier this year. Furthermore, I am advised that the Chief Appeals Officer is keeping current processes under continuous review with a view to achieving a more effective throughput of appeals having regard to due process in terms of the rights of appellants and adherence to the requirements of natural justice. The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that

[Deputy Mary Hanafin.]

is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Departmental Staff.

910. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of occasions on which her Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34346/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): An officer who retires or is removed from the civil service due to the abolition of his/her office or to Departmental reorganisation may, at the discretion of the Minister for Finance, be awarded a special severance gratuity in addition to pension and retirement lump sum, within statutory limits. A gratuity is also payable in certain circumstances to Secretaries-General of Government Departments and Offices who, pursuant to their conditions of appointment, are obliged to retire before maximum retiring age on the expiration of their fixed-term appointments. Under the latter provision, one officer was awarded a standard severance gratuity amounting in this case to €114,959.00 under Section 7 of the Superannuation and Pensions Act 1963, during the past three years. This is the only instance in which a gratuity was paid.

With regard to agencies under the aegis of the Department, the Chief Executive of the Pensions Board was awarded added years on retirement as provided for in their contract. The additional amounts paid as a result were €17,990.94 in respect of the lump sum, and €3,042.22 in respect of the annual pension.

911. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from her Department in each of the past five years; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34361/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Thirteen staff have been dismissed from my Department in the period 1st January 2004 to 31 December 2008.

Seven of the above officers were on probationary contracts.

Social Welfare Appeals.

912. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason a person (details supplied) in County Mayo had their illness benefit removed; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34368/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Payment of illness benefit to the person concerned was discontinued following an examination by a Medical Assessor of the Department who expressed the opinion that he was capable of work. An appeal was opened and in the context of that appeal, his case was reviewed by a second Medical Assessor who also expressed the opinion that he was capable of work.

I am informed by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in the light of this second medical opinion, that office decided to afford him an opportunity of setting out the complete and up to date grounds of his appeal. On receipt of his response the relevant departmental papers will be requested from the Department and the appeal will then be referred to an Appeals Officer for consideration.

The person concerned has also submitted an Invalidity Pension appeal which is being similarly processed.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Question No. 913 answered with Question No. 895.

Social Welfare Benefits.

914. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when a person (details supplied) in County Kildare will receive domiciliary care allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34494/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): In order to qualify for Domiciliary Care Allowance a child must have a disability so severe that it requires the child needing care and attention and/or supervision substantially in excess of another child of the same age. This care and attention must be given by another person; effectively full-time, so that the child can deal with the activities of daily living. The child must be likely to require this level of care and attention for at least 12 months.

An application for Domiciliary Care Allowance was received by the Department on 10th September 2009. This application was referred to one of the Departments Medical Assessors who found that the child in question was not medically eligible for Domiciliary Care Allowance.

A letter issued to the person in question on 2nd October 2009 where she was advised of the decision to refuse Domiciliary Care Allowance. In the case of an application which is refused on medical grounds, the applicant may submit additional information and/or ask for the case to be reviewed by a different Medical Assessor specially designated for this task.

Where a person is not satisfied with the decision of a Deciding Officer, he or she may appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

915. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the number of people who receive the single parent allowance here; the number of children per recipient; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34517/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The number of people in receipt of one-parent family payment at 30 September 2009 is 89,404. A breakdown showing the number of children per customer is set out in the table below:

Number of Children	Number of Recipients
1	49,913
2	24,872
3	9,639
4	3,343
5	1,085
6	350
7	130
8	44
9	19
10	8
11	1
	89,404

Family Support Services.

916. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs if she will provide this Deputy with copies of the minutes of the board meetings of the Family Support Agency that took place in the years 2006 to 2009 inclusive; the core funding and all other grants to each family resource centre, from the Family Support Agency from 2006 to 2009 inclusive; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34524/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I have asked the Family Support Agency to supply the requested information to the Deputy.

Social Welfare Appeals.

917. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the position of an appeal by a person (details supplied) in County Kildare against the decision to refuse their application for jobseekers allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34532/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the relevant Departmental papers and comments on the grounds of appeal in the case of the person concerned have been sought. When received, the appeal in question will be referred to an Appeals Officer for early consideration.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Social Welfare Benefits.

918. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the reason for the termination of one parent family allowance in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34573/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The person concerned claimed one parent family payment from 3 July 2008. She has been paid in respect of herself and 3 children. Means of E77.50 per week have been assessed on her claim.

In June 2009 she requested a review of her means as her ex husband became unemployed. She was requested to submit evidence of maintenance payments being made to her.

A form was sent to her on 5 August as a final notice indicating that she had 21 days to send in the required information. A deciding officer was in contact with her and explained to her that she should be aware that the details requested were required urgently.

To date the person concerned has not supplied the information requested. However, the deciding officer has given her additional time to submit the details and her one parent family payment will continue at the current rate in the meantime.

919. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when she proposes to reform the back to education allowance in order that all jobseekers can avail of the scheme within three months of the start of their claim. [34420/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Since its introduction, the underlying objective of the back to education allowance (BTEA) scheme has been to equip people on social welfare payments with qualifications that will enable them to obtain employment in the labour market. It is a second chance educational opportunities scheme for people

on welfare payments who wish to participate in full time education and who would not otherwise be able to do so.

Improvements to the scheme were announced in the supplementary budget and came into effect from 1st May 2009. In order to qualify for participation, an applicant must now be in receipt of a relevant social welfare payment for 3 months if pursuing a second level course or 12 months if pursuing a third level course. The qualifying period for access to third level courses is reduced to 9 months for those who are participating in the National Employment Action Plan process or engaging with the Department's facilitator programme. People who are awarded statutory redundancy may access the scheme immediately, provided an entitlement to a relevant social welfare payment is established prior to commencing an approved course of study.

In general, an applicant must be at least 21 years of age prior to commencing an approved course of study. However, lone parents and recipients of jobseekers' payments who are out of formal education for at least 2 years can qualify at 18 years of age.

The requirement to be in receipt of a social welfare payment for a minimum period has always been a feature of the scheme. A waiting period is considered essential to confer entitlement to income support for an indefinite period and is considered necessary in the context of targeting scarce resources at those who need it most.

The back to education allowance has an important role to play in enhancing the employability skills of jobseekers. The conditionality of the scheme will continue to be monitored in the context of the objectives of the scheme and changes in the economic climate.

920. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when she proposes to reform the back to work enterprise allowance in order that all jobseekers can avail of this scheme within three months of starting their claim. [34421/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): In order to respond effectively to the growing numbers on the Live Register and the current employment situation, it was decided in the context of the recent supplementary budget to refocus resources on the enterprise strand of the back to work allowance which supports people into self employment. These changes significantly strengthen the supports for jobseekers wishing to move to self employment.

Claimants who qualify for jobseeker's benefit are being afforded immediate access to a new short term enterprise allowance, provided they have 104 contributions paid or have established entitlement to statutory redundancy from their latest period of employment. It is payable at the same rate and for the same duration as jobseeker's benefit.

For jobseekers on the live register, the qualifying period required for access to the back to work enterprise allowance scheme has been reduced from 2 years to 12 months provided an entitlement to jobseeker's allowance is established. Those who do not have an underlying entitlement to jobseeker's allowance can access the scheme, as before, subject to the 2 year qualifying period.

These changes to improve access to the scheme were made in conjunction with a reduction in the period for which the allowance is payable from 4 years to 2 years at 100% of existing social welfare entitlement in the first year and 75% in the second year. Furthermore, people who previously participated in the back to work enterprise allowance scheme may apply a second time after a period of at least 5 years has elapsed.

The qualifying conditions will continue to be monitored in the context of the objectives of the scheme and changing economic circumstances.

921. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the action she has taken to ensure that her Department is notified when a person in receipt of a payment from her Department enters full-time permanent nursing home care. [34422/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): There is an obligation, under Social Welfare legislation, on customers to notify the Department of any change in their circumstances which may affect their entitlement to payment. Customers are informed of this requirement when notified of the decision on their claim and at subsequent reviews.

When a person in receipt of a social welfare payment enters full-time permanent nursing home care they continue to be entitled to their payment, and if aged 70 years and over also remain eligible for the telephone allowance.

The only area where a change in entitlements can arise is where the person is in receipt of Household Benefits — electricity or gas and free television licence. Where a person fails to notify the Department of their change of address, there is a range of control measures in place to address such circumstances. For example:

- The various utility companies notify the Department where there is a change of address on a customer's account or where supply is terminated. Payment is immediately suspended in all such cases.
- When notification of a change of address is received on any payment scheme where household benefit is also in payment, the household benefit claim is automatically stopped.
- Only one household benefits claim is payable per household and controls are in place to prevent payment of more than one entitlement at the same address.
- Special projects are undertaken to review customer's ongoing entitlement having regard to specific review criteria.

In addition, regular reviews are undertaken to determine a person's ongoing entitlement to household benefits. Customers are issued with continuing eligibility certificates for completion and return within a specified time.

The Department is committed to ensuring that social welfare payments are available to those who are entitled to them and to ensuring that abuse of the system is prevented and dealt with effectively when detected.

Social Welfare Appeals.

922. **Deputy Noel J. Coonan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when she expects an application for disability allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary to be finalised; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34596/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the Department was asked for the documentation in the case and the Deciding Officer's comments on the grounds of the appeal. In that context, an examination by another Medical Assessor will be carried out. The person concerned will be notified when arrangements for the examination have been completed.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

923. **Deputy Noel J. Coonan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when she expects an application for disability allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary to be finalised; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34597/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that, in accordance with statutory requirements, the Department was asked for the documentation in the case and the Deciding Officer's comments on the grounds of the appeal. In that context, an examination by another Medical Assessor will be carried out. The person concerned will be notified when arrangements for the examination have been completed.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

924. **Deputy Noel J. Coonan** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs when she expects an application for disability allowance by a person (details supplied) in County Tipperary to be finalised; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [34598/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that the relevant Departmental papers and comments of the Department have been received and the case has been referred to an Appeals Officer for consideration.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department that is independently responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Pension Provisions.

925. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs her views on the extent of underfunded company pension schemes in the private sector; if she proposes State intervention to support such pension schemes; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [27980/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Under the Pensions Act 1990, defined benefit pension (DB) schemes must meet a minimum funding standard which requires that schemes maintain sufficient assets to enable them discharge accrued liabilities in the event of the scheme winding up.

The Pensions Act, and associated regulations, prescribe that defined benefit schemes are required to assess once every year whether they meet the funding standard. Not all schemes have the same reporting date, but the Pensions Board in its Annual Report for 2008 estimated that approximately 90% of defined benefit schemes did not meet the funding standard.

Where schemes do not satisfy the Funding Standard, the sponsors/trustees must submit a funding proposal to the Pensions Board to restore full funding, normally within three years.

However, as a result of the economic difficulties, the Government introduced a number of temporary measures aimed at easing the pressures being experienced by schemes.

Those measures include:

- The granting of extra time for schemes to formulate funding proposals;
- Granting flexibility to the Pensions Board to allow longer periods (over 10 years) for recovery plans in appropriate circumstances;
- Enabling the Board to allow the term of a replacement recovery plan to extend beyond the end date of the original plan in certain circumstances; and

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- Enabling the Board to take into account voluntary employer guarantees in approving recovery plans.

It is likely that, as a result of recent improvements in investment markets, the solvency of most schemes has improved. However, the situation is still a cause for concern, and I encourage scheme trustees and sponsoring employers to continue to work with the Pensions Board to address funding issues as a matter of urgency.

926. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs her views on increasing the standard retirement age in order to enhance long-term fiscal sustainability; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [27966/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): The average exit age from the labour force in Ireland was 64.1 years in 2006, compared to the EU25 average of 61 years. Notwithstanding this, the Green Paper on Pensions, published in October 2007, discussed the issue of raising state pension age as a measure to assist with the sustainability of the public pension system and to strengthen inter-generational solidarity. As was pointed out in the Green Paper, people are now living longer and healthier lives, with the time spent in retirement now much longer than was previously the case. This creates sustainability pressures for both occupational pension schemes as well as state pensions. Other countries have already announced increases in state pension age.

While Ireland currently has a relatively younger population than other countries, it is expected that, by mid century, we will have only two people of working age to every pensioner compared to six people of working age at present. The Green Paper projected that population ageing would give rise to a substantial increase in age-related expenditure, of which pension provision is expected to be the single largest component. Increasing state pension age is one option to help address these spending pressures.

The Government is currently finalising a national pensions framework which will be published before the end of the year. Any decisions on amending state pension age will be made in that context.

Social Insurance.

927. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Social and Family Affairs the discussions she has had with the Department of Finance regarding the situation whereby artists may get a large sum of money from a show once every couple of years, but have no discernible income for many other years and hence do not pay PRSI contributions so they may not be eligible for unemployment assistance or old age pensions; her plans to solve this tax issue which not only affects artists but other self-employed persons; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [32325/09]

Minister for Social and Family Affairs (Deputy Mary Hanafin): Self-employed people including artists are liable for PRSI at the Class S rate of 3% and are consequently eligible for a narrower range of benefits than general employees who, together with their employers, pay a total social insurance contribution of 14.05%, excluding levies, under the full-rate PRSI Class A.

Self-employed workers are not insured against short-term benefits such as illness and job-seeker's payments — these are only available to persons covered by PRSI Classes A, E, H and P. This reflects the need for coverage for various contingencies, the rate of contributions that

self-employed people pay, the practicalities of administering and controlling access to short-term payments and the annualised system of contributions that these same people enjoy. A system of separate arrangements for employed and self-employed workers within a social insurance context is common in other European social protection systems.

There are no immediate plans to extend cover for short-term benefits to this group of insured workers. Any such measure would have significant financial implications and would have to be considered within a budgetary context. Consideration would also have to be given to an appropriate increase in the rate of the PRSI Class S contribution.

Self-employed workers who do not qualify for an insurance-based benefit may establish entitlement to assistance-based payments such as Jobseekers Allowance. They can apply for the means-tested Jobseeker's Allowance if their business ceases or if they are on low income as a result of a downturn in demand for their services. In general their earnings level in the last twelve months is the basis for determining their expected income for the following year. However, in the current climate account is taken of the downward trend in the economy and it is accepted that future earnings may be lower than those of previous years. This is factored in projecting future earnings, with account being taken of the potential for significant upward or downward variations in income from one year to the next.

Similarly, any person who does not satisfy the social insurance contribution criteria for the State Pension (Contributory) may apply for the State Pension (Non-Contributory), the award of which is, inter alia, subject to a means test.

In addition, self-employed persons who are no longer covered by compulsory PRSI can opt to pay Voluntary Contributions if they meet the necessary requirements. Payment of Voluntary Contributions can help to maintain or improve an individual's contributory pension entitlement. Self-employed persons pay a special rate of Voluntary Contributions and the current amount payable is €253 per year.

Physical Education Facilities.

928. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Defence if all available Defence Forces physical education sports facilities and equipment could potentially support the delivery of physical education in secondary schools here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32942/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O'Dea): A wide range of educational, voluntary and community groups currently avail of facilities including those for the provision of sports and physical education. These facilities are provided subject to terms and conditions laid down by my Department and to the exigencies of the requirements of the Defence Forces.

929. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Defence if he will provide an audit of all available Defence Force personnel with expertise in the area of physical education and sport, such as physical education teachers, personal and training or National Council for Exercise and Fitness instructors and coaches who hold recognised coaching or leadership qualifications from the governing bodies or sport here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32943/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O'Dea): The Defence Force has a total of 292 personnel who are qualified in one of these areas. In addition, a further 16 are presently undergoing a course of study. These qualified personnel are stationed throughout the Defence Forces including the Air Corps and Naval Service.

I am advised by the Military Authorities that this figure is proving adequate at present to meet the needs of the Defence Forces at home and overseas.

Ministerial Travel.

930. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Defence the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33079/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): The information requested is being compiled by my Department and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Army Barracks.

931. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Defence the cost of security and maintenance of Longford Army Barracks; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33354/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): The Government decision of 14 October 2008 approved a programme for consolidation of Defence Forces formations that included the closure of Connolly Barracks, Longford. The cost incurred since the closure is €16,516.37.

Defence Forces Equipment.

932. **Deputy Chris Andrews** asked the Minister for Defence the way he justifies awarding lucrative contracts to Israeli companies when the country has been accused of war crimes in a recently released United Nations report; if he will exclude Israeli companies from future tender competitions until such time as meaningful negotiations commence with Palestine; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33448/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): Earlier this year, my Department initiated a tender competition for the supply of Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA) equipment for four from twenty-seven Light Tactical Armoured Vehicles that are being supplied by BAE Systems in South Africa. Following a detailed evaluation of tenders, the contract for the award of the Surveillance and Target acquisition equipment, with a value of €2.37m inclusive of VAT, was awarded to Elbit Systems Limited in Israel. The four Surveillance and Target Acquisition Suites ordered for use with four of the Light Tactical Armoured Vehicles are required to enhance the capability of the Irish Defence Forces to carry out surveillance and target acquisition for overseas Peace Support Operations. They will be used as an information-gathering asset and will provide a means to enhance force protection and the safety of Irish troops whilst on such missions.

My Department conducts tender competitions in accordance with EU procurement guidelines. For procurements of defensive equipment in excess of €1million, the Code of Conduct on Defence Procurement is observed and competitions are advertised by the European Defence Agency as was the case with the tender competition for the Surveillance and Target Acquisition suite. Tender competitions are held in accordance with the EU Code of Conduct on Export Controls. The tender competitions are open to companies in individual countries in accordance with the terms of all United Nations, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and European Union arms embargos or restrictions. Neither Elbit Systems Limited nor Israel have had embargos or restrictions imposed on them under the terms of these organisations. The Department of Defence is obliged to deal impartially with all companies that are entitled to enter its procurement competitions and must evaluate tenders on the basis of objective criteria set out in the tender documentation.

The principle of competitive tendering for Government contracts is used for the acquisition of defensive equipment for the Defence Forces. Central to those procedures is the requirement to allow fair competition between suppliers through the submission of tenders. The acquisition

of the four Surveillance and Target Acquisition Suites followed on from such a tender competition.

933. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Defence his plans for the storage of military equipment from Lifford and Rockhill Army Barracks, County Donegal; the location at which he will facilitate these materials in the long term; if this will involve the construction of a new building; the costs that will accrue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33545/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): The Government decision of 14 October 2008 approved a programme for consolidation of Defence Forces formations that included the closure of Lifford and Rockhill barracks. Prior to the closure of these posts all equipment and materials were removed to Finner Camp. The equipment transferred from Lifford and Rockhill was accommodated within the existing facilities and infrastructure in Finner Camp and did not require the building of any new buildings.

Naval Service Vessels.

934. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Defence the funding which has been allocated for the building of new offshore patrol vessels; when construction will commence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33856/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): My Department’s Vote for 2009 includes an amount of €5m which has been allocated towards the purchase of new Offshore Patrol Vessels for the Naval Service.

This funding has been ear-marked as a down-payment to be made upon the signing of a contract with the preferred bidder who emerged following a recent tender competition organised by my Department.

The Naval Vessel Replacement Programme will be considered as part of the Estimates and budgetary process for 2010. A contract cannot be signed until Government approval has been granted.

Subject to a Government decision on the matter, I would anticipate that the construction of the new vessels would commence a number of months after a contract is signed.

Defence Forces Co-operation.

935. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Defence his plans to encourage cooperation between the Defence Forces with Argentina; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33879/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): Insofar as opportunities arise in the discharge of their duties, the Defence Forces have my support for the development of international contacts and friendly relations with the armed services of other States.

Such contact with the Argentinean services is particularly welcome and is entirely consistent with the historic links between our nations. The Defence Forces have a very good relationship with the Argentinean Military primarily through the Admiral Brown Naval connection. The achievements of Admiral William Brown, originally from Foxford, Co. Mayo, as founder of the Argentine Navy and a key contributor to national independence, has led to a number of mutual naval service visits in recent years.

The Argentine Naval Sail Training Vessel the ARA Libertad visited Dublin in June this year, and 100 Argentine Naval Cadets, along with the Acting Argentine Ambassador to

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Ireland, visited Foxford, Co Mayo in connection with Admiral Brown on 18 June. Lt Gen Earley visited Argentina as part of an Irish delegation in 2007.

The Defence Forces and the Argentinean Armed Forces are developing an exchange training programme. An Irish officer attended a course in Argentina in September 2008. Opportunities for return visits by Argentinean Officers are being explored.

The Argentine Armed Forces have served in various peace keeping / enforcing missions around the world including United Nations Truce Supervision Organization where they served with members of the Defence Forces. The Argentine Armed Forces also served with United Nations Peace keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) and as observers with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Departmental Reports.

936. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Defence the number of experts’ and consultants’ reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33897/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): My Department commissioned a total of four reports during 2008:

The Independent Monitoring Group, which was set up to give effect to the recommendations of the Doyle Report (2002) concerning Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Defence Forces, was re-constituted in February 2008. The objective was to review progress and report on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2004 and 2002 Reports. The cost of the Group’s report was €37,109.

PA Consultant Group was commissioned by my Department to make recommendations on the best means of meeting the medical requirements of the Defence Forces. The consultancy focused on the sustainable provision of the relevant medical expertise and services to the Defence Forces. The contract was awarded in June 2008 and the cost was €95,000.

Entograph was commissioned by my Department to evaluate options for bracken control in the Glen of Imaal and identify a plan for its control. The cost was €30,129.

Mott Mac Donald Ltd was commissioned by my Department to carry out a review of the Safety Policy at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel. The cost of this review was €50,000.

Departmental Staff.

937. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Defence the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33948/09]

938. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Defence the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33963/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): I propose to take Questions Nos. 937 and 938 together.

I have set out in the tables below the number of persons in my Department and in the agencies under the aegis of my Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in the years 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.

Department of Defence

Year	Early Retirement	Termination	Resignation
2006	1		
2007	1		
2008			
2009 (to 1/9/09)	3		1

Civilian Employees

Year	Early Retirement	Termination	Resignation
2006	1		5
2007		1	4
2008	3		6
2009 (to 1/9/09)	12	1	1

Coiste an Asgard

Year	Early Retirement	Termination	Resignation
2006	Nil	Nil	Nil
2007	Nil	Nil	Nil
2008	Nil	Nil	1
2009 (to 1/9/09)	Nil	Nil	Nil

The Department of Defence staff and civilian employees referred to above were paid the appropriate retirement benefits payable to civil service personnel generally or to state industrial employees. There was no cost to my Department as the costs were borne by the Vote for Superannuation and Retired Allowances. Certain costs have arisen in respect of civilian employees of my Department who availed of voluntary early retirement schemes following the closure or rationalisation of military facilities. The total costs involved are being compiled and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible. No cost arose in respect of the resignation from Coiste an Asgard.

Standard retirement payments were made to members of the Defence Forces who took early retirement or resigned during the years in question. The cost is paid from the Vote for Army Pensions.

Departmental Contracts.

939. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Defence if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34312/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O'Dea): The Department of Defence has entered an 18 month contract with Vodafone effective from 1st October 2009. This contract covers the provision of mobile voice and data services for the Department of Defence. The devices issued to the Minister for Defence are included in this contract.

The contract was awarded in accordance with the Mobile Framework Agreement established by the Department of Finance.

Departmental Staff.

940. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Defence the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34338/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): My Department has not sanctioned or applied for the payment of a top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under the remit of the department in any of the last three years.

941. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Defence the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34353/09]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Willie O’Dea): One member of staff of my Department was dismissed in 2004. One Civilian employed with the Defence Forces was dismissed in 2007 and another in 2009.

Housing Grants.

942. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will support the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 9. [33283/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): The Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for People with a Disability is administered by the local authorities and all matters relating to compliance with the terms and conditions of the scheme, the processing and approval of applications and the payment of grants to individual applicants are the responsibility of the relevant local authority.

Tax Yield.

943. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the return to the Exchequer if the tax on second homes were raised to €1,000. [34432/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): The Government has decided to broaden the revenue base of local authorities by introducing this charge on all non-principal private residences, including private rented accommodation, holiday homes and any other residential property that is not the owner’s sole or main residence. The charge has been set at €200 per annum.

When the Bill was at Second Stage in the Houses, it was indicated that the charge could be expected to raise about €40 million a year, based on collection from approximately 200,000 properties. However, census and other data suggest that there may be 400,000 properties in the State liable for the charge and the annual potential yield could therefore be significantly higher than estimated at present.

Departmental Expenditure.

944. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the amount it has cost to set up and operate a project (details supplied) in County

Mayo since it commencement in tabular format on a yearly basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34589/09]

1015. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the amount of funding provided by him to a project (details supplied) in County Mayo since it commenced in tabular format; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34590/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 944 and 1015 together.

The information requested is being compiled and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Tax Code.

945. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will consider a circular letter to local authorities to allow the introduction of a waiver scheme for persons who have lost their job in respect of the €200 charge for non-principal private residences; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34713/09]

946. **Deputy Seymour Crawford** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the position regarding the €200 charge on an a house (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34933/09]

947. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if a person who is resident in the UK but who has a holiday home here, is liable to the second home property tax; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34704/09]

952. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if a person will be liable for property tax when a house is owned by a child of parents to release funds for medical expenses; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33067/09]

954. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the reason a person (details supplied) is expected to pay the non-principal private residence charge, when in fact they only own one property; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33135/09]

956. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if the non-principal private residence charge will be liable on vacant houses (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33190/09]

969. **Deputy Máire Hackett** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if the €200 second house levy applies in the case of a person (details supplied). [33427/09]

973. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if a person who is not living here, but owns a home here, has to pay the €200 charge under the Local Government (Charges) Act 2009 second home tax; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33544/09]

999. **Deputy Joe Costello** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the terms of the tax on second homes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34069/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 945 to 947, inclusive, 952, 954, 956, 969, 973 and 999 together.

The Government has decided to broaden the revenue base of local authorities by introducing a charge on all non-principal private residences. The charge is payable by the owners of private rented accommodation, holiday homes and any other residential property that is not the owner's sole or main residence.

While detailed guidance has been provided to local authorities for the purpose of applying the Local Government (Charges) Act 2009, covering, *inter alia*, the terms and definitions used in the Act and their broad application, interpretation and implementation of the legislation is a matter for the local authorities in the first instance.

Given the modest nature of this charge, I do not propose to introduce a waiver scheme at the present time.

Grant Payments.

948. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon will be awarded their payment; the reason for the delay in issuing same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32956/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I understand that payment has been issued in this case in recent days, following the receipt of a tax clearance certificate.

Local Authority Funding.

949. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he has considered implementing a rate subsidy scheme to allow local authorities to reduce rates in particular areas (details supplied) to allow these businesses to remain active and employing persons whilst not causing the local authority to further erode its rate base; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33004/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Rates are local property taxes that are levied by local authorities on commercial properties rateable under the Valuation Act 2001. The determination of the annual rate on valuation which is applied to property valuation to calculate rates is a decision taken locally by the elected members of a local authority in their annual budget.

I have no plans to introduce a rates subsidy scheme that would favour one commercial sector over another. However, to support economic activity and employment, both nationally and locally, and to protect the interests of communities, I specifically requested that local authorities exercise restraint in setting any increases in commercial rates in their 2009 Budgets. Local authorities recognise the challenging environment in which business operates and have responded positively to this request.

I am cognizant of the importance of rates income as a contribution to the cost of services provided by local authorities. These services are of considerable benefit to all, including rate-

payers and business generally. I will continue to keep the approach to rates by local authorities under review.

Planning Issues.

950. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government his views on the drying of clothes on balconies in apartment complexes; if appropriate facilities for drying clothes outdoors in apartment blocks will become part of the planning process in the drive to reduce carbon emissions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33012/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I am aware that many apartment management companies do not permit the drying of clothes on balconies in the lease/letting agreement.

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Design Standards for Apartments (2007) state that communal facilities for drying clothes may be provided in well-ventilated areas in some larger schemes. Where such communal facilities are not provided, the Guidelines say that consideration needs to be given to the provision of drying facilities within each unit, such as the use of screened balconies. A copy of the Guidelines is available on my Department's website at www.environ.ie. Incorporating appropriate outdoor drying facilities into the design of apartment developments may have environmental merit and, taking into account practical implementation issues such as space, privacy and security, my Department will consider the proposal further in the context of any future review of the Guidelines.

Designated Areas.

951. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when a decision on the implementation of a special protection order on Dublin Bay will be made in view of the fact that he has a copy of the report from the Designated Areas Appeal Advisory Group in his possession; the reason for the delay in making his decision; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33043/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Following the notification of my intention to designate South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area in May 2008, one appeal, from the Dublin Port Company, was made to the Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board for its consideration. The Board heard the appeal on 2 July 2009. Having considered the scientific evidence presented by my Department and by the appellant, the Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board advised me that there is sufficient scientific evidence to support the retention of the area subject to the appeal within the SPA. The Board recommended that the appeal be refused.

I have accepted the recommendation of the Board in this regard, and have rejected the appeal. My decision was notified to Dublin Port Company in July 2009.

I expect shortly to sign a Statutory Instrument, which will complete the designation process for this site.

Question No. 952 answered with Question No. 945.

Ministerial Travel.

953. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the annual cost to his Department of Ministerial expenses related to over-

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seas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33082/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): A summary of the information requested, where available, is set out in the tables below for the period from 1999 — 2003 and for the period from 2004 to the end of September 2009. Detailed information on the cost of attending engagements overseas is currently being compiled in respect of my own travel since June 2007 and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible. However, collation of the costs of every individual event attended by Ministers and Ministers of State for each of the past ten years would involve an inordinate amount of time and resources.

This applies particularly to expenses paid prior to the introduction of the current financial accounting system on 01 January 2004. However, the cost of overseas travel and subsistence claims made by Ministers and Ministers of State at the Department prior to that date is available and is set out in the following table.

Overseas Travel & Subsistence claims by Ministers and Ministers of State 1999 to 2003

Year	Claim
	€
1999	6,873.77
2000	8,614.55
2001	9,010.39
2002	3,598.58
2003	4,975.54

The current financial accounting system facilitates more detailed retrieval of information on different claims and expenses. The table below sets out the expenses paid in connection with overseas travel engagements by Ministers and Ministers of State in my Department from 01 January 2004 to the end of September 2009 including air fares, accommodation, transport costs and travel and subsistence claims made by the Ministers.

However, some costs incurred on behalf of Ministers during Ireland's presidency of the EU in the first half of 2004 have been recorded under a general EU presidency account. Many of the costs directly attributed to Ministers cannot readily be extracted from this account.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Jan-Sept 2009
Total Expenses	€64,130.81	€80,976.95	€103,485.12	€43,505.18	€55,474.01	€30,082.74

Question No. 954 answered with Question No. 945.

Departmental Audits.

955. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if the audit of community facilities being conducted under active citizenship has been completed in respect of every county; if such audits have been published; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33189/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): In keeping with the recommendation in the Task Force Report on Active Citizenship, an audit of community, sports and arts facilities at local level was commenced in the second half of 2008 by each County and City Council, under the auspices of the relevant County/City Development Board and in line with guidelines issued by my Department. These guidelines were developed in consultation with the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, the Department of the Taoiseach and local authorities. Thirty two local authorities have carried out audits of community facilities and two audits are in progress at this time. On completion of the audits, appropriate arrangements will be made for the local authorities to make them available.

Question No. 956 answered with Question No. 945.

National Biodiversity Plan.

957. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the position regarding the new National Biodiversity Plan to cover the period 2008 to 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33193/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): A public consultation process on a new National Biodiversity Plan took place last year in association with other Government Departments and the Biodiversity Stakeholders Forum, which operates as a Standing Committee of Comhar (the National Sustainable Development Council). All of the submissions received have been examined. Detailed consideration with Government Departments on the Plan is now commencing following which a draft Plan is expected to be available by the end of this year.

Urban Renewal Schemes.

958. **Deputy Kieran O'Donnell** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when the €1 million required for the planning and design stage of Limerick regeneration will be forthcoming; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33210/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): I refer to the reply to Questions Nos. 1037 and 1044 of 16 September 2009 regarding the Limerick Regeneration Programme, and my subsequent statement to the House as part of the adjournment debate on 23 September 2009. A Project Team, led by the Limerick Regeneration Agencies, was established in 2009 to deliver detailed plans for two new sheltered housing projects in Moyross and Ballinacurra Weston. Some €1.5 million is set aside in 2009 to meet these design costs and it is intended that priority projects in the Southill and St. Mary's Park areas will be added to the Project Team's remit.

The broader economic and employment situation in Limerick and the Mid-West region is under consideration in light of the Interim Report of the Mid-West Task Force. The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment published the Task Force's Interim Report on 28 July 2009 and the Government is now engaging in a cross-Departmental consultation process to evaluate and consider the implementation of the report's recommendations. The Report's recommendation that the implementation of the Limerick Regeneration Plan should be accelerated, and that expenditure of €1 million should be provided initially in order to accelerate the detailed planning and design process, will be considered in the context of that consultation process.

Proposed Legislation.

959. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local

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Government when he intends to introduce regulations to implement the recommendations of the Working Group to Review the Management of Dog Breeding Establishments; and if the kennels of non-commercial clubs registered with an organisation (details supplied) will be fully exempt from such regulations. [33222/09]

964. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will confirm that his previous commitment to exclude registered hunt kennels from the Control of Dogs (Amendment) Bill remains; the procedures in place to ensure adequate input from people who might be impacted by the proposed regulations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33253/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 959 and 964 together.

Work is under way in drafting an amendment to the Control of Dogs Acts and I hope to publish proposed new legislation in the near future. The process has included discussions with a number of organisations, bodies, public agencies and interests active in the area. The draft Bill is being designed to give statutory effect to the recommendations of the Working Group that had been established to review the management of dog breeding establishments. The Working Group recommended that a dog breeding establishment be defined as ‘a premises containing more than 5 female dogs, aged over 4 months, with breeding potential’.

The draft Bill will propose that dog breeding establishments be required to register with the relevant local authority, that they pay a registration fee and that they meet a minimum set of veterinary, welfare and other standards, together with some associated requirements.

The Hunting Association of Ireland (HAI) made submissions to me in relation to their activities and the nature of these. As a consequence and in recognition of the “not for profit” basis of these, and as communicated to the HAI directly and in response to representations on their behalf, I decided to provide exemption in the legislation in respect of the payment of registration fees. The HAI has made clear that their premises operate comprehensive and appropriate standards. Accordingly, I do not consider that this aspect of the legislative regime should cause difficulty.

EU Directives.

960. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will confirm the status of the principal directive at issue, and the general subject matter of any proceedings by the European Commission against the Government in the environmental sector under Articles 226 and 228 of the EC Treaty. [33248/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): In areas for which my Department has responsibility, the European Commission is currently in correspondence in respect of 29 cases relating to transposition and implementation of EU environmental legislation. The cases are at various stages of proceedings as listed in the attached table. As indicated in the table nearly all cases are of national application. Some are also site specific and the principal locations are provided.

EU Instrument Number and General Reference	Stage in Proceedings							Locations: Site/County
	Article 226 Letter of Formal Notice	Article 226 Reasoned Opinion	Being Referred to the European Court of Justice	Before the European Court of Justice for a hearing or awaiting judgement	European Court of Justice Decision to be Implemented	Article 228 Letter of Formal Notice	Article 228 Reasoned Opinion	
75/442/EEC the waste directive	1 1			1		1		Of national application Of national application and site specific (Ferrybank, Co Waterford and Drogheda Co Louth) Of national application A case of national application and also related to certain sites (see note 1 below setting out locations)
76/464/EEC on dangerous substances in water							1	Of national application
79/409/EEC on wild birds						1		Of national application
79/923/EEC on the quality required of shellfish waters							1	Of national application and site specific (Cork Harbour)
80/68/EEC on groundwater						1		Ballymurtagh, Co Wicklow
80/778/EEC on the quality of drinking water for human consumption							1	Of national application
85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment	1			1				Of national application Of national application but also site specific (Duleek and M3 Co. Meath)
91/271/EEC on urban waste water treatment				1		1		Of national application Of national application but also site specific (Derrybrien, Co Galway)
92/43/EEC on habitats			1		1			Of national application Site specific (see note 2 below setting out locations) Of national application also site specific (Clara Bog, Co Offaly, and River Lickey Co Waterford)
						1		Of national application

EU Instrument Number and General Reference	Stage in Proceedings							Locations: Site/County
	Article 226 Letter of Formal Notice	Article 226 Reasoned Opinion	Being Referred to the European Court of Justice	Before the European Court of Justice for a hearing or awaiting judgement	European Court of Justice Decision to be Implemented	Article 228 Letter of Formal Notice	Article 228 Reasoned Opinion	
96/61/EC concerning integrated pollution prevention and control	1							Of national application
98/81/EC on the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms	1							Of national application
99/31/EC on landfill		1						Of national application
2000/53/EC on end of life vehicles	1							Of national application
2000/60/EC the water framework directive	1							Of national application
2002/96/EC on waste electrical and electronic equipment	1							Of national application
2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment	1							Of national application
2003/35/EC on public participation in certain plans and programmes relating to the environment					1			Of national application
2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries and amending Directive 2004/35/EC	1							Of national application
2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration	1							Of national application
2007/2/EC establishing an infrastructure for spatial information in the EU	1							Of national application
Decision 2005/166/EC & Decision 280/2004/EC: Rules concerning a mechanism for monitoring Community greenhouse gas emissions and for implementing the Kyoto Protocol	1							Of national application

Note 1: Poolbeg, Dublin City; Powerstown, Co. Carlow; Cullinagh and Ballard, Fermoy Co. Cork; Drumnaboden Co. Donegal; Lea Rd. and Ballymorris, Portarlinton Co. Laois; Limerick City wetlands, Co. Limerick; Greenore, Co. Louth; Various wetlands at Ballynatin, Pickardstown, Ballygunner Bog and Castletown, as well as Tramore and Killbarry, Co. Waterford; Pembrokestown, White Rock Hill Co. Wexford; Bray Co. Wicklow.

Note 2: Bray, Co. Wicklow, Tramore, Co. Waterford, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, Howth and Shangannagh, Co. Dublin and Sligo.

Waste Management.

961. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if all local authorities have completed the register of contaminated sites; if any local authorities have not done so, the action he will take to ensure compliance. [33249/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): A ministerial policy direction issued on 3 May 2005 in regard to compliance by local authorities with the requirements of section 22 of the Waste Management Acts to prepare an inventory and risk assessment of all non-licensed closed landfills where disposal or recovery activities have taken place. To assist local authorities in this process, the EPA has developed a dedicated web site. However the web site is not, and is not intended to be, a register of contaminated sites.

Under the Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations 2008 local authorities are obliged to identify and register by 30 June 2009 all closed unlicensed landfills which were operated by them during the period 15 July 1977 to 27 March 1997, i.e. in the period between the adoption of relevant EU requirements and their having full effect in Ireland through the waste licensing system now the statutory responsibility of the EPA. My Department understands from the EPA that all local authorities have complied with this registration requirement.

Local authorities are also required, under section 26(2) of the Acts, to identify and assess sites at which waste disposal activities were carried out that to a significant extent involved hazardous waste. The EPA in 2007 published a Code of Practice for Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites. The code provides the framework for local authorities to establish any environmental risk posed by such sites.

Urban Renewal Schemes.

962. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the progress made in relation to the Cork Docklands project; the funding available for this project; the timescale involved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33250/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I refer to the replies to Questions Nos. 477, 478, and 499 of 7 July 2009 and Questions Nos. 757 and 767 of 9 July 2009.

My Department, in conjunction with the Inter-Departmental Senior Officials Group established to consider the analysis and recommendations in the Cork Docklands Development Forum Report, is urgently considering what enabling measures can be put in place to further progress the development of Cork Docklands.

Waste Disposal.

963. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the position in relation to Haulbowline Island, County Cork; his plans to deal with the toxic waste at the site; the way the site will be managed; and when he will undertake the health survey of the Cork Harbour area as promised. [33251/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I refer to the reply to Question No. 500 of 7 July 2009. The position is unchanged.

Question No. 964 answered with Question No. 959.

Departmental Correspondence.

965. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government his views on suspending Part 3 of the Building Control Act 2007, in view of the effect it is having on experienced architects (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33256/09]

1007. **Deputy Alan Shatter** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will meet an organisation (details supplied) to discuss with them their concerns about Part 3 of the Building Control Act 2007; the consideration given by him to date to their concerns; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34372/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 965 and 1007 together.

I refer to the reply to Questions Nos. 998, 1024, 1057 and 968 of 16 September 2009. I have no plans to suspend Part 3 of the Building Control Act 2007.

Planning Issues.

966. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if planning permission is required to convert a car park into a commercial car park. [33303/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2009 and the associated regulations, all development commenced on or after 1 October 1964 requires planning permission unless specifically exempted. While certain developments are exempted under section 4 of the Act and Part 2 and Schedule 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, there is no specific exemption for car parks. A change in the use of land is development for the purpose of the legislation, but planning permission is not required for a change of use within any one of the classes of use specified in Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

The interpretation and application of the legislation is a matter the planning authorities in the first instance.

Private Rented Accommodation.

967. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will examine the manner in which the rental accommodation scheme is being operated in County Kildare; if his attention has been drawn to the relatively few new participants, which have been allowed into the scheme in recent months; his views on the manner in which Kildare County Council are dealing with applicants who are in part-time employment and who are being advised by the council that inclusion in the scheme would be too expensive for the Council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33311/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): Since the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) commenced in 2005 to the end of August 2009, Kildare County Council has transferred a total of 692 households from rent supplement to RAS or other social housing. Of that total, 60 households have been accommodated to date in 2009. The Council have advised my Department that they will meet their 2009 target of transferring 200 rent supplement households to RAS (150) and social housing (50).

It is a matter for each individual authority to manage the transfer of rent supplement households to RAS and my Department has no function in the transfer of individual cases. The qualifying criteria for RAS are that a household must be in receipt of rent supplement, usually for 18 months or more and have a long term housing need. Households in part-time employment are not precluded from the scheme.

Water and Sewerage Schemes.

968. **Deputy Paul Connaughton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if his Department has received a file from Galway County Council concerning the Loughrea/Kilrickle water scheme; the position regarding same; if he will confirm that the Kilrickle water scheme is still part of the Loughrea town augmentation scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33339/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): The Loughrea Regional Water Supply Scheme, which includes a proposed connection to serve Kilrickle, is included for funding in my Department's Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009.

My Department awaits the submission of a revised Design Review Report for the scheme from Galway County Council.

Question No. 969 answered with Question No. 945.

Register of Electors.

970. **Deputy John Cregan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government his plans to include a post code for each electoral area on the electoral register; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33429/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Electoral law provides that the preparation of the Register of Electors is a matter for each local registration authority. It is their duty to ensure, as far as possible and with the cooperation of the public, the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the Register.

The Programme for Government contains a commitment to establish an independent Electoral Commission. It states that the Commission's responsibilities will include taking charge of the compilation of a new national rolling electoral register. The question of the use of postcodes for electoral registration purposes would appropriately arise for consideration in this context.

Housing Grants.

971. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if there are guidelines or legislation in place to ensure that a grant scheme approved by a local authority is honoured when the work is completed; the safeguard in place for grant applicants who are approved funding but are told there is no funding available on completion of the works; his views on introducing such guidelines to ensure that local authority budgets are fully transparent; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33511/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): The Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and People with a Disability are administered by local authorities in accordance with the provisions of the Housing (Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability) Regulations,

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S.I. No. 670 of 2007. Matters such as the assessment and approval of individual applications and the payment of grants to householders, are the responsibility of the relevant local authority.

The combined allocation to Mayo County Council, incorporating the Exchequer contribution and the co funding provided by Council, for 2009, was €2,775,834, an increase of 14% on the 2008 allocation.

The annual allocations to local authorities under the schemes are calculated on foot of detailed discussion between my Department and the local authorities and on the basis of a number of criteria, including the level of applications on hand that have been assessed as eligible, applications yet to be assessed and projections for new applications to be received during the year. It is a matter for each local authority to decide on the specific level of funding to be directed towards each of the individual schemes, from within the combined allocation notified to them by my Department, and to manage the operation of the schemes in their areas from within their allocation. There are no undue delays in recouping grant expenditure to the local authorities and, nationally, some 75% of the overall Exchequer contribution has been recouped to local authorities to date.

At my Department's request, the Centre for Housing Research is currently carrying out an evaluation of the grant schemes in consultation with stakeholders, including the local authorities, representative organisations for older people and persons with a disability, and with a cross-section of grant applicants. The need for revised guidelines with regard to the payment of grants by local authorities to approved applicants will be considered in the light of the evaluation report.

Election Management System.

972. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the reason people who are successful in local election are given an extra seven days to make their disclosures under the Local Election (Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure) Act 1999; his views on whether this is fair; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33535/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I refer to the reply to Question No. 320 of 22 September 2009. The Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure) Act 1999, as amended, requires that all candidates, both successful and unsuccessful, furnish a statement of election expenses and statutory declaration to the local authority concerned within 90 days following polling day.

Section 20(1) of the Act provides that where an unsuccessful candidate fails to furnish the relevant statement within the specified period, the person shall be disqualified for membership of any local authority for the remainder of the term of office of the members of the local authority concerned.

Section 20(2) of the Act provides that where a member of a local authority elected at the election fails to furnish to the local authority concerned, within the period specified for this purpose, the relevant statement, the member shall be suspended from membership of the authority for the period of 7 days commencing on the expiry of the time specified for this purpose, or a lesser period ending on the compliance by the member with the requirements of section 13, and if at the end of that period the member has not complied with the requirements of section 13, the member shall be disqualified for membership of any local authority.

In the case of an unsuccessful candidate who failed to furnish a statement to the local authority concerned, there is no scope to provide for a suspension from membership of that local authority.

The requirement to submit a statement of election expenses and statutory declaration, and the disqualification provisions that apply for non-submission, have been in effect for the local elections held in 1999, 2004 and 2009. I consider that 90 days is more than adequate to make a return, and would be reluctant to relax the provisions currently contained in the legislation.

However, if practical issues emerge with the implementation of legislation, then I will, of course, consider them to determine any action that may be required.

Question No. 973 answered with Question No. 945.

Local Authority Housing.

974. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the reason for the delay in agreeing the scheme of letting submitted by Dublin City Council a number of years ago; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33558/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): I approved the Dublin City Council revised scheme of letting priorities on 16 April, 2009 and a letter conveying this approval issued to the Council on 20 April, 2009.

Special Areas of Conservation.

975. **Deputy Michael P. Kitt** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if there is EU or Exchequer funding available for developing designated bog areas; the amount of such funding each year for the past 10 years; the amount to be spent in 2009; the breakdown of this funding; the areas involved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33559/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Ireland is required to protect habitats of European importance under the Habitats Directive 1992, which was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997, and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. In accordance with the Directive, Ireland has nominated certain raised and blanket bogs, which are priority natural habitats under the Directive, as candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs). In addition, Ireland has also designated other raised and blanket bogs as natural heritage areas (NHAs) under the 2000 Wildlife Act. All raised and blanket bog, SACs and NHAs are listed in the table below.

My Department provides funding for compensation of turf cutters who cease cutting and for the purchase of freehold or turbary rights on these designated sites with a view to their protection and, where appropriate, restoration. The following sums have been expended on this in the last 10 years:

Year	Amount
	€million
1999	2.25
2000	1.60
2001	0.40
2002	0.40

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Year	Amount
	€million
2003	0.50
2004	0.36
2005	4.69
2006	4.10
2007	5.00
2008	6.30

In 2009, having regard to available resources, expenditure is expected to be just under €4.7m. The breakdown is expected to be about €3.7m to be paid to commercial cutters and €1m for purchase of turbary rights or freehold of domestic turf cutters. A list of the bogs concerned is attached, including the counties in which they are located. Purchases of freehold or turbary rights of domestic cutters are mainly confined to raised bogs, and especially to those 32 raised bogs designated before 1999, on which cutting is due to end this year. These bogs are listed as the first 32 in the table.

Special Areas of Conservation

#	Site Code	Site Name	County
1	000006	Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally)	Cavan and Meath
2	000231	Barroughter Bog	Galway
3	000248	Cloonmoylan Bog	Galway
4	000285	Kilsallagh Bog	Galway
5	000296	Lisnageeragh Bog and Ballinstack Turlough	Galway
6	000297	Lough Corrib	Galway and Mayo
7	000301	Lough Lurgen Bog/Glenamaddy Turlough	Galway
8	000326	Shankill West Bog	Galway
9	000382	Sheheree (Ardagh) Bog	Kerry
10	000391	Ballynafagh Bog	Kildare
11	000440	Lough Ree	Ros/LD/WM
12	000457	Derrynabrock Bog	Mayo and Roscommon
13	000497	Flughany Bog	Mayo and Sligo
14	000547	Tawnaghbeg Bog	Mayo
15	000566	All Saints Bog and Esker	Offaly
16	000572	Clara Bog	Offaly
17	000575	Ferbane Bog	Offaly
18	000580	Mongan Bog	Offaly
19	000581	Moyclare Bog	Offaly
20	000582	Raheenmore Bog	Offaly
21	000585	Sharavogue Bog	Offaly
22	000592	Bellanagare Bog	Roscommon
23	000597	Carrowbeh/Caher Bog	Roscommon
24	000600	Cloonchambers Bog	Roscommon
25	000604	Derrinea Bog	Roscommon
26	000614	Cloonshanville Bog	Roscommon
27	000641	Ballyduff/Clonfinane Bog	Tipperary
28	000647	Kilcarren-Firville Bog	Tipperary

#	Site Code	Site Name	County
29	000679	Garriskil Bog	Westmeath
30	001242	Carrownagappul Bog	Galway
31	001818	Lough Forbes Complex	Longford and Roscommon
32	002110	Corliskea/Trien/Cloonfellov Bog	Galway and Roscommon
33	000595	Callow Bog	Roscommon
34	002298	River Moy	Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo
35	002331	Mouds Bog	Kildare
36	002332	Coolrain Bog	Laois
37	002333	Knockacoller Bog	Laois
38	002336	Carn Park Bog	Westmeath
39	002337	Crosswood Bog	Westmeath
40	002338	Drumalough Bog	Roscommon
41	002339	Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough	Roscommon
42	002340	Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs	Meath and Westmeath
43	002341	Ardagullion Bog	Longford
44	002342	Mount Hevey Bog	Meath and Westmeath
45	002343	Tullaher Lough and Bog	Clare
46	002346	Brown Bog	Longford
47	002347	Camderry Bog	Galway
48	002348	Clooneen Bog	Longford
49	002349	Corbo Bog	Roscommon
50	002350	Curraglehanagh Bog	Galway
51	002351	Moanveanlagh Bog	Kerry
52	002352	Monivea Bog	Galway
53	002353	Redwood Bog	Tipperary
54	002354	Tullaghanrock Bog	Roscommon
55	002356	Ardgraique Bog	Galway

Natural Heritage Areas

#	Site Code	Site Name	County
1	000220	Lough Namucka Bog NHA	Galway and Roscommon
2	000221	Moorfield Bog/Farm Cottage NHA	Galway and Roscommon
3	000222	Suck River Callows NHA	Galway and Roscommon
4	000229	Ballygar Bog NHA	Galway
5	000235	Bracklagh Bog NHA	Galway
6	000245	Clooncullaun Bog NHA	Galway
7	000247	Slieve Bog NHA	Galway
8	000249	Cloonoolish Bog NHA	Galway
9	000254	Crit Island West NHA	Galway
10	000267	Funshin Bog NHA	Galway
11	000280	Castle Ffrench West Bog NHA	Galway
12	000281	Keeloges Bog NHA	Galway
13	000283	Kilmore Bog NHA	Galway
14	000284	Kilnaborris Bog NHA	Galway
15	000292	Leaha Bog NHA	Galway
16	000307	Lough Tee Bog NHA	Galway

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#	Site Code	Site Name	County
17	000310	Meneen Bog NHA	Galway
18	000321	Raford River Bog NHA	Galway
19	000333	Anna More Bog NHA	Kerry
20	000337	Doon Lough NHA	Clare
21	000422	Aghnamona Bog NHA	Leitrim and Longford
22	000564	River Little Brosna Callows NHA	Offaly and Tipperary
23	000565	Clonydonnin Bog NHA	Offaly and Westmeath
24	000570	Black Castle Bog NHA	Offaly
25	000591	Bella Bridge Bog NHA	Roscommon
26	000603	Cornaveagh Bog NHA	Roscommon
27	000605	Derrycanan Bog NHA	Roscommon
28	000640	Arragh More Bog NHA	Tipperary
29	000642	Ballymacegan Bog NHA	Tipperary
30	000648	Killeen Bog NHA	Tipperary
31	000652	Monaincha Bog/Ballaghmore Bog NHA	Laois
32	000674	Ballynagrenia and Ballinderry Bog NHA	Westmeath
33	000677	Cloncrow Bog (New Forest) NHA	Westmeath
34	000684	Lough Derravaragh NHA	Westmeath
35	000691	Rinn River NHA	Leitrim and Longford
36	000694	Wooddown Bog NHA	Westmeath
37	000890	Cangort Bog NHA	Offaly and Tipperary
38	000921	Screggan Bog NHA	Offaly
39	000937	Scohaboy Bog NHA	Tipperary
40	000985	Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough NHA	Cavan, Longford and Westmeath
41	000993	Ayle Lower Bog NHA	Clare
42	001020	Loughanilloon Bog NHA	Clare
43	001227	Aughrim Bog NHA	Galway
44	001240	Capira/Derrew Bog NHA	Galway
45	001244	Castle Ffrench East Bog NHA	Galway
46	001254	Derrinlough Bog NHA	Galway
47	001255	Derrynagran Bog and Esker NHA	Galway
48	001264	Eskerboy Bog NHA	Galway
49	001280	Killaclogher Bog NHA	Galway
50	001283	Killure Bog NHA	Galway
51	001303	Moorfield Bog NHA	Galway
52	001324	Jamestown Bog NHA	Meath
53	001352	Bunnaruddee Bog NHA	Kerry
54	001388	Carbury Bog NHA	Kildare
55	001393	Hodgestown Bog NHA	Kildare
56	001405	Cashel Bog (Leitrim) NHA	Leitrim
57	001420	Corracramph Bog NHA	Leitrim
58	001423	Cloonageeher Bog NHA	Leitrim and Longford
59	001448	Forthill Bog NHA	Longford
60	001450	Mount Jessop Bog NHA	Longford
61	001580	Girley Bog NHA	Meath
62	001582	Molerick Bog NHA	Meath
63	001623	Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA	Roscommon

#	Site Code	Site Name	County
64	001652	Tullaghan Bog (Roscommon) NHA	Roscommon
65	001684	Lorrha Bog NHA	Tipperary
66	001725	Nure Bog NHA	Westmeath
67	001812	Lough Garr NHA	Westmeath
68	001853	Nore Valley Bogs NHA	Tipperary
69	002033	Daingean Bog NHA	Offaly
70	002072	Lisnarrigh Bog NHA	Roscommon
71	002307	Cloonlough More Bog NHA	Clare
72	002323	Milltownpass Bog NHA	Westmeath
73	002344	Annaghbeg Bog NHA	Galway
74	002355	Hawkswood Bog NHA	Offaly
75	002357	Clonreher Bog NHA	Laois

Housing Grants.

976. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government his proposals to provide adequate funding to the local authorities in the Waterford constituency for housing grants; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33566/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): Allocations totalling €79.562 million for 2009 were notified to local authorities on 7 May 2009 under the Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and People with a Disability, the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme and the old Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs Grant Schemes.

The 2009 allocations to both Waterford County Council and Waterford City Council amount to €2,220,005, compared to an initial allocation of €1,951,230 in 2008, an increase of almost 14%. The scope for making further allocations under the schemes is being reviewed at present and will take account of any under-spend by local authorities of their allocations under the schemes or other allocations under the wider range of housing programmes.

Water Charges.

977. **Deputy Dinny McGinley** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if properties such as churches and attached church halls that are registered as charitable organisations are obliged to pay non-domestic water charges; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33613/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): The Government's Water Pricing Policy, in consistency with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive, requires local authorities to recover the cost of providing water services from all non-domestic users of these services by means of a volumetric charge based on actual metered consumption. Accordingly, under the Pricing Policy, all non-domestic users are obliged to pay water charges.

Water and Sewerage Schemes.

978. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the reason he will accept an appropriate assessment linked to an application for a waste water treatment plant carried out by a local authority to discharge urban sewage directly into a marine special area of conservation for which there is no baseline data, no

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conservation objectives and no management plan, yet he refuses to accept an appropriate assessment linked to applications for aquaculture licences in SACs or special protection areas citing the absence of the same baseline data, conservation objectives or management plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33624/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): It is a matter for the appropriate consent authority to ensure that any development or activity that could have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site is granted such consent in compliance with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives, as transposed into Irish law in the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations. Waste water treatment plants are generally subject to planning consent and to licence from the EPA. Aquaculture licences are issued by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

I am a statutory consultee in such applications and provide scientific advice to the relevant consent authority in such matters. It is for the consent authority to make the appropriate assessment, based on the information made available to it in support of the application, as to whether consent can be given to the proposed development or activity.

Local Authority Housing.

979. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the regulations or legislation in place to assist local authorities in the taking over of housing developments when the initial contractor is insolvent or is no longer trading; and if he will introduce legislation to assist homeowners in this regard to ensure that local authorities take control of these developments. [33625/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides that, where an estate is completed to the satisfaction of the planning authority in accordance with the planning permission, the planning authority must initiate taking in charge procedures as soon as possible following a request to do so by the developer or by the majority of the owners or occupiers. Similarly, where an estate has not been completed to the standard outlined in the planning permission and the planning authority has not taken enforcement action within the appropriate period, the planning authority must also initiate taking in charge procedures if requested to do so by the owners/occupiers. The decision as whether any particular estates should be taken in charge is ultimately one for the elected members of the planning authority.

Sections 34(4)(g) and 180(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provide respectively that a planning authority may attach conditions to a planning permission requiring the giving of adequate security for the satisfactory completion of a proposed development and, if a development is not subsequently completed satisfactorily, may apply the security given for the satisfactory completion of that development.

My Department's Development Management Guidelines (June 2007) and policy guidance on the Taking in Charge of Residential Developments (February 2008) advise that it is essential that planning permissions for residential developments are subject to conditions under which an acceptable security is provided by way of bond, cash deposit or otherwise so as to secure the satisfactory completion of those developments. The guidance states that the security given should be adequate to ensure the proper completion of roads, footpaths, water mains, sewers, lighting and open space and the lodgment of the security should be coupled with an agreement that would empower the authority to realise the amount of the security at an appropriate time.

980. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the local authorities that have been authorised to switch houses which were previously identified as affordable homes for resale to social housing to let; the way this decision interfaces with the planning acts in terms of consultation with residents or opportunities to make representations; the legal implication for home owners who bought their homes on the basis of planning permissions for private and affordable housing only; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33751/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): Where a local authority has a stock of unsold affordable housing units on hand and has exhausted all options for the sale of those units as affordable housing, the Planning and Development Acts 2000 — 2008 provide that such units may be used for another purpose connected with the functions of the authority, including social housing. In terms of funding, this is subject to prioritisation within the authority's social housing programme and the approval of my Department.

Local authorities have been advised by my Department on options for bringing unsold affordable homes into use, including the options of the temporary transfer of affordable homes for use under the Rental Accommodation Scheme or under the new social leasing arrangements, or in certain limited cases, for transfer to the permanent social housing stock. Insofar as the latter approach is concerned, approvals have issued to the following local authorities:- Athy Town Council; Cobh Town Council; Dublin City Council; Fermoy Town Council; Kilkenny County Council; Kinsale Town Council; Laois County Council; Limerick City Council; Midleton Town Council; Sligo County Council; Templemore Town Council and Wexford County Council.

981. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if extra funding will be provided to Cork County Council for the number of idle local authority houses that require maintenance in view of the large housing waiting lists in north Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33822/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): In April 2009, my Department notified Cork County Council of an allocation of €550,000 to support its efforts to bring vacant housing stock back into viable use and to improve the energy efficiency of these dwellings. A programme of works proposed by the Council was approved by my Department in June 2009. No request has been made by the Council for additional funding to expand this programme. In addition, the Council received approval under its 2009 Improvement Works Programme to use €395,000 of its own resources to improve a number of void properties throughout the County.

Local Authority Charges.

982. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if there is discretion on the part of local authorities to grant rates exemptions to non for profit organisations including those that provide full day care services for children, specifically when those child care facilities are funded through the national development plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33823/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Rates are local property taxes that are levied by local authorities on commercial properties rateable under the Valuation Act 2001. Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial purposes in accordance with the details entered

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in the valuation lists prepared by the independent Commissioner of Valuation. The determination of the annual rate on valuation which is applied to property valuations to calculate rates is a decision taken locally by the elected members of a local authority in their annual budget.

With regard to the application of rates charges to child-minding facilities, local authorities only levy rates on commercial establishments. Where childcare provision is within a community facility, operating in a non-profit capacity, commercial rates do not generally apply.

Planning Issues.

983. **Deputy George Lee** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the outcome to the bonds lodged with local authorities if developers do not adhere to the planning permission conditions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33831/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Sections 34(4)(g) and 180(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provide respectively that a planning authority may attach conditions to a planning permission requiring the giving of adequate security for the satisfactory completion of a proposed development and, if a development is not subsequently completed satisfactorily, apply a security given under section 34 for the satisfactory completion of that development.

My Department's Development Management Guidelines (June 2007) and policy guidance on the Taking in Charge of Residential Developments (February 2008) advise that it is essential that planning permissions for residential developments are subject to conditions under which an acceptable security is provided by way of bond, cash deposit or otherwise so as to secure the satisfactory completion of those developments. The guidance also states that the security given should be adequate to ensure the proper completion of roads, footpaths, water mains, sewers, lighting and open space and the lodgment of the security should be coupled with an agreement that would empower the authority to realise the amount of the security at an appropriate time.

The enforcement of planning conditions, including conditions in relation to bonds, and the application of a bond for the completion of a development are matters for the relevant planning authority.

Water and Sewerage Schemes.

984. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when work will commence on the provision of the Freshford wastewater scheme in County Kilkenny; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33833/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): The Freshford/Johnstown/Goresbridge Sewerage Scheme is included in my Department's Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009 at an estimated cost of €7.9 million. Following my approval of the Preliminary Report for the scheme last November, Kilkenny County Council have been progressing the preparation of contract documents.

Local authorities were asked in July to submit an assessment of needs for water and sewerage services to my Department by 23 October 2009. These assessments will form a key input to the development of the 2010 to 2012 Water Services Investment Programme, which it is anticipated will be published in early 2010. In conducting their assessments, local authorities have been asked to prioritise schemes and contracts for progression over the coming years based on key environmental and economic criteria.

Environmental Policy.

985. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the proposed increase in the charge for plastic bags, when he will increase this charge; will it be for a further 22 cent therefore a total of 44 cents; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33841/09]

986. **Deputy Paul Kehoe** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the proposed increase in the charge for plastic bags, if he has engaged with retailers and suppliers and producers to this price increase; his views on whether the possible negative business consequences for packaging suppliers of a short lead time for the introduction of a 100% increase on the retail price of plastic bags, when suppliers already have considerable stocks of branded bags on site and will face difficulties for their businesses in absorbing the very devaluation of this stock;; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33842/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 985 and 986 together.

The primary purpose of the levy on plastic bags is not to generate revenue but to change consumer behaviour and achieve a significant reduction in the consumption of plastic bags dispensed at retail outlets. The introduction of the levy at the rate of 15 cent per bag in 2002 led to a dramatic reduction in the number of disposable plastic bags provided to consumers, from an estimated 328 bags per person per year prior to the introduction of the levy to 21 bags per person by the end of 2002, with a consequent positive environmental benefit.

However, there followed a gradual increase in plastic bag usage which, by the period January to June 2007, had risen to an estimated 33 bags per person. In order to counteract this trend the levy was increased to 22 cent with effect from July 2007. Plastic bag consumption subsequently dropped to 26 bags per person for the period July 2007 to December 2007 but has climbed back to 27 bags per person for 2008.

Under Section 72(7) and (8) of the Waste Management Act 1996, as inserted by Section 9 of the Waste Management (Amendment) Act 2001, it is only possible to increase the plastic levy in line with changes in the consumer price index. The increase in the levy to 22 cent per bag in July 2007 was in accordance with this legislation and, while it did reduce plastic bag usage somewhat, it was not successful in bringing plastic bag usage back to the level achieved when the levy was first introduced in 2002.

This demonstrates that greater flexibility is required, both in setting the plastic bag levy rate and in amending the level of charge as circumstances require. I will bring forward legislation to provide for this required flexibility and a Regulatory Impact Analysis has been carried out in respect of this proposed legislation. While the provisions of the proposed legislation would allow for an increase to 44 cent, any amendment to the level of charge will have regard to both the level of plastic bag usage and changes in the consumer price index.

Departmental Reports.

987. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33900/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): The information requested in the question is set out in the following table.

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Name of the Report	Cost
	€
Independent Assessment of Proposed Acquisition by the Irish Heritage Trust Limited of Anne's Grove House, Garden and Home Farm, Castletownroche, Mallow, Co Cork.	14,520
Independent Assessment of Proposed Acquisition by the Irish Heritage Trust Limited of 14 Henrietta Street, Dublin 1	14,000 ¹
Consultancy to develop a plan for the development of ENFO's Library and Information Service	13,500
To provide a Communications Strategy for ENFO	32,812
To review some of Ireland potential World Heritage sites and provide a report on the viability of nominating such sites	9,573
Limiting Thermal Bridging & Air Infiltration	19,011
DEHLG review and Spot checks of Capital Projects & Associated Training	130,548
Quarterly construction Industry Indicators	26,620
Construction Industry Review and Outlook report	117,954
Gateway Innovation Fund Proposal Evaluation	73,689
National Litter Pollution Monitoring System	101,203
Assessment of Need for "Living over the Shop" Tax Incentives to Support Urban Regeneration in NSS Gateways	32,186
Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill Conservation Study	69,816
Study on Meeting the Requirements of European Regulation 842 on Certain Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (F-gases).	84,658
Irish Battlefields Project	290,542
Monasterboice Conservation Study	39,160
Geotechnical Consultancy — Rath Lugh	4,734
Preliminary Study on the Establishment of an Electoral Commission in Ireland	8,400
Regulatory Impact Assessment Report (Waste Facilities & Plastic Bags)	72,341
Strategic Review of the Capital Funding Scheme for Voluntary & Cooperative Housing	160,000 ²
Development of implementation plan for Homeless Strategy	4,981
Waterford Youth Service — Research Project	15,000
Screening Regulatory Analysis Report on the draft European Communities Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations 2009	32,613
Preparation report on the nomination of Clonmacnoise as World Heritage Site	50,232
National Archaeological Archive and Archaeological Object Resource Facility — scoping report	54,407 ³
Former Irish Steel Plant Environmental Report (2008)	394,949
Peer Review of White Young Green Irish Steel Plant Environmental Report 2008	27,779
International Review of Waste Management Policy	195,110
Regulatory Impact Analysis of a proposed Section 60 on a Ministerial Direction in relation to Volumetric Contractual Commitments	22,216
Strategic Review of the Capital Funding Schemes for Voluntary and Co-operative Housing.	160,000

¹No payment made to date²80,000 paid in 2008³50% of costs to be met by the National Museum. 9,000 paid to date.

Water and Sewerage Schemes.

988. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the position regarding a scheme (details supplied) in County Mayo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33911/09]

989. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government position regarding the upgrade of a treatment plant (details supplied) in County Mayo; if funding will be allocated for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33912/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 988 and 989 together.

A scheme to extend the Lough Mask Regional Water Supply Scheme from Shrah to Westport and to upgrade the water treatment plant in Tourmakeady is included for funding in my Department's Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009. My Department received proposals in July 2009 from Mayo County Council for progressing the scheme to construction on the basis of the tenders received by the Council. The Department, following discussions with the Council, is now awaiting additional information on these proposals from the Council.

Local authorities were asked in July to submit an assessment of needs for water and sewerage services to my Department by 23 October 2009. These assessments will form a key input to the development of the 2010 to 2012 Water Services Investment Programme, which it is anticipated will be published in early 2010. In conducting their assessments, local authorities have been asked to prioritise schemes and contracts for progression over the coming years based on key environmental and economic criteria.

990. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if funding will be provided to allow sewerage schemes (details supplied) to proceed in 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33925/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Lixnaw is included in my Department's Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009 as part of the NSS Hub Cluster Sewerage Scheme which will serve a number of towns and villages in Co. Kerry. Further information is awaited from Kerry County Council to enable my Department to examine the Preliminary Report for Lixnaw.

I understand that Kerry County Council is undertaking a strategic study with a view to optimising the delivery of wastewater infrastructure in up to 90 towns and villages in the county, including Tarbert. My Department will consider the Preliminary Report for the Tarbert Sewerage Scheme in the light of the study recommendations.

Local authorities were asked in July to submit an assessment of needs for water and sewerage services to my Department by 23 October 2009. These assessments will form a key input to the development of the 2010 to 2012 Water Services Investment Programme, which it is anticipated will be published in early 2010. In conducting their assessments, local authorities have been asked to prioritise schemes and contracts for progression over the coming years based on key environmental and economic criteria.

Departmental Staff.

991. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33951/09]

992. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his

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Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33966/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 991 and 992 together.

The information requested in relation to my Department is set out below:

DOEHLG	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Early Retirement	5	6	3	23	37
Resigned	10	8	3	4	25
Contract Terminated	1	0	0	0	1
Total	16	14	6	27	63

There is no cost to this Department in relation to staff who retire — lump sums are paid by this Department but subsequently recouped from the Department of Finance while all other pension payments are made from the Department of Finance Vote.

Day to day staffing operational matters, including cost neutral early retirements, resignations and contract terminations, are matters for the individual agencies concerned and information would not be readily available in my Department, unless specific sanction was required. One retirement was sanctioned in 2006 by my Department and the Department of Finance under the terms of Department of Finance Circular of 26 May 1998 on Severance and Early Retirement for Chief Executives of Semi State Bodies. The retiring CEO received 3.1 added years under the terms of the circular at a lump sum cost of approximately €11,000 and an annual pension cost of approximately €4,000.

My Department is required to report to the Department of Finance on the numbers availing of the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER) in agencies under the aegis of my Department. Information received in September in relation to this is that 3 applications under the ISER have been approved.

Legislative Programme.

993. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the progress on implementing a noise legislation Bill; if it is proposed that this bill will give neighbours the right to complain about excessive noise; the expected powers the gardaí will have when a noise complaint is made; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33995/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): The Programme for Government contains a commitment to introduce comprehensive legislation on noise pollution within the lifetime of this Government. Earlier this year, following an extensive consultation process, the General Scheme of a Noise Nuisance Bill was prepared in my Department and approved by the Government. The Noise Nuisance Bill is included in Section A of the Government Legislation Programme published on 16 September, 2009.

While there are already a wide range of measures in place to deal with noise from a variety of sources, it is my aim that the new legislation will take a more integrated approach to noise pollution, including through codes of practice for construction, commercial and domestic situations. There will, in addition, be measures to increase awareness of how noise nuisance can be addressed and to strengthen existing local authority powers including through a system

of fixed payment notices in relation to noise nuisance offences. The Bill will also extend to An Garda Síochána some of the more appropriate improved powers of the local authority authorised officers.

Private Rented Accommodation.

994. **Deputy Bobby Aylward** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will review the late fee clause under the Residential Tenancy Act 2004 and provide for an exemption from this requirement to landlords who through no fault of their own are being penalised by the Private Residential Tenancies Board in cases when registration forms were submitted in ample time by landlords but the delay rested with the Board in processing the applications; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34017/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): Under the provisions of sections 134 and 135 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, as amended, a landlord has one month from the tenancy commencement date to apply to the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) to register a tenancy. If the application form submitted is incomplete it will be returned by the PRTB and the late fee will apply unless it is resubmitted within the month. I understand that currently some 30% of tenancy registration applications submitted to the PRTB by landlords are incomplete, placing a heavy additional administrative burden on the PRTB.

The registration fee for a single tenancy is €70; a tenancy registration submitted outside of the one month period is required to pay an additional fee of €70. In no instance where a tenancy registration form has been properly completed and submitted within the one month period is any additional fee charged.

995. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the mechanisms which have been put in place by him or in conjunction with other Departments to establish an independent supervisory or appeal system for tenants of approved housing bodies which present claims of harassment, intimidation or elder abuse by staff and other tenants. [34052/09]

996. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will verify that there is no independent appeal or monitoring systems for complaints of poor service standards, bad or derogatory treatment, arbitrary possession proceedings or other adverse situation from tenants of approved housing bodies, and his proposals to improve this situation. [34053/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): I propose to take Questions Nos. 995 and 996 together.

I refer to the reply to Questions No's 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510 and 512 of 7 July, 2009. The consultancy report on the strategic review of the voluntary and co-operative housing sector, referred to in that reply, has now been completed and was published in September 2009 for consultation progress.

National Parks.

997. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the progress made to date to designate the Liffey Valley area, in County Dublin as a National Park; the contact his Department has had with South Dublin County Council in

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this regard; the outcome of these discussions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34063/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): In September 2008, I requested South Dublin County Council to arrange for an evaluation of lands between Palmerstown and Lucan Bridge, the existing area of special amenity and the N4/old Lucan Road/Old Hill Road, in order to assess the suitability of some or all of these lands for designation as a new area of special amenity, having regard to the provisions of section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

In February 2009, South Dublin County Council submitted a report on the matter. This has been considered in my Department, and it is intended to request the Council to give further consideration to the extent of lands that might be included in such an area. Also in February 2009, my Department requested Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council and Kildare County Council to carry out evaluations of lands in the Liffey valley which fall within their functional areas, in order to assess the suitability of some or all of these lands being designated as part of an extended area of special amenity. Responses have been received from each of these planning authorities and are under consideration.

My Department is finalising its consideration of the relevant information and I will shortly decide whether to give a direction under section 202(2) of the Act regarding the making of a further special amenity area order or orders.

Local Authority Housing.

998. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will respond to a housing policy issue (details supplied) in County Cork. [34066/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): A preliminary proposal was received by my Department in relation to the project in question this week. This proposal is under assessment and further information will be required prior to my Department making a formal determination of the project's suitability for inclusion in the leasing programme. All leasing proposals submitted to my Department are assessed in accordance with the terms set out in circular N3/09 and the accompanying guidance document, which my Department issued in February 2009. The leasing initiative is designed to widen further the sources of supply for social housing and thereby help create a flexible range of delivery mechanisms for local authorities to meet the demand for housing.

The initiative will also maximise the level of social housing need that can be met from available public resources, responding to a much greater level of housing needs than could be delivered by relying solely on construction and acquisition programmes. It will also bring into active use some of the vacant housing stock throughout the country. However it is essential that all State investment in housing support, including use of the new leasing arrangements, complies fully with the "sustainable communities" philosophy at the heart of the Government's housing policy, as outlined in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*. In this regard, authorities must have regard to the concentration of social housing in a particular development or in the general area where property leasing is proposed.

Question No. 999 answered with Question No. 945.

1000. **Deputy Christy O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the procedure applied when a local authority tenant wishes to buy the accommodation they currently rent; is the procedure applicable to all local authorities; the criterion used to make such a decision; if there is a minimum time that a person needs to be a tenant of a local authority before they may seek to buy their home; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34082/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): The procedure for processing individual applications under the existing tenant purchase scheme is a matter for each housing authority, within the terms and conditions of the scheme set down in primary legislation and regulations made thereunder. Section 14 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997 empowers a housing authority to refuse to sell a dwelling to a tenant where the authority considers that the tenant is or has been engaged in anti-social behaviour or that a sale to that tenant would not be in the interest of good estate management. The scheme provides for a discount of 3% of the market value of the house being purchased for each year of reckonable tenancy, up to a maximum of 30%. In addition to this, a further discount of €3,809 is provided. Article 7 of the Housing (Sale of Houses) Regulations 1995 (as substituted by article 2 of the Housing (Sale of Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 1999) specifies the meaning of the expression “reckonable tenancy” for discount purposes, while article 12 of the 1995 regulations provides that a housing authority shall not sell a dwelling to a tenant with reckonable tenancy of less than 1 year.

Social and Affordable Housing.

1001. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the position regarding funding which has been approved for three regeneration projects in the Cranmore area of Sligo; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34084/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): I refer to the reply to Question No. 321 of 22 September 2009. The position is unchanged.

Election Management System.

1002. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the situation regarding the registration for postal voting for the referendum of 2 October 2009 (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34175/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Postal voting is provided for in respect of certain categories of person as specified in electoral law. Electors who are eligible for, but not already included on, the postal voters list may apply for entry on the supplement to this list and they can do this at any time. Under section 15A(4) of the Electoral Act 1992, as inserted by section 7 of the Electoral (Amendment) Act 2001, an application by an elector to have his or her name entered in the supplement to the postal voters list, which is received by the registration authority on or after the third day after the date of the making of the order appointing polling day at a referendum shall not have effect in relation to that referendum.

As the polling day order fixes the polling day, it is not possible to advertise the definitive closing date for the postal voters’ supplement in advance of the order being made. The polling day order for the 2009 Lisbon Treaty Referendum was made on 13 July and, accordingly, the closing date for the supplement to the postal voters list was 15 July. My Department notified

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advertisements to the print media immediately on the making of the polling day order and these were widely published on the 14 and 15 July.

Library Projects.

1003. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will instruct Sligo County Council to reopen the library facilities in Ballymote in view of the fact that it will be closed for the next six months until the new library facilities open. [34217/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): My Department provides funding towards the capital costs of approved new libraries and the refurbishment of existing libraries along with funding for mobile libraries and delivery vans. The 2009-2010 Capital Programme amounting to €8.5 million in 2009 included assistance of €300,000 for 2009 in regard to refurbishment of Ballymote Library.

Day to day operations, including staffing levels, in the public library service are a matter for each local authority in its capacity as a library authority under Section 78 of the Local Government Act, 2001. It is a matter for the local authority in its capacity as the library authority to make arrangements for public library services during redevelopment works.

Departmental Contracts.

1004. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34315/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): My Department's contract for the provision of mobile phones is with Vodafone. The contract is in place from June 2008 to date.

Departmental Staff.

1005. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under its remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34341/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): My Department has not sanctioned or applied for the payment of a top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to any staff member of my Department in the last three years.

In relation to the agencies under the aegis of my Department, within the last three years one retirement was sanctioned in 2006 by my Department and the Department of Finance under the terms of Department of Finance Circular of 26 May 1998 on Severance and Early Retirement for Chief Executives of Semi State Bodies. The retiring CEO received 3.1 added years under the terms of the circular at a lump sum cost of approximately €11,000 and an annual pension cost of approximately €4,000.

1006. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34356/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): One member of staff in my Department was dismissed in 2006 for failing to fulfil the terms of their contract. No other members of staff were dismissed in the past 5 years.

Question No. 1007 taken with Question No. 965.

Proposed Legislation.

1008. **Deputy Bobby Aylward** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when he will publish the proposed planning legislation which will define exceptional circumstances as stated in Directive 85/337 EEC exempting an application for retention planning permission from having an environmental impact; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34429/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): In a judgment in July 2008, the European Court of Justice ruled that the retention permission system as it applies in Irish law with regard to projects that require or may require an environmental impact assessment (EIA) under the EIA Directives does not comply with the Directives and needs to be amended. The response to the judgment, including any provisions for exceptional cases, will be addressed by way of committee stage amendments in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

Special Areas of Conservation.

1009. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government if he will intervene and allow the purchase by the State, of a small portion of raised bog, designated as a special area of conservation, from a person (details supplied) in County Leitrim; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34502/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Having regard to available budgetary resources, priority is being given under the bog purchase scheme this year to those wishing to sell their interest in the 32 raised bog sites which were nominated for designation as Special Areas of Conservation in 1999. For these sites, the derogation given by the Government, which allowed the continuation of turf cutting for personal domestic use, expires in 2009.

The persons in question in this case own land within Corracramph Bog, a Natural Heritage Area designated in 2004, and the 10 year derogation period will not expire until 2014. Land transactions within this area, accordingly, will not qualify for priority attention this year.

Local Authority Housing.

1010. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the average cost to his Department, of standard three bedroom homes delivered in County Kildare by Kildare County Council and by the voluntary sector under the CLSS, in each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34506/09]

1011. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the number of social housing units provided by Kildare County Council and by the voluntary housing sector in County Kildare in each of the past three years; the annual cost of providing these units; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34507/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1010 and 1011 together.

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Data in relation to social housing starts and completions are published in my Department's Quarterly Housing Statistics Bulletins, copies of which are available in the Oireachtas library and on my Department's website, www.environ.ie. The following table sets out my Department's recoupment to the housing authorities in County Kildare in respect of the main supply programme, the programme delivered by the Voluntary and Co-operative sector under the Capital Assistance Scheme and the funding drawn down from the Housing Finance Agency under the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme (CLSS), for the years 2006 to 2008.

Housing Authority	Local Authority Housing Supply			Voluntary & Co-operative Housing Capital Assistance Scheme			Voluntary & Co-operative Housing Capital Loan & Subsidy Scheme		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
Kildare Co. Co.	32.2	40.6	45.0	6.3	1.3	4.2	2.3	0.069	11.4
Naas Town Council	0.45	0.0	2.2						
Athy Town Council	1.80	1.8	3.7						

These programmes include a variety of supply options and expenditure on individual projects may extend beyond a single year, depending on the type, size and complexity of the projects and the duration of the contract period.

The accommodation provided by Kildare County Council and the voluntary sector under the CLSS can include a range of accommodation types. In some instances a single contract can include a range of accommodation types and it is not possible to disaggregate the data to show unit costs for any one type. In the case of accommodation provided by approved housing bodies under the CLSS in County Kildare, my Department's records show that the unit cost was €185,123 in 2006 and €183,979 in 2008. There are no comparable figures available for 2007.

In the case of accommodation provided by housing authorities, the information available in my Department shows that, based on tender prices submitted in 2006 and 2007, the average all-in cost of the accommodation provided was €172,490 in 2006 and €180,919 in 2007. There are no comparable figures available for 2008.

Social and Affordable Housing.

1012. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the position regarding the plans for the future funding or provision of a social or old age housing complex at a location (details supplied) in Dublin 7; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34514/09]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy Michael Finneran): I refer to the reply to Question No. 351 of 3rd February 2009. The position is unchanged.

Waste Management.

1013. **Deputy Ciarán Cuffe** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the measures in place to ensure that waste is correctly labelled when exported; the inspections that take place of waste which is exported; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34526/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): Regulation (EC) No. 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 14 June

2006, sets out the controls applicable to shipments of waste within, into and out of the European Community. Exports of waste are classified as either amber waste, applicable to waste going for disposal, or green waste, for non-hazardous waste going for recovery. Amber listed waste is subject to prior written notification and the consent of both the competent authority of origin and destination. Green listed waste is subject to prior notification and an accompanying information document to track the shipment.

Dublin City Council is the designated national competent authority for the implementation of the Regulation and they are responsible for the control of all exports of waste. The inspection of consignments of waste to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements is an inherent part of the competent authority's functions, with the level of such inspections an operational issue for the authority.

Planning Issues.

1014. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government the plans in place to extend the granting of planning permission period, in view of applicants finding themselves in difficulty in accessing finance from banks to secure mortgage applications; the action he will take to ensure banks help applicants to secure mortgages; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34539/09]

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Deputy John Gormley): The Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill, published in June 2009, provides an amendment to section 42 of the Planning and Development Acts, which currently provides that the duration of a planning permission must be extended, subject to certain conditions, where substantial works have been carried out before the expiration of the original permission. The proposed amendment provides for the extension of permission (for a period of up to 5 years) in circumstances where substantial works have not been carried out, but there are commercial, economic or technical considerations, beyond the control of the applicant, which substantially militated against either the commencement of development or the carrying out of substantial works.

While the Government has been careful to ensure that the process of correction in the housing market is not artificially interfered with, a number of steps have been taken to ensure that in so far as possible mortgage finance is available to households who want to buy or build houses at this time. In this regard, the Government announced the introduction of a new mortgage scheme in the context of Budget 2009. The Home Choice Loan has been introduced through the local government system, backed by loan finance raised by the Housing Finance Agency. Home Choice Loan is now available to first time buyers of new houses or self-builds, subject to a maximum loan of €285,000 or maximum Loan To Value (LTV) of 92% (whichever is the lesser) and income thresholds. The scheme commenced on 1 January 2009.

In addition, the Government's recapitalisation of Allied Irish Bank and Bank of Ireland included a Credit Package under which the banks committed to, amongst other things, providing an additional 30% capacity for lending to first time buyers in 2009. The banks also committed to actively promote mortgage lending at competitive rates with increased transparency on the criteria to be met.

Question No. 1015 answered with Question No. 944.

Telecommunications Services.

1016. **Deputy Michael P. Kitt** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the reason the village of Kiltormer, County Galway, needs a second provider of

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broadband in view of the fact that Eircom broadband is in the area and that there is a 24 m telecommunications mast 2.5 km outside the village. [32931/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): The village of Kiltormer in County Galway is located in Kiltormer Electoral District (ED) and has been designated as being part of the National Broadband Scheme (NBS). In advance of the roll-out of the NBS an extensive mapping exercise was carried out to identify those areas throughout the country where broadband services were not available. Kiltormer ED was included in the NBS as it was not considered served at the time this exercise was carried out.

Under the contractual arrangements entered into with my Department, 3 are obliged to provide broadband in each of the NBS-designated Electoral Districts. The location and erection of masts is a matter for the relevant planning authorities.

Fishing Industry Development.

1017. **Deputy Liz McManus** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the recipients of the salmon hardship scheme; the persons who have been paid to date in 2009, excluding those who are availing of the three-year option; the amounts paid out; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33054/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Conor Lenihan): I set out in my reply to Question No. 1067 of 16 September 2009 details of the total number of applicants that availed of the Salmon Hardship Scheme. I am advised by BIM and the Loughs Agency, who administered the Salmon Hardship Scheme on behalf of the Department, that 42 beneficiaries of the scheme were paid €702,037 during 2009 to date, i.e. other than those availing of payment spread over three years. It is not appropriate to reveal details of individual participants having regard to protections afforded to personal data but aggregated information on the operation of the scheme will be provided when final 2009 figures become available.

Ministerial Travel.

1018. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33077/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): In the time available it has not been possible to collate the information requested by the Deputy. The information will be provided to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Broadcasting Services.

1019. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will support the case of a person (details supplied) in County Clare. [33229/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland was responsible for the licensing of commercial broadcasters up until 30 September 2009. This responsibility rests with the newly established Broadcasting Authority of Ireland with effect from 1 October 2009. The Commission was, and the Authority is, an independent statutory body and I have no function in this matter. With regard to the industrial relations and employment rights issues raised, these are matters for my colleague the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Industrial Development.

1020. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources his plans to attract inward investment into a digital content centre, in view of the fact that the education system here does not offer students subjects that encourage a career in the area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33238/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): The International Content Services Centre (ICSC), one of the proposed actions of the recently published ‘Technology Actions to Support the Smart Economy’ report, is intended to be a global content management facility that streamlines the storage, localisation, delivery and distribution of content, the associated rights management, clearance and collection, to provide a global service for national and international clients. The ICSC will focus on digital creative arts, including film, games and animation. Ireland has a highly educated workforce, a world-renowned legal system for the arbitration of disputes, favourable taxation policies and an internationally recognised and acclaimed brand related to creativity and innovation.

Current provisions of the Finance Act attract multinationals and high potential start-up foreign enterprises through measures such as Tax Relief on Intellectual Property and corporation tax concessions for start-up enterprises. Potential customers for the ICSC include music rights organisations, large traditional media content holders and on-line games providers/vendors. The Centre will also support the ongoing development of the 1,000 or so digital content companies currently located in Ireland. The majority of these companies are small (1-10 persons) and highly creative with high potential for growth.

Postal Services.

1021. **Deputy Brian O’Shea** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if the new postal code will be based on Irish language abbreviations (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33285/09]

1025. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the system which will be used for the introduction of new postcodes; the consultation which will take place with local communities with regard to their introduction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33657/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1021 and 1025 together.

The Government recently approved the implementation of a postcode as recommended by the National Postcode Project Board (NPPB). In arriving at the recommended model the consultants assisting the NPPB, both technical and economic, engaged in a series of stakeholder consultations. Additionally the project has benefited from other consultations all of which have been consistent in revealing widespread support for the introduction of postcodes. There are no plans to engage in further consultations.

The NPPB was established to recommend the most appropriate postcode system for Ireland and to look at the costs and benefits and implementation of postcodes and recommended an alpha-numeric post code model taking the form of ABC 123. The precise postcode nomenclature and the allocation of individual postcodes will not be finalised until the body that will be charged with implementing postcodes is appointed.

There is nothing in the proposal to prevent a person from using a form of address in either of the official languages of the State. Additionally, in the case of towns located in the Gaeltacht there is nothing in the recommendation that would prevent the postcode utilising letters from the official Irish language version of the place name.

Energy Conservation.

1022. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the reason an entire house must be refurbished in order to qualify for the Sustainable Energy Ireland grant and that the grant is not sufficient in comparison to the cost involved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33498/09]

1036. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the position regarding the green loan home energy scheme on a county basis; the amount of the €100 million budget which has been spent; the number of households that have availed of the scheme by category; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34544/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1022 and 1036 together.

The Government's Home Energy Saving Scheme, which is administered by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), provides grant assistance to homeowners for retrofit energy efficiency measures such as attic and wall insulation, very high- efficiency boilers, heating controls and Building Energy Rating (BER) assessments.

While a householder is free to choose which measures to install in his or her home, for a first application the householder must undertake works attracting grant payments of at least €500, not including the BER grant. A householder installing only an efficient boiler with heating controls is eligible for a grant of €700, and so will exceed the threshold and be eligible for the Scheme. Likewise, a householder installing just internal or external wall insulation will qualify. For the lower cost measures such as roof or cavity wall insulation, the householder can qualify by combining just two measures, for example roof insulation and heating controls together attract a grant of €750.

To be eligible for the grant for wall insulation, the householder must insulate all external walls. Likewise, roof insulation must cover the full roof space. Partial solutions are not supported under the Scheme, as SEI's position is that they are not an optimal solution and they offer poor value for money to the householder and the Exchequer. The cost of installing the various qualifying measures is market driven. In the current competitive environment, householders can get best value for money by shopping around and comparing costs between contractors. The grants available under the Scheme represent a very generous contribution of around 30% of installation costs for the average home.

Cross-Border Projects.

1023. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will readdress the issues outlined in Parliamentary Question Nos. 1062 and 1063 of 16 September 2009. with regard to wild fisheries; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33554/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Conor Lenihan): In accordance with the Foyle Fisheries Act 1952 and the Foyle Fisheries (Northern Ireland) Act 1952, as amended by the Foyle and Carlingford Fisheries Act 2007 Foyle and Carlingford Fisheries (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, the Loughs Agency is empowered to regulate certain species of wild fish in the areas under its jurisdiction. These species include freshwater fish of any kind, salmon, sea bass, tope, eels, mussels and oysters. The process of securing foreshore licences as referred in Parliamentary Questions 1062 and 1063 of 16 September 2009 does not affect fishing as this does not involve usage of the foreshore as in the case of aquaculture.

Alternative Energy Projects.

1024. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the position with regard to the renewable energy feed in tariff scheme in place to promote offshore wind energy projects in order to provide some certainty to existing offshore wind farm developers and potential new entrants into the market; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33618/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): In 2008 I announced that new tariff bands would be introduced to the existing REFIT feed in tariff scheme as follows:

- *AD and high efficiency CHP:* A price of €120 per megawatt hour of energy produced.
- *Offshore wind:* A price of €140 per megawatt hour of energy produced.
- *(Wave and tidal)* A price of €220 per megawatt hour of energy produced.

My Department has been subsequently engaged with the industry representative associations around the terms and conditions of these rates, particularly around the area of offshore planning and permitting conditions.

On 9th September 2009 I announced full terms and conditions for these new categories which are subject to State Aid clearance from the EU. My Department is currently in discussion with the European Commission with a view to successfully progressing the State Aid clearance over the coming months. In order to be eligible for REFIT, developers will require planning permission, foreshore permits, signed grid connection offers and an offer of a power purchase agreement from a registered supply company.

The next grouping of renewable electricity grid connection offers, which includes around 800 MW of offshore wind projects, referred to as the Gate 3 process, is currently under way and the new tariffs will facilitate some of these developers involved in this process to progress their projects through the financial planning stages. There are no offshore wind projects currently eligible to apply for the REFIT scheme until the connection offer process has been completed.

Question No. 1025 answered with Question No. 1021.

Departmental Reports.

1026. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of reports by experts and consultants commissioned by his Department during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33895/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): My Department commissioned 10 reports in 2008 at a cost of €884,618.65. Details of the reports are shown in the following table.

Report Compiled	Cost of Report inclusive of VAT
	€
Study of Oil and Gas Industry Support Services	27,188.00
Review of Corrib EIS	47,204.00
Strategic Environmental Assessment for Oil and Gas Activity in Ireland's Offshore Atlantic Waters: Rockall Basin	267,953.00
Technical Assistance on Corrib Gas Safety Matters — Review of Documents	22,870.00
Comparative study of GSI/GSNI	8,602.79

[Deputy Eamon Ryan.]

Report Compiled	Cost of Report inclusive of VAT
	€
Cost/benefit study of INFOMAR project	66,086.00
Make IT Secure evaluation report	14,520.00
Study on the Relative merits of Overhead Electricity Transmission Lines Versus Underground Cables.	148,437.96
Review of the Security of Ireland's Access to Commercial Oil Supplies	271,756.90
2008 Media Literacy Directory	10,000.00

Departmental Staff.

1027. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33946/09]

1028. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33961/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1027 and 1028 together.

The agencies under the remit of my Department are responsible for day-to-day staffing matters within their own organisations including retirements. Decisions in respect of entitlements on retirement are subject to the specific statutory entitlements applicable under the superannuation schemes of their organisations.

Since the formation of my Department in June 2007 the following is the information in respect of the Department as requested, in tabular form.

Reason	2007	Cost	2008	Cost	2009	Cost
Early Retirement	*2	€165,329.84 Lump Sum Payments Only	Nil	Nil	**4	€137,721.79 Lump Sum Payments Only
Contract Terminated	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	***3	€13,005.60 Statutory Redundancy Payments
Resignation	3	Nil	5	Nil	1	Nil

*2 officers retired from the Department in June and December, 2007. One of whom was on the grounds of ill-health (as approved by the Chief Medical Officer) and the other officer availed of the Cost Neutral Actuarially Reduced Scheme.

**3 of these officers retired on grounds of ill-health (as approved by the Chief Medical Officer), the remaining officer availed of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (i.e. immediate payment of 10% of actual Lump Sum entitlement), the remaining 90% will fall due for payment upon the respective officer attaining age 60.

***As a result of the departure of Minister of State, Mr. Sean Power, T.D., the contracts of these 3 officers, who were employed in the Minister's Private Office, were terminated. The Lump Sum payment total, as indicated, is in respect of their statutory entitlements in accordance with the Redundancy Payments Act.

Telecommunications Services.

1029. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the progress that has been made in deciding whether the European economic recovery package can be used to address problems of access to broadband in unserved rural areas; and if there is a time frame within which such a decision will be made. [34050/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): The widespread acceptance of the benefits of broadband has motivated the EU Commission to set aside a portion of European Economic Recovery Package (EERP) funding for rural broadband initiatives. While the National Broadband Scheme (NBS), which will be implemented by the end of 2010, will ensure broadband is available to almost all parts of the country, a small number of premises in areas not covered by the NBS will still not be capable of receiving broadband services. This is primarily due to technical difficulties and other reasons (distance from nearest DSL enabled telephone exchange, no line of sight etc).

My Department is currently examining options around the design of a scheme under the EERP to make service available to such premises in rural areas. It is hoped to commence this Scheme in 2010 and conclude it by 2011. A critical first step is to apply for and secure State Aid clearance from the European Commission. This dialogue has already begun.

Mobile Telephony.

1030. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34310/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): In 2008, following a competitive tendering process, my Department, entered into a fixed price contract with Vodafone for mobile phone service. The mobile phone assigned to me is included in the Vodafone contract as it covers all departmental mobile phone requirements. As the Deputy will appreciate value for money is a high priority issue and in that regard the contract referred to has resulted in significant savings across all Departmental users over previous years.

Departmental Staff.

1031. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34336/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): My Department was established in June 2007 and has not sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on the retirement of any staff member in this Department. The agencies under the remit of my Department are responsible for day-to-day staffing matters within their own organisations including retirements. Decisions in respect of entitlements on retirement are subject to the specific statutory entitlements applicable under the superannuation schemes of their organisations.

1032. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34351/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): Since the formation of my Department in June 2007 the appointment of one civil servant was terminated. This termination occurred during the probationary period of the officer involved.

Alternative Energy Projects.

1033. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources his views on a proposal by a person (details supplied) in County Cork in respect of energy generation; and the position regarding his policy on the matter. [34504/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): I have no particular views on the proposal mentioned by the Deputy. The development of renewable energy is however, a priority for myself and the Government. In 2008, renewable electricity was at 12.2% of all electricity generated, up from 5% in 2004. Ireland is on target to meet its target of 15% by 2010.

The “All Island Grid Study” published early last year, examines the ability of the electricity systems on an All-Island basis to absorb power from renewable energy powered projects. Its finding shows that a target of 42% is feasible without any major increase in pumped storage. The Study is not prescriptive on the alternative technologies, including pumped storage, which a liberalised electricity market may bring forward to balance customer demand and supply as the renewable energy powered capacity increases. I understand that several private developers are understood to be currently examining proposals which may lead to additional pumped storage projects being developed. In the context of the continued development of renewable energy, and wind in particular, on the Irish electricity system, Sustainable Energy Ireland, EirGrid and ESB, together with the energy sector, will continue to keep developments and proposals in relation to pumped storage hydro facilities under close review.

Inland Fisheries.

1034. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the cost of the ongoing State case regarding Gweebarra, County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34530/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Conor Lenihan): The Department is not involved in any case relating to the River Gweebarra. I have been advised however, by the Northern Regional Fisheries Board (NRFB) that the Board is currently involved in a number of legal actions concerning the Gweebarra fishery. While Interlocutory (Temporary) Orders have been granted by the courts against a number of individuals concerning obstructing lawful fishing on the River Gweebarra, the Court recommended that the parties consider mediation. The NRFB has indicated it welcomes this initiative and the matter is currently being discussed by the legal representatives of both parties. As the matter is sub judice it would not be appropriate to comment further.

Electricity Generation.

1035. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources the regulatory processes for the construction of 250 kW generators; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34543/09]

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (Deputy Eamon Ryan): The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) is statutorily responsible for the licensing and authorisation of power generation plants under the Electricity Regulation Act 1999. I have no direct

function in the matter. I am aware that different regulatory regimes may apply depending upon the size of the generator and the technology used. I have asked the CER to respond directly to the Deputy outlining the situation with regard to 250 kw generators of any type.

Question No. 1036 answered with Question No. 1022.

Food Industry.

1037. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the initiatives he has taken to promote indigenous agrifood products domestically; the initiatives he has taken to promote indigenous agrifood products abroad; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33324/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): As Ireland's largest indigenous, manufacturing sector the agrifood sector is crucial to sustaining and reinvigorating the economy. Strategies for the development of a consumer focused, competitive and sustainable agrifood sector at home and abroad are set out in the Agri-vision 2015 report and the Cawley Report. These strategies identify the delivery of safe, high quality, nutritious food, produced in a sustainable manner in high value markets as the optimum road for the future of the Irish food industry in the light of the changes which have already taken place or are anticipated over the next number of years and span the entire food chain from primary production through processing to market access which is key to developing export potential.

Bord Bia, under the aegis of my Department, is the state agency responsible for market development of food, seafood, drink and horticulture at home and abroad and closely monitors food exports. It has published a Strategy to boost food exports for the period 2009-2011. The strategy's six key priorities include enhancing the industry's position on its home market and export expansion with a particular emphasis on Eurozone markets.

Bord Bia has a comprehensive set of marketing and promotional programmes in place, which have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders in the food industry. The schedule of marketing activities for 2009 have regard to the impact of the sterling differential on competitiveness and include:

Food Ingredients/Nutraceuticals (Europe), which will provide industry with detailed market requirements particularly for dairy ingredients.

Participation in Trade Fairs in Paris, Madrid, Portugal and Amsterdam, mentoring on supplying Continental supermarket groups and provision of market insights.

Private Label seminar (Scandinavia, Germany & Holland) with company specific mentoring and Private Label Manufacturers Association trade fair in Amsterdam.

On the home market, Bord Bia's Quality Assurance schemes for various products are well known. This year Bord Bia has also introduced a 'Best in Season' promotional campaign for locally grown produce in season promotes seasonal local produce. This highlights to consumers which fruit and vegetables are available in Ireland and when they are in season. The key messages include freshness, taste and health benefits. Press and digital media and a best in season website (www.bestinseason.ie) have focused on strawberries in June, new season potatoes in July and seasonally available vegetables and potatoes in a "back to school" theme for September on emphasising the important role play in a healthy balanced diet for children, particularly as the winter months approach.

The Good Practice Standard and Flag for Farmers' Markets which was launched at the Bloom 2009 Festival encourages farmers markets to provide market access to locally produced in-season produce.

Food Labelling.

1038. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the criteria in place in order that an agrifood company can label and market its products as Irish; the percentage of Irish raw materials to be used so that agrifood companies can market and label their products as Irish; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33325/09]

1039. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the procedures he has in place in order that consumers are not misled by products claiming to be Irish; the procedures in place to ensure that raw agrifood materials being imported are not being labelled or marketed as Irish; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33326/09]

1040. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the cost to indigenous agrifood enterprises of loopholes in labelling that allow raw materials produced outside of Ireland and subsequently processed here to label and market themselves as Irish; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33327/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1038 to 1040, inclusive, together.

The Minister for Health & Children has overall responsibility for the general food labelling legislation. Responsibility for the enforcement of this legislation rests with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (F.S.A.I.).

Under the general labelling Directive (2000/13/EC), the place of origin of the foodstuff must be given only if its absence might mislead the consumer to a material degree. The European Commission is currently undertaking a major review of all food labelling legislation. In this context the Commission has prepared draft revised labelling regulations and these are being discussed at Council Working Party level in Brussels. These draft regulations will be submitted to the EU Council of Health ministers during 2009.

Notwithstanding the outcome of the current review on origin labelling, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Children, my Department had taken steps to try to introduce origin labelling for meats other than beef, which is already subject to specific labelling legislation since September 2000.

My Department, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Children, drafted regulations that would require the country of origin to be indicated on pigmeat, poultry and sheepmeat. This was notified to the EU Commission in December 2007 as required by legislation. The Commission was not prepared to adopt the draft regulations in their present format on the grounds that the proposed legislation is not in compliance with EU food labelling regulations. The Commission's main contention is that only harmonised rules with EU-wide applicability may be applied to food labelling other than in exceptional circumstances. In March, the EU Commission delivered a negative opinion on the regulations but afforded Ireland an opportunity to provide further information in support of them. In the meantime, the Department provided additional details including evidence of consumers' desire for country of origin labelling. However the EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health formally adopted the negative opinion in December 2008.

There is no statutory requirement in place to define the percentage of Irish raw materials to be used for agri food in order to allow companies to market and label their products as Irish. There is also the issue where a primary product can enter Ireland and be processed in some way thereby allowing it to be branded, as an Irish product, this is known as "substantial transformation". This terminology originates in WTO, CODEX and EU Legislation governing the

EU Custom Code and therefore can only be amended at EU level. I have been concerned that this arrangement could, in certain circumstances, be used to mislead the consumers as to the origin of the raw materials used in certain products. This was one of the principal points made to the European Commission in the context of our request for their approval of our proposed national arrangements.

The issue of more informative and clear labelling will continue to be pursued by the Department of Health and Children at EU level in the context of the current review. We are pressing for the inclusion of a requirement to indicate the origin of primary ingredients in finished products.

In the meantime products carrying the Bord Bia quality assurance label provide consumers with assurance on product origin. There is also an industry lead campaign that allows products carry “The Love Irish Food” logo providing 80% of the product’s manufacturing process took place in this state and if ingredients were sourced locally where possible.

Food Industry.

1041. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the numbers in employment in the food processing sector in 2009; the numbers in employment in the food processing sector in each of the past ten years; the numbers in employment in overall industry in 2009; the numbers in employment in overall industry in each of the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33419/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): CSO data (Quarterly National Household Survey) for Quarter 2, 2009 shows there were approximately 47,500 people employed in the food and beverages sector out of a total of over 258,000 employed in overall industry (defined as NACE sectors B to E inclusive). The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food publishes data on employment in the agrifood sector based on two sources, primarily the CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) and also the CSO Census of Industrial Production (CIP). This data is published in the Compendium of Agriculture Statistics on an annual basis. The Compendium is available under the Publications section of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food’s website at www.agriculture.gov.ie

Methodological differences between the QNHS and CIP mean that these datasets will not be identical. The tables below gives detailed breakdowns of published data for both these datasets in relation to the most recent 10-year periods available under the given survey/census. Both sets of data indicate that food and beverage production accounts for approaching one-fifth of employment in the manufacturing industry sector.

Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) Data

Employment Level (000's)					
Sector/Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
All Industry	311.0	313.2	321.0	307.1	306.4
Manufacturing Industry	299.2	301.9	309.0	294.9	293.1
Food and Beverages Sector	52.4	53.9	53.8	51.8	52.7
Sector/Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All Industry	299.9	289.6	291.5	297.5	287.0
Manufacturing Industry	286.4	276.7	280.2	284.2	272.9
Food and Beverages Sector	54.1	53.5	58.1	52.6	51.5

Source: CSO Special Request based on annual Q2 data.

[Deputy Brendan Smith.]

Census of Industrial Production (CIP) Data

Persons Engaged in Industry (000's)					
Sector/Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
All Industries	257.9	260.4	266.1	272.6	268.2
Manufacturing Industries	240.5	242.8	249.0	255.0	250.2
Food Products, Beverages & Tobacco Products	46.3	46.3	47.5	48.1	50.4
Sector/Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
All Industries	258.4	247.6	239.5	235.7	237.9
Manufacturing Industries	240.3	230.0	221.3	218.2	219.8
Food Products, Beverages & Tobacco Products	50.1	49.7	45.7	44.1	42.0*

*Includes Manufacture of Food Products and Beverages only.

Source: CSO Census of Industrial Production (Local Units).

Grant Payments.

1042. **Deputy John Cregan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the reason a forestry payment cannot be issued to a person (details supplied) in County Limerick on foot of their application; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32930/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): I understand that there are no outstanding forestry payments due to the person in question.

Dairy Sector.

1043. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the average age of a dairy farmer here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32937/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): My Department does not compile data that would allow the average age of a dairy farmer to be calculated, and I note that the CSO, similarly, does not derive this information from its census returns.

Grant Payments.

1044. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when an application will be processed for a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32967/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An official of my Department has been in direct contact with the person named, following which a full review of the case is being undertaken. The person named will be advised of the outcome of this review, in writing, immediately it is concluded.

Aquaculture Development.

1045. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food further to Parliamentary Question No. 42 of 30 June 2009, the progress made regarding the processing of aquaculture licences; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32974/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): In the case of aquaculture sites located outside the Natura 2000 area 85 applications are currently being examined by my Department's Engineering Division as a matter of priority.

In the case of aquaculture sites located within the Natura 2000 area my Department, in conjunction with the Marine Institute, is gathering the necessary baseline data appropriate to the conservation objectives of these areas.

Every effort is being made by my Department to expedite the determination of all outstanding cases having regard to the complexities of each case and the need to comply fully with all relevant national and EU legislation.

Farm Retirement Scheme.

1046. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the position regarding persons who availed of the farm retirement scheme, implying the surrendering of their herd number; if these herd numbers will be reactivated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32992/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): A person who is admitted to the Scheme of Early Retirement from Farming has undertaken to cease farming definitively and cannot be given a herd number at any time after that.

Grant Payments.

1047. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a person (details supplied) in County Mayo will receive his forestry premium payment. [33020/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An application for payment of a forestry road grant is currently being processed by my Department. I have asked that the matter be finalised as quickly as possible.

Ministerial Travel.

1048. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the annual cost to his Department of ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33075/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The information requested is being assembled and a detailed written response will issue directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Grant Payments.

1049. **Deputy Edward O'Keeffe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33281/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Payment under the Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme of one animal was issued on 14th November 2008. One other animal will not qualify for this Scheme as its birth was registered outside the statutory requirement of 27 days from the date of birth.

Information on meal feeding and weaning is required in respect of the remaining nine animals. They will be considered for payment when this information is submitted. An officer from my Department has been in contact with the person named.

1050. **Deputy Paul Connaughton** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the reason a person (details supplied) in County Galway has not been awarded the full cow suckler welfare scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33342/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Payment under the Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme has issued to the person named in respect of one animal. Applications for payment in respect of a further thirty-two animals have been validated for payment.

However, weaning information is required in respect of the remaining five animals. When this information is submitted and found to be in order, payment will then issue in respect of all eligible animals. An officer from my Department has been in contact with the person named.

1051. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the position regarding the outstanding farm waste management grants; the number of persons awaiting such grants in Counties Longford and Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33350/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): To date in 2009, 264 applicants have received payment under the Farm Waste Management Scheme in Co. Longford whilst the equivalent figure for Co. Westmeath is 287. Five applicants remain to be approved for payment in Co. Longford and four in Co. Westmeath. These files cannot be further processed until the outstanding issues are resolved.

1052. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if a REP scheme four application in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork has been approved; when he will receive his first payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33474/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): REPS 4 is a measure under the current Rural Development Programme 2007–13 and is subject to EU Regulations which require detailed administrative checks on all applications, including plan checks, to be completed before the first 2009 payments issue.

Processing of applications, including the application from the person named, has commenced to facilitate the release of payments at the earliest possible date.

Farm Retirement Scheme.

1053. **Deputy Michael Ahern** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the reason for the delay in processing payment of retirement pension in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33596/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The person named has been approved for payment. The first payment will issue on 30 October 2009.

Grant Payments.

1054. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a person (details provided) in County Cork will be awarded their installation aid grant.; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33652/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The person concerned is an applicant under the Young Farmers' Installation Scheme. Because of Budgetary pressures, entry to this scheme was suspended on 14th October 2008.

1055. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a person (details supplied) in County Cork will be awarded his disadvantaged area payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33654/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An application under the 2009 Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 12 May 2009. Payments under the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme commenced on 22 September, with payments issuing in respect of those cases cleared for payment at that stage. Payments continue to issue as outstanding issues are resolved. The application of the person named was fully processed and the applicant has been paid his Disadvantaged Areas Scheme payment.

Bovine Diseases.

1056. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make arrangements to have work undertaken in an area (details provided) in County Cork to eradicate a problem. [33663/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): A badger survey and capture programme was undertaken on the lands of this herdowner in December 2008 following the disclosure of seven TB reactors in the herd and nine badgers were removed. In line with my Department’s policy, these lands were again surveyed for badgers in March 2009 and this resulted in the capture of a further nine badgers. In June 2009, this herd was de-restricted following two clear TB tests. The position is that the local District Veterinary Office (DVO) intends to survey these lands again for badger activity in the coming months, having regard to the incidence of the disease in other areas and also the prioritisation of TB breakdowns in these areas.

Organic Farming.

1057. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick. [33667/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): REPS 3 was a measure introduced under the Rural Development Programme for Ireland 2000-2006. Under Supplementary Measure 6 of REPS 3, it was possible for a farmer to receive an organic payment in addition to his basic REPS payment. A new stand alone Organic Farming Scheme was introduced under the Organic Farming Measure of the Rural Development Programme for Ireland 2007-2013. Under this programme, the EU ruled that in order for a farmer to avail of the Organic Farming Scheme if they were in either REPS 2 or REPS 3, they had to transform to REPS 4. The EU decided that a situation was not allowed whereby a farmer could be in REPS 3 under one rural development programme and in the Organic Farming Scheme under another. It is therefore not possible for the person named to join the Organic Farming Scheme while still holding REPS 3 commitments. The person named ceases his commitments in REPS 3 on 30th November 2010 and would be allowed join the Organic Farming Scheme at that stage if the Scheme is still in operation.

The Organic Farming Scheme is currently suspended. My colleague, Mr. Trevor Sargent TD, Minister for Food and Horticulture, Fisheries and Food recently announced the outcome of the review of the Scheme, under which support is paid to farmers in the sector. It is the Department’s intention, subject to the outcome of the estimates process, to re-open the Organic Farming Scheme from 1 January, 2010 with revised scheme conditions. The amount of funding

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available for the Organic Farming Scheme will be determined later in the year when the Government are preparing the estimates for 2010.

Grant Payments.

1058. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if a person (details supplied) in County Sligo will receive their disadvantaged area based payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33671/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An application under the 2009 Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 15 May 2009. Payments under the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme commenced on 22 September, with payments issuing in respect of those cases cleared for payment at that stage. Payments continue to issue as outstanding issues are resolved. The application of the person named was fully processed and the applicant has been paid his Disadvantaged Areas Scheme payment.

1059. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a person (details supplied) in County Cork will receive payment in respect of his installation aid application; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33690/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The person concerned is an applicant under the Installation Aid Scheme. Because of Budgetary pressures, entry to this scheme was suspended on 14th October 2008.

Aquaculture Development.

1060. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will permit an association (details supplied) in County Louth who have proof of ownership of a vessel, to participate in cockle fishing; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33720/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The Dundalk Cockle fishery was reopened on 30 September 2009. As the fishery operates in a conservation area designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives, access to the fishery is strictly limited as required under the published Fisheries Natura Plan. The access rules were put in place taking into account the scientific advice on the outtake of the fishery. Access to the fishery was restricted to those applicants with licensed and registered vessels that could show track record of having targeted cockles in Dundalk Bay in any of the years from 2004-2007, inclusive. In addition, persons could apply for a permit to hand gather cockles. The application forms for the fishery were publicly advertised on 22 September 2009. Vessel owners who applied and met these conditions were granted Permits to fish and all hand gatherers who applied were granted Permits. The application period is now closed.

Grant Payments.

1061. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the number of applicants due to be issued with their 75% REP scheme four payment later in 2009; the total value of payments to be made; the date on which payments will issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33729/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): There are approximately 29,000 REPS 4 participants, including 16,380 new applications received in 2009, eligible for payment in 2009. In accordance with the requirements of EU regulations, a comprehensive administrative check must be carried out on new applications received in 2009 before the first instalment of 75% of the 2009 payment can be released to these and to those already in the scheme. The administrative checking process is currently under way with a view to commencing payments as soon as possible. If all new applicants prove eligible for payment, the 75% payment would amount to approximately €105 million.

1062. **Deputy Seymour Crawford** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a person (details supplied) in County Monaghan will be awarded his disadvantaged payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33761/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An application under the 2009 Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 30 April 2009. Payments under the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme commenced on 22 September, with payments issuing in respect of those cases cleared for payment at that stage. Payments continue to issue as outstanding issues are resolved. The application of the person named was fully processed and the applicant has been paid his Disadvantaged Areas Scheme payment.

1063. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the financial and grant assistance paid from EU and national sources in respect of a factory (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33815/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): No grant assistance has been paid to the Company in question by my Department in recent years.

An amount of €81,870 was paid in 2005 to a sister plant in respect of purchase, installation, calibration and maintenance of carcass classification equipment, which is still operational at the plant.

Rural Environment Protection Scheme.

1064. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will increase the option for farmers under the REP scheme three who are currently on a 170 kg limit to 250 kg limit similar to REP scheme four due to the fact that many of these farmers financial plans were based on the continuation of the REP scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33816/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Farmers who obtain a derogation from the Nitrates Regulations, allowing them to operate at a level up to 250 kg organic nitrogen per hectare, are eligible to join REPS 4. This provision was approved by the European Commission as part of the current Rural Development Programme. However the 170 kg limit was a condition of the Commission's approval for REPS 3 under the previous Rural Development Plan and forms part of the basis for the level of payment under that scheme. It is therefore binding on all participants.

Grant Payments.

1065. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when payment will be awarded to a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33840/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An application under the 2009 Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 11 May 2009.

The Terms and Conditions governing the Scheme require, inter alia, that applicants maintain a minimum stocking density on their holding of 0.15 livestock units per forage hectare declared, for at least three consecutive months, during the calendar year of application. However, where the holding of an applicant is identified as not meeting this minimum requirement, the person in question is invited to submit evidence of satisfactory stocking i.e. Flock Register, Horse Passports or details of a REPS or Commonage Framework Plan, which provides for a lower stocking level.

The person named was written to on 21 September 2009 and invited to submit appropriate evidence of the numbers of livestock maintained on his farm, as Department records currently do not show the person named as having yet achieved the minimum stocking density. On receipt of a satisfactory response from the person named, the application will be further processed with a view to payment at an early date.

1066. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a person (details supplied) in County Clare will be awarded their payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33873/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An application under the 2009 Single Payment Scheme/Disadvantaged Areas Scheme was received from the person named on 5 May 2009. Payments under the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme commenced on 22 September, with payments issuing in respect of those cases cleared for payment at that stage. Payments continue to issue as outstanding issues are resolved. The application of the person named was fully processed and the applicant has been paid his Disadvantaged Areas Scheme payment.

Departmental Reports.

1067. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the number of experts' and consultants' reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33893/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Details of experts' and consultants' reports commissioned by my Department during 2008 are as follows.

Subject Matter	Cost
	€
Work on 2008-2011 IT Strategy.	950
Quarterly IT Security Review as required for EU accreditation purpose.	15,730
Ex Post Evaluation of the Rural Development Plan 2000-2006 (EU Regulatory Requirement).	74,084
Review of work carried out at my Department's high security Veterinary Laboratories, Backweston.	22,992
BSE Risk Analysis.	4,595
Factors Affecting Afforestation in Ireland in Recent Years.	22,875

Harbours and Piers.

1068. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food further to

Parliamentary Question No. 1091 of 16 September 2009 when a foreshore licence will issue in respect of a project (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33922/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): An application for a foreshore lease to facilitate construction of a pier at Doonbeg, Co Clare was received on 9th October 2007. The application was circulated to my departments consultees in the normal way.

Issues have been raised by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government regarding potential impacts of the proposed development on underwater archaeology. Observations submitted by the applicant have been responded to by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and these responses are currently with the local authority for consideration.

Rural Environment Protection Scheme.

1069. **Deputy Dinny McGinley** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a REP scheme four payment will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Donegal. [33935/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): REPS 4 is a measure under the current Rural Development Programme 2007–13 and is subject to EU Regulations which require detailed administrative checks on all applications, including plan checks, to be completed before the first 2009 payments issue.

Processing of applications, including the application from the person named, has commenced to facilitate the release of payments at the earliest possible date.

Animal By-Products.

1070. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has assessed the impact which exclusive control of the rendering material from cattle processing plants can potentially have on the price of cattle; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33937/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Eight plants have been approved in this country to render animal by-products (ABP) in accordance with the terms of Regulation (EC) 1774 of 2002. All of these plants operate under the supervision of my Department. Four of the plants are approved as Category 1 plants and can deal with all types of ABP, including specified risk material. The other four are Category 3 plants dealing with lower risk material. Meat plants also have the option, subject to authorization in accordance with regulatory requirements, of sending material for disposal outside this jurisdiction. During 2008 the eight rendering plants in this country took in 509,383 tonnes of raw ABP from meat plants and this was converted to 142,365 tonnes of meat and bonemeal (MBM) and 72,544 tonnes of tallow. It is my policy to encourage alternative disposal options for ABP, including MBM and tallow, with a view to maximizing added value.

The consequence of the ban on the use of MBM in animal feed, due to its association with the spread of BSE, was that MBM for some years had to be exported for incineration at significant cost. In recent years however increasing amounts of MBM have been put to beneficial use. For instance between 2006 and 2008 the proportion of MBM exported for incineration declined from 61% to 45%. During the same period export for technical use increased from 21% to 39%. MBM is also now being used as a co-fuel in the cement industry and Category 3 MBM is increasingly being used as an ingredient in fertiliser and in petfood. I am also aware of a number of proposals to use MBM as a fuel to generate electricity.

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Tallow has a number of uses. Category 3 tallow can be used in animal feed and is also used by the pharmaceutical industry. Both Category 1 and Category 3 tallow can be used as boiler fuel and it is a valuable substitute for imported heavy-duty oil. The price charged for the disposal of material arising from the cattle processing industry is a matter for the market to decide but it is my belief that the beneficial uses of MBM and tallow which I have outlined above will help to keep down the cost of rendering for the cattle processing industry.

Rural Environment Protection Scheme.

1071. **Deputy Pádraic McCormack** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food his plans to restore the REP scheme to its original form in view of the situation with many farmers in disadvantaged areas; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33942/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): REPS 4 was closed to new applicants in July against the background of the situation in the public finances, the resources available to the Department and the increase, over the past year, from just under 47,000 to some 63,000 in the number of REPS participants. A record 17,000 applications were received up to the closing date of 15 May for 2009, and further applications which were received up to the time of closure will be processed as applications for 2010. Payments due to REPS farmers for 2009 will be the highest ever and all participants already in REPS will continue to receive annual payments until their current contracts run their course.

I plan to introduce a new agri-environment scheme in 2010 which will reduce compliance costs to participants and which will provide a menu of targeted actions from which farmers may choose. Funding for the new scheme will include the additional modulation funds which I ensured will be retained for the benefit of Irish farmers in the negotiations on the CAP “Health Check”. It will also include additional matching Exchequer funding. The details of the scheme are in the process of being finalised and will require the approval of the European Commission, which has already received an outline of our proposals.

Departmental Staff.

1072. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33944/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): In the case of staff in my Department who availed of early retirement, there was no cost to my Department as the cost of Civil Service pensions and lump sums is borne by the Department of Finance. No costs arose in relation to termination of contracts or resignations in respect of staff employed by my Department. The corresponding information requested by the Deputy in relation to each agency under the aegis of my Department is a matter for the agencies themselves as part of their day to day activities.

1073. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33959/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The information requested by the Deputy in respect of staff in my Department is set out in tabular form:

Year	Early Retirement	Contracts Terminated	Resigned
2006	12	2	17
2007	10	Nil	35
2008	13	Nil	18
2009 to date	41	1	9

The corresponding information requested by the Deputy in relation to each agency under the aegis of my Department is a matter for the agencies themselves as part of their day to day activities.

Grant Payments.

1074. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the position regarding the payment of a farm grant to a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [33997/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The person concerned is an applicant under the Farm Improvement Scheme. Applications under this Scheme are being processed by my Department up to the level of funding provided for the Scheme in the 2006 Partnership Agreement, *Towards 2016*.

1075. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the amount was paid out in 2006, 2007 and 2008 in single farm payments; and the proportion of this money was paid to farmers in County Mayo. [34054/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Details of payments requested are as follows. The payments to Mayo applicants represent 4.82% in 2006, 4.83% in 2007 and 4.82% in 2008.

2006 SPS Payments

County	Number	€
Carlow	1,676	25,043,180.69
Cavan	4,884	36,330,845.51
Clare	6,142	48,947,118.66
Cork	13,197	172,718,714.26
Donegal	7,946	46,984,377.25
Dublin	661	9,472,619.91
Galway	12,238	81,817,027.56
Kerry	7,683	59,346,549.23
Kildare	2,105	33,135,327.67
Kilkenny	3,517	58,026,301.94
Laois	2,999	42,317,173.79
Leitrim	3,419	17,366,275.30
Limerick	5,253	54,109,514.18
Longford	2,416	20,388,424.85
Louth	1,562	20,621,681.05
Mayo	11,566	60,198,400.97
Meath	3,844	57,400,864.23

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County	Number	€
Monaghan	4,083	31,910,551.94
Offaly	3,096	37,921,125.53
Roscommon	5,799	41,196,073.17
Sligo	4,004	23,049,469.08
Tipperary	7,075	104,953,087.17
Waterford	2,462	40,841,789.89
Westmeath	2,979	34,651,692.72
Wexford	4,100	62,229,037.73
Wicklow	2,127	28,655,160.73
	Total	1,249,632,385.01

2007 SPS Payments

County	Number	€
Carlow	1,674	25,252,685.15
Cavan	4,849	36,148,966.70
Clare	6,114	48,484,487.38
Cork	13,042	172,057,158.62
Donegal	7,924	47,710,314.98
Dublin	652	9,296,562.36
Galway	12,116	81,586,453.45
Kerry	7,642	59,271,730.43
Kildare	2,095	33,084,920.24
Kilkenny	3,486	57,616,317.09
Laois	2,982	42,263,989.07
Leitrim	3,394	17,522,534.38
Limerick	5,215	53,693,016.16
Longford	2,393	20,213,685.62
Louth	1,534	20,389,294.31
Mayo	11,463	60,162,225.74
Meath	3,782	56,974,169.28
Monaghan	4,033	31,558,750.86
Offaly	3,069	37,612,945.08
Roscommon	5,766	41,088,595.49
Sligo	3,981	22,956,021.91
Tipperary	6,979	104,064,359.05
Waterford	2,450	40,438,961.55
Westmeath	2,949	34,328,624.79
Wexford	4,073	62,115,527.45
Wicklow	2,090	28,636,367.75
	Total	1,244,528,664.89

2008 SPS Payments

County	Number	€
Carlow	1,640	25,530,227.69
Cavan	4,766	35,960,624.43
Clare	6,063	48,285,970.25
Cork	12,890	172,565,315.36
Donegal	7,888	48,118,847.02
Dublin	641	9,348,773.40
Galway	11,946	81,224,065.11
Kerry	7,577	59,223,518.90
Kildare	2,039	32,883,441.92
Kilkenny	3,471	57,898,985.97
Laois	2,935	42,481,112.10
Leitrim	3,369	17,492,539.91
Limerick	5,136	53,506,136.40
Longford	2,363	20,159,785.01
Louth	1,497	20,497,090.03
Mayo	11,365	60,030,025.39
Meath	3,700	57,021,181.44
Monaghan	3,989	31,505,352.60
Offaly	3,026	37,574,526.36
Roscommon	5,696	41,022,424.46
Sligo	3,930	22,945,938.08
Tipperary	6,924	104,533,427.54
Waterford	2,430	40,625,627.94
Westmeath	2,905	34,414,910.47
Wexford	3,999	62,914,527.22
Wicklow	2,069	28,705,081.62
	Total	1,246,469,456.62

Rural Environment Protection Scheme.

1076. **Deputy Jim O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the position regarding a REP Scheme four application for a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will confirm that the 2008 payment will issue. [34064/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): My officials are currently processing the application of the person named. It is expected that payment will issue within the next 14 days.

1077. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if an application by person (details supplied) in County Cork under REP scheme four has been approved; if so, when they will be awarded payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34076/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): REPS 4 is a measure under the current Rural Development Programme 2007–13 and is subject to EU Regulations which require detailed administrative checks on all applications, including plan checks, to be completed before the first 2009 payments issue.

[Deputy Brendan Smith.]

Processing of applications, including the application from the person named, has commenced to facilitate the release of payments at the earliest possible date.

1078. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food further to Parliamentary Question No. 336 of 22 September 2009, if he will review the situation regarding REP scheme four payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Mayo. [34177/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Applications to join REPS 4, which must comprise an application form and a full agri-environmental plan, were accepted up to close of business on 9 July 2009. The person named lodged a one page document, which did not represent a valid agri-environmental plan, with his application by the closing date and the application is, therefore, ineligible under the terms of the scheme.

Departmental Contracts.

1079. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will respond to a query (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34308/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Following an EU procurement exercise conducted by the Department of Finance, a mobile phone framework agreement was established to provide non-commercial public sector bodies with a simple way to procure mobile voice and data services at competitive rates from a list of qualified vendors. This framework commenced in February 2008. The framework agreement is intended to maximise volume discounts and provide for reductions in administrative and transaction costs for providers and public sector purchasers. My Department has run a number of competitions under the framework for its mobile voice and data services during 2008 and 2009. Both O₂ and Vodafone have been successful in separate competitions, in each case the successful vendor was the most economically advantageous response. My own mobile phone service is included in one of these contracts, currently held with Vodafone, which will be tendered again during 2010.

Departmental Staff.

1080. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the number of occasions on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34334/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): In the three years 2007-2009 my Department has discussed with the Department of Finance the pension arrangements of one member of staff of a body under the aegis of my Department. Discussions have not concluded and the staff member has not retired.

1081. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34349/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The information requested by the Deputy is set out as follows.

Year	Staff Dismissed
2005	2
2006	0
2007	0
2008	0
2009	1

Departmental Properties.

1082. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food the costs associated with the provision of her Department's offices in Ennis, County Clare and in Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34465/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): The lease costs for all of my Departments' offices are a matter for the Office of Public Works. Costs of staff, light, heat and telecommunications are being prepared and will be communicated directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Rural Environment Protection Scheme.

1083. **Deputy Seymour Crawford** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when a person (details supplied) in County Monaghan can expect to receive their REP scheme four payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34477/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): REPS 4 is a measure under the current Rural Development Programme 2007–13 and is subject to EU Regulations which require detailed administrative checks on all applications, including plan checks, to be completed before the first 2009 payments issue. Processing of applications, including the application from the person named, has commenced to facilitate the release of payments at the earliest possible date.

Grant Payments.

1084. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will confirm that a person (details supplied) in County Sligo was issued with a demand letter for an overpayment of €2337.69 due in 2005 under the single payment scheme in spite of the fact that all overpayments due were cleared on 19 April 2007; if he will further confirm that this notice was issued in error; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34482/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): Following direct contact between an official of my Department and the person named, it has been agreed that this case will be fully reviewed, on receipt of the further documentation, which the person named has been requested to provide.

Beef Exports.

1085. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food further to Parliamentary Question No. 451 of 23 June 2009, if he will review the decision to exclude this premises from the service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34522/09]

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Deputy Brendan Smith): As set out in my previous reply, the service provided by my Department for the export of cattle involves a considerable amount of checking on the transport vehicle(s), documentation, identification of the cattle, fitness for transport, and health status, as well as preparing the health certificate to accompany the consignment and sending a notification of the details of the export to the Member State of destination via the TRACES system.

In order to make best use of resources, requests to my Department for export services have to be prioritised in line with limitations on staff resources, budgets and having regard to the volume of exports to be covered by each request. On occasions it is not possible to provide all the requested services, especially at weekends or outside of normal working hours. My Department continues to work with exporters and export points to facilitate the important export trade to the greatest extent possible. I have reviewed this case and I have established that it is not possible to provide the requested services

School Staffing.

1086. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of people employed in the English language school industry. [32977/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The most recent statistics for direct employment in the English language sector come from a survey carried out from late 2008 to early 2009 on behalf of Fáilte Ireland, the body responsible for promotion and development of the sector.

The survey’s results estimated that there are approximately 1,200 people who are directly employed on a full-time, all year round basis, and that there are an additional 2,800 people employed on a seasonal basis.

There is also a wider economic benefit from the expenditure of English language students in Ireland, including for families who host international students in their homes. The same survey identified an average weekly expenditure of around €440 per student, leading to an estimated direct impact of €270 million from English language students on the Irish economy.

School Transport.

1087. **Deputy Andrew Doyle** asked the Minister for Education and Science the rules regarding the school transport scheme whereby children of the same family are not allowed onto the bus at the same stop; and if he will make a commitment to resolving this anomaly as soon as possible. [33129/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): Under the terms of my Department’s Post Primary School Transport Scheme, pupils are eligible for transport if they reside 4.8 kilometres or more from and are attending their nearest Gael Choláiste.

The situation referred to by the Deputy arose following the establishment of a new second Gael Choláiste in 2007 located south of the town referred to in the details supplied.

Eligible pupils who, prior to the establishment of the new Gael Choláiste had transport from the town in question to the original Coláiste referred to in the details continue to avail of such transport, subject to the terms of the scheme, until they complete their second level education.

All new applicants for transport from the town, including children in the same family, have their applications assessed on the basis of distance from home to the nearest Gael Choláiste. Therefore, those pupils including siblings, who reside 4.8 kilometres or more from their nearest

Gael Choláiste and who choose to attend a Gael Choláiste other than their nearest may only avail of transport from the catchment boundary.

I should add that the Value for Money Review of the School Transport Scheme, including catchment boundaries, is due to be completed by the end of 2009.

Inquiry into Child Abuse.

1088. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Education and Science the cost of the recent Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse which reported a number of months ago. [33449/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Expenditure for the Commission to Inquire into child Abuse from inception, to the end of 2008 was € 59.36 Million. At this point it is estimated that a further €30-€40 million may be required to meet the remaining costs of the Commission. This is a tentative provision, given that the Commission has yet to negotiate on a large volume of third party legal costs.

Services for People with Disabilities.

1089. **Deputy Edward O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Education and Science if persons (details supplied) in County Cork will be assisted. [34426/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The student to which the Deputy refers has been provided with one print copy of brailled books from the National Braille Production Centre (NBPC). The NBPC’s current policy is to make one set of books available in hard copy format to the client and provide an alternative electronic copy that schools/parents can arrange to braille. In exceptional circumstances, the NBPC will provide a second copy of the braille books. I am pleased to advise the Deputy that given the circumstances of this case, the NBPC is now making arrangements to provide a second set of books to the student concerned, which should be available within two weeks.

School Enrolments.

1090. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position of an application by persons (details supplied) in County Kildare for a placement for primary education for their son; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34533/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I wish to advise the Deputy that the enrolment of a child in a school is a matter in the first instance for the parents of the child and the Board of Management of a school. My Department has no role in relation to processing applications for enrolment in schools. Where a school refuses to enrol a pupil, the school is obliged to inform parents of their right under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of my Department. Where an appeal under Section 29 is upheld, the Secretary General may direct a school to enrol a pupil.

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is the statutory agency which can assist parents who are experiencing difficulty in securing a school place for their child. The Board can be contacted at National Educational Welfare Board, National Headquarters, 16-22 Green Street, Dublin 7 or by telephone at 01-8738700.

As the Deputy will be aware, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), is responsible for processing applications from primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports. The NCSE operates within my Department’s criteria in allocating such support. The responsibility

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also includes identifying appropriate educational placements for individual children with special educational needs.

My Department encourages parents and school authorities to engage locally regarding pupils’ education. It is open to the parents concerned to raise any queries they may have relating to their child’s special educational needs directly with the school authorities or with the local SENO. The parent may contact the SENO using the contact details available on www.ncse.ie.

The Deputy will be further aware that the home tuition scheme provides funding to parents to provide education at home for children who, for a number of reasons such as chronic illness, are unable to attend school. The scheme was extended in recent years to facilitate tuition for children awaiting a suitable educational placement and also to provide early educational intervention for pre-school children with autism.

I am pleased to advise the Deputy that home tuition has recently been approved for the child in question.

Institutes of Technology.

1091. **Deputy John Cregan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will intervene in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick who was unsuccessful in securing a placement on a course with Limerick Institute of Technology; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32928/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Institutes of Technology are statutory bodies established under the Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006 and my Department does not have any function in their day to day operational affairs or in relation to applications from individual prospective students. Therefore, it would not be appropriate for me to intervene on behalf of any particular student.

Adult Education.

1092. **Deputy Michael Ring** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will provide the funding for a course (details supplied) in view of the fact that funding for same has been withdrawn. [32936/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I understand, following consultation between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and FÁS, that the funding referred to by the Deputy is the funding for grant assistance that was targeted by FÁS at persons in employment towards the cost of participation on a particular course in the higher education institution also referred to by the Deputy. This funding was awarded on a year by year basis by FÁS, under its Training of People in Employment programmes, subject to available funding being available. I further understand that while FÁS did fund students on this particular course, the numbers being funded have declined over recent years. Responsibility for funding decisions in relation to such programmes are a matter for FÁS and I have no role in the matter.

Regarding the provision of funding support by my Department towards fees and maintenance support for this course, as referred to by the Deputy, the position is that under the terms of my Department’s free fees schemes the exchequer meets the tuition fees of eligible full-time students who are pursuing approved full-time undergraduate courses of study in an approved institution. Students eligibility for free tuition fees is determined by each individual institution.

Currently my Department funds four maintenance grant schemes for third level and further education students. These are the Higher Education Grants Scheme, the Vocational Education

Committees' Scholarships Scheme, the Third Level Maintenance Grants Scheme for Trainees and the Maintenance Grants Scheme for Students attending Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Courses. The Higher Education Grant Scheme is administered by the Local Authorities on behalf of my Department; the other three maintenance grant schemes are administered on a similar basis by the VECs. Students who are entering approved courses for the first time are eligible for grants where they satisfy the relevant conditions as to age, residence, means, nationality and previous academic attainment.

The decision on eligibility for student grants is a matter for the relevant assessing authority — i.e. the local authority or VEC. Candidates wishing to apply for the means-tested maintenance grant should apply, if they have not already done so, to their local VEC to establish eligibility.

Physical Education Facilities.

1093. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if there are shortfalls as per his Departments guidelines in relation to the delivery of physical education in secondary schools at junior or senior cycle here; if so, if he will identify where such shortfalls exist, that is, if they are more pronounced in particular parts of the country, in particular schools, senior versus junior cycle and so on; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[32939/09]

1095. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will provide an assurance that physical education as a non-examinable subject will not become marginalised on the school curriculum pending implementation of some or all of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programme recommendations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32941/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1093 and 1095 together.

At post-primary level, in accordance with the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools physical education should form part of the curriculum in all schools. The programme that each school plans and delivers should be based on the Department's approved syllabuses and the teaching hours should be registered on the school timetable.

It should be noted that teacher allocations for all second level schools are approved by my Department on an annual basis in accordance with generally applied rules based on recognised pupil enrolments on the 30th of September of the preceding school year. Each school management authority is required to organise its curriculum, teaching time-table and subject options having regard to pupils' needs within the limits of its approved teacher allocation. The appointment of teachers to posts within the approved quota is a matter for the authorities of the schools concerned.

Physical education will continue to play an important role in providing a broad and balanced education programme for students. The evidence available to date would not suggest there has been a significant diminution or marginalisation of the subject recently in schools. An evaluation of inspection reports undertaken by my Department in 2008 indicates that the vast majority of schools are timetabling PE. However, the reports showed that 22% of schools did not provide the subject for the all students in senior cycle. In such cases, the provision was either not provided for final year students (13%), not provided at all for senior cycle (4%) or provided for only part of the year (4%). If issues emerge during a school inspection which indicate that a programme is not being implemented in accordance with the requirements of

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the Department, these matters are brought to the attention of the school board of management for attention.

School Staffing.

1094. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will provide an assurance that schools competitions across different sports will not be adversely affected due to non-replacement of school teachers who traditionally accompanied school teams pending the implementation of some or all of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programme recommendations. [32940/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The substitution cover arrangements introduced in January 2009 will continue for the 2009/2010 school year. Each post-primary school has been provided with a defined number of hours of substitution cover outside of the supervision and substitution scheme to provide cover for teacher absences arising from uncertified sick leave and official school business. This was calculated on the basis of the number of pupils in a school with a minimum number of available hours for all schools with less than 100 pupils. Thus for the 2009/2010 school year 0.31 hours substitution cover was allocated for each pupil in a school as per the school’s recognised pupil enrolment on the 30th September 2008. Examples are an allocation of 62 hours for a 200 pupil school and 124 hours for a 400 pupil school.

It is a matter for the managerial authority of each school to decide on the use of the hours provided. The supervision/ substitution scheme also continues to operate and teachers who undertake the duties in accordance with the terms of the scheme continue to receive the annual payment.

Question No. 1095 answered with Question No. 1093.

Schools Building Projects.

1096. **Deputy Mary Wallace** asked the Minister for Education and Science the 43 locations here that have been identified in the recent study for additional primary school provision for 2010, 2011 and 2012 as having significant demographic changes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32944/09]

1097. **Deputy Mary Wallace** asked the Minister for Education and Science the time frame for the completion of the detailed analysis and report to identify school accommodation requirements for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 in an area (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32945/09]

1098. **Deputy Mary Wallace** asked the Minister for Education and Science the time frame for the completion of the detailed analysis and report to identify school accommodation requirements for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 in an area (details supplied) in County Meath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32946/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1096 to 1098, inclusive, together.

The Forward Planning Section of my Department has carried out a study of the country to identify the areas where, due to demographic changes, there may be a requirement for significant additional school provision at both primary and post-primary levels over the coming years. This study has been conducted using data from the Central Statistics Office, the General Regis-

ter Office and the Department of Social & Family Affairs in addition to recent schools' enrolment data.

The study indicates that the requirement for additional primary provision in years 2010, 2011 and 2012 is likely to be greatest in more than 40 selected locations across the country based on significant changes to the demographics of those areas. This information has been circulated to all existing school Patrons who have been invited to bring forward proposals for the expansion of existing schools or indeed to put themselves forward as Patron for any new primary school, should it be required. The requirement for the establishment of new schools will of course be lessened where it is possible to expand and extend existing schools in those areas.

The Forward Planning Section is in the process of carrying out an analysis of each of these locations, including the two areas referred to by the Deputy, in order to identify the school accommodation requirements up to and including the school year 2014/2015.

When the required reports have been completed for these initial areas selected the Forward Planning Section will continue to work on preparing reports on a priority basis for the remainder of the country. I will arrange to have a list of the initial areas identified for analysis forwarded to the Deputy for her information.

Schools Recognition.

1099. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding the registration of Educate Together as a second level patron; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32947/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): My Department is currently considering a number of broad policy issues relating to the recognition process for second level schools. The application from Educate Together to be recognised as a patron body at second level will be fully examined within the context of legal, financial and other factors that I must consider.

School Transport.

1100. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will intervene in the case of a child (details supplied) in County Tipperary who has been refused transport to a special school which is best equipped to meet their needs. [32970/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): Under the terms of my Department's School Transport Scheme, a pupil with special needs is eligible for transport if s/he is attending the nearest recognised: mainstream school, special class / special school or a unit, that is or can be resourced, to meet the child's special educational needs under the Department's criteria.

In this case, my Department has been advised that the pupil in question is not attending the nearest such facility and is therefore, not eligible for school transport.

This case has been the subject of an appeal to the School Transport Appeals Board which has made a determination in the matter. The parents have been notified of this decision.

Special Educational Needs.

1101. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the guarantees available for parents of pupils with serious special educational needs in post primary schools that their child will be taught by a teacher qualified in special needs. [32971/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The recruitment and appointment of teachers to fill vacancies in an individual school is a matter for the Board of Management of the school concerned. It is the policy of my Department that unqualified personnel should only be employed in exceptional circumstances and when all avenues for recruiting qualified personnel have been exhausted. Unqualified personnel should therefore only be employed for short periods pending the recruitment of a fully qualified teacher. I have indicated my intention to commence Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act in the near future. I have also indicated that the commencement of the section will also provide for it to be regulated that a school may employ unregistered personnel on a time limited basis in extreme circumstances.

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 (SESS). The SESS facilitates a partnership approach involving support teams of practising teachers, Education Centres, the Inspectorate, the National Educational Psychological Service, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the National Council for Special Education, Third Level Colleges, Health Board Personnel, Teacher Unions and other relevant bodies and services.

Parents of children with autism now have three distinct choices available to them depending on the needs of the child; their child can either attend a mainstream class in their local school with additional supports as required, they can attend a special class in a mainstream school or they can attend a special school. While some children with autism can thrive in a mainstream class, special classes in both mainstream and special schools have been specifically designed to meet the needs of those who require more intensive support.

My Department’s Inspectorate carried out an Evaluation of Educational Provision for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) which was published in 2006. The report looked at the education that is provided for children with autism in a variety of settings nationwide, including mainstream classes supporting children with autism.

I am satisfied with the current policy of providing schools who have special classes for children with autism with qualified teachers, low pupil teacher ratios, a minimum of 2 special needs assistants per class, access to professional development as well as training courses in autism specific interventions, enhanced capitation and grants for specialist equipment and furniture, if required, together with special school transport arrangements.

1102. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the resource hours allocated to pupils with special needs are being used specifically for these pupils or if in some cases they are being used in the general body of the school. [32972/09]

1103. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the way resource hours for children with special educational needs are being used in post primary schools. [32973/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1102 and 1103 together.

Resource teaching is allocated to schools to support pupils with special educational needs who qualify for such support under the criteria outlined in various Department circulars.

As the Deputy is aware, my Department implemented a general allocation system of learning support/resource teachers to mainstream primary schools in September 2005. The system provides teaching resources to schools to enable them to cater for children with high-incidence special education needs. The system allows schools to respond quickly and effectively to the

individual needs of children with special educational needs. The system facilitates flexibility in the delivery of interventions by schools in allowing for individualised tuition, group work, in-class support or a combination of these interventions, whichever is considered the most appropriate for the child in question. It is a matter for the individual school to use its professional judgement to identify pupils that will receive this support and to use the resources available to the school to intervene at the appropriate level with such pupils. My Department issued a comprehensive circular, SP ED 02/05, to schools to provide guidelines and advice on the manner in which they should use the resources that have been allocated to them to best effect.

In circumstances where a child has low incidence needs, this automatically attracts an individual resource teaching allocation through the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). Circular SP ED 02/05 advises school management that the additional teaching resources that are allocated to schools under the terms of the general allocation model cannot be used for mainstream class teaching or to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Reference is also made in the circular to the deployment of additional teaching resources that are allocated to schools by the NCSE for the support of individual pupils with low incidence disabilities.

In the case of post primary schools, circular PPT 01/05 outlines the Department's policy in relation to the allocation of teaching resources. Group teaching approaches are prioritised in catering for pupils with special educational needs at post primary level. Apart from the obvious benefit of being part of a group, this joint provision offers a level of support which meets and often exceeds the recommended individualised provision as per the relevant circulars.

Post-Leaving Certificate Courses.

1104. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will support the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5. [32987/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): I understand that the person referred to by the Deputy made an application to a local PLC college for a place on a particular course. Places on this particular course are limited under an agreement with a third level institution and the college operates a competitive selection process. I understand that following the selection process this person was not successful in obtaining a place. It is open to learners to make application to any PLC College in the country for a place on a course of their choice.

Higher Education Grants.

1105. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science his views on correspondence (details supplied) in relation to reforming the residency requirements for the student grants system; if he will allow the use of affidavits when otherwise legitimate applications for a student grant cannot proceed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [32990/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): In order to establish a candidate's status as an independent mature student, documentary evidence is required as proof of a candidate's ordinary/permanent address from 1st October of the year preceding entry to college.

Awarding authorities are obliged to satisfy themselves beyond doubt that an acceptable degree of proof has been submitted by the grant applicant. While an affidavit if accompanied by other supporting documentation can be considered as evidence of independent living, an affidavit in isolation cannot be accepted as sole proof of residency. The Deputy's correspondence in this matter is being considered and a response will issue shortly.

Special Educational Needs.

1106. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he has received an application from a school (details supplied) in County Tipperary for a special needs assistant in respect of a child; if he will grant a special needs assistant in this case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33018/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): As the Deputy will be aware, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), for allocating resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants to schools to support children with special needs. 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. I have arranged for the details supplied by the Deputy to be forwarded to the NCSE for their attention and direct reply.

Teaching Qualifications.

1107. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will support a matter (details supplied). [33023/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The postgraduate diploma in primary education is currently provided by four state-funded Colleges of Education.

The issue of providing such courses in the coming year is currently being considered in the context of likely demands in the system and the resources available. A decision on the matter will be communicated to the relevant colleges as soon as possible.

Grant Payments.

1108. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the reason the grant for a secretary and caretaker come at the end of March when the school year is almost over; his views, in view of the fact that he has by the end of October all of the relevant information required to provide for this grant, or providing for prompt payment in this area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33046/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The Deputy is referring to funding arrangements for primary schools. The way in which primary schools are funded takes account of the fact that the State’s accounting period is based on a calendar year, while schools traditionally operate on the academic year commencing in September. Thus, primary schools receive capitation funding in January and June, and the ancillary services grant in March.

I have consistently said that it is my intention to streamline and rationalise the different grant schemes that provide funding to primary schools, both for ease of administration and to ensure that school management has greater autonomy over the funding provided.

Therefore, capitation funding provided for general running costs, and funding provided for caretaking and secretarial services may be regarded as a common grant from which the Board of Management can allocate according to its own priorities. In due course, both grant schemes will be merged. In the interim, both grants will continue to be paid according to existing timelines and calculated separately as heretofore.

With regard to the availability of enrolment data, I wish to advise the Deputy that the primary census has up to now been a paper-based process; my Department would receive a set

of paper forms from over 3200 primary and special schools every year. Each form must be manually logged and checked and corrected with input from the school where necessary and then entered manually into my Department's database. This process takes a number of months due to the number of schools involved. For this reason, data for all schools at primary level does not normally become available until close to the end of the academic year.

In order to reduce the processing time involved, a spreadsheet form has been introduced for the 2009/2010 census which can be returned to my Department by email. This reduces the workload involved in processing the forms, as totals and checks are automatic, and the data can be loaded automatically to the database.

It should be noted also that it has been the case in previous years that approximately 25-30% of returns for primary schools are still outstanding by the end of October deadline, which can add a further delay to the processing time for those schools that make a late return.

Special Educational Needs.

1109. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a full time special needs assistant will be provided for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33049/09]

1110. **Deputy Phil Hogan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a laptop will be provided for a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33050/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1109 and 1110 together.

As the Deputy will be aware, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENO) for allocating resource teachers and special needs assistants to schools to support children with special needs. SENOs also make recommendations to my Department where assistive technology is required. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such support. My Department has no record of receiving a recommendation for a laptop for the child in question.

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. I have arranged for the details supplied by the Deputy to be forwarded to the NCSE for their attention and direct reply.

1111. **Deputy Michael Fitzpatrick** asked the Minister for Education and Science the national and second level schools in Kildare north which have allocated disabled parking bays. [33052/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): My Department's Technical Guidance Documents require that all new school buildings and extensions are designed to cater for persons with varying ranges of physical ability and to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by design limitations. These guidance documents state that at least one car-parking space near the main entrance should be provided for disabled users and the number of reserved spaces should be in accordance with the Building Regulations and the National Disability Authority guidelines. Parking provision should be as stated in the guidance documents, subject to the planning requirements of the relevant Local Authority.

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In the case of older schools where the school authority is not in a position to provide the required amount of parking spaces for disabled users, application under the Emergency Works Scheme may be made to my Department for funding to provide same.

School Hygiene.

1112. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the fact that the finance of some primary schools is so precarious that they can no longer afford paper towels in the children’s toilets or hand cleaning dispensers and are requesting parents to send hand towels in with their children; and the steps he is taking to help primary schools in particular to combat the spread of swine flu through the school population. [33074/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The Deputy may be referring to advice which my Department sent to schools in Circular 47/09, sent to all primary and post-primary schools in August, which advised schools on how they could source information on and respond to the pandemic flu.

My Department has been communicating public health advice from the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health and Children to the education sector. My officials are engaging with the management bodies of schools so that they can provide the most relevant information to schools that address any sector specific issues. This public health information is guiding schools to update their plans to encourage and facilitate everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of this pandemic flu, and be able to respond to symptoms and cases of this flu.

Specifically in relation to hand hygiene, the advice available to my Department is that students/staff should wash their hands with soap and water. Hand-drying facilities must not be shared between people. Therefore, the type of hand drying facilities that can be used include paper towels, which are disposed of into waste bins, hot air hand dryers, roller towels, or students and staff members could be asked to bring in and use their own individual towels.

On the general issue of funding for schools, I wish to assure the Deputy that the education budget for 2009 provided for improvements to the overall level of day-to-day funding for primary schools, which has seen funding increase from €167 million in 2008 to almost €190 million in 2009.

This builds on the progress made in recent years that has seen the primary school capitation grant increased from €81.26 per pupil in 2000 to its current rate of €200, representing an increase of 146% in the standard rate of capitation grant since 2000.

The primary capitation grant has been improved by more than €21 to bring the rate to €200 per pupil, while the ancillary services grant for primary schools has increased by €3.50 to €155 per pupil.

Taken together, these increases mean that primary schools eligible for the full ancillary services grant will get €355 per pupil — or almost €25 extra — in this school year to cover their day to day running costs, with a primary school of 300 pupils getting €7,475 more. In 2000, a primary school with 300 pupils was in receipt of less than €40,000 to meet its day to day running costs. Under these new rates, that primary school will receive €106,500. This excludes the salary of teachers and Special Needs Assistants, which are paid by my Department.

Furthermore enhanced rates of capitation funding are paid in respect of children with special educational needs who attend special schools or special classes attached to mainstream schools.

The current rates range from €512 to €986 per pupil — an increase of 59% from the rate in 2006.

By any standards, these have been very significant improvements within a relatively short period of time, and the Government is committed to further increasing funding for schools as resources permit. However, while increasing resources is important, we must also focus on measures to enhance the quality of education in our schools to ensure that increased resources lead to the best possible outcomes for our children.

Ministerial Travel.

1113. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Education and Science the annual cost to his Department of Ministerial expenses related to overseas travel engagement; and the event and the expense for same for each of the past ten years. [33080/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The information requested by Deputy is currently being collated by my officials, but unfortunately it has not been possible to fully gather all the relevant data in the time available.

I will reply directly to the Deputy as soon as the information has been fully collated.

School Funding.

1114. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will make a commitment that in future education decisions that the Protestant faith school will return to a situation where they are regarded as non-fee paying schools in line with commitments and practices of the past; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33099/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I wish to reassure the Deputy that I, along with my colleagues in Government, recognise the importance of ensuring that students from a Protestant background can attend a school that reflects their denominational ethos.

The Deputy will be aware that I have met with representatives of both the Church of Ireland Board of Education and the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland to discuss the funding position of Protestant schools and the background to the decision in the October budget to remove certain grants from fee-charging Protestant schools.

I have emphasised that no changes have been made to the block grant, which is expected to be €6.5 million in this school year. It covers capitation, tuition and boarding costs and is distributed through the Secondary Education Committee established by the churches concerned. This fund ensures that necessitous Protestant children can attend a school of their choice.

I wish to advise the Deputy that my officials have met representatives from the Secondary Education Committee to discuss future funding arrangements for Protestant schools.

In this context, I have expressed my willingness to consider any proposals that might be made to my Department that would enable the available funding to be focused and adjusted to more effectively meet the twin objectives of access for individuals and sustaining the schools that they wish to attend, particularly those in rural areas.

The October Budget implemented changes in how all fee-charging schools are treated in relation to the number of publicly funded teaching posts they are allocated. With effect from 1 January 2009, teachers in fee-charging schools are allocated at a pupil teacher ratio of 20:1, which is a point higher than allocations in non-fee-charging post-primary schools.

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In view of the challenging economic circumstances that we are facing, I am not in a position to reverse this decision.

This decision is justified on the basis that schools which have access to fees as an income source are in a better position to maintain services at a time when the public finances are under such severe pressure. Fee-charging schools can continue to employ additional teachers that they fund from their fee income.

I will continue to work with representatives of the Protestant educational sector to ensure that State funding made available to the Protestant community is targeted in the fairest way possible to meet the needs of their children and their schools.

School Curriculum.

1115. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary schools here which offer a modern language, normally in fifth or sixth class; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33120/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): In the 2008/2009 year, Modern European languages were taught in 505, or 15%, of our primary schools as part of an initiative that was introduced by my Department in September, 1998. The aims of this initiative include the development of communication skills in a modern European language, the fostering of positive attitudes to language learning and the diversification of the languages taught in our schools. In the participating schools, the pupils in 5th and 6th classes are taught one of four languages — French, German, Italian and Spanish. A dedicated support structure for the teachers in the schools concerned has been in place since the initiative was implemented.

Schools Building Projects.

1116. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the condition of the roadway leading to a school (details supplied) in County Cork; if he has awarded all moneys due to the contractor in this case; if the approach road was included in his estimate for the works for the school; the steps, in view of the health and safety concerns raised, he will take to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33134/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The new site for the school referred to by the Deputy was acquired by the school Patron from a local developer as a result of a land swap. My Department has funded the construction of the new school. However, the project scope was predicated on the assurance that certain site development works and appropriate site access from the main road were to be carried out by the developer such as access road/path as part of the overall deal with the school Patron.

It has been brought to my attention that the developer has not, as yet, completed this work. I understand that the Board of Management of the school is engaging with the developer to progress the terms of their agreement. My officials are monitoring the situation.

School Staffing.

1117. **Deputy John Cregan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of retired teachers substituting at primary and secondary level; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33136/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The information sought by the Deputy is being compiled and will be sent to him as soon as possible.

Schools Building Projects.

1118. **Deputy John Cregan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the progress being made regarding the approval for a new second level college at Croom, County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33137/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I can confirm that an application for large scale capital funding for a new second level college at Croom, County Limerick has been made to my Department. The application has been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects and assigned an appropriate band rating. Information in respect of the current school building programme along with all assessed applications for major capital works, including the project referred to by the Deputy, are now available on my Departments website at www.education.ie.

The priority attaching to individual projects is determined by published prioritisation criteria, which were formulated following consultation with the Education Partners. There are four band ratings under these criteria, each of which describes the extent of accommodation required and the urgency attaching to it. Band 1 is the highest priority rating and Band 4 is the lowest. Documents explaining the band rating system are also available on my Department’s website.

The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase will be considered in the context of my Department’s multi-annual School Building and Modernisation Programme. Furthermore, my Department is now in the process of identifying school projects eligible for consideration for inclusion in the 4th bundle of Public Private Partnership projects and the school in question is being considered in that context. 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.

Departmental Projects.

1119. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the pilot project which has been developed with regard to the use of schools after hours under active citizenship; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33187/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The pilot programme recommended by the Task Force on Active Citizenship in its March 2007 Report is operated by the National Assessment Committee of the Young People’s Facilities and Services Fund (YPSF) from a fund administered by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA). Through its Regional Office Service, my Department has encouraged schools to make their premises available for the use of community and other groups. Advice on the issues and implications for schools were covered in a circular letter issued to all schools in April, 2005.

In May 2008 I announced details of a scheme under the Dormant Accounts (Educational Disadvantage) Fund to enable DEIS Band 1 schools in Limerick city to enable schools to open after school hours, including weekends and holiday periods, provide after school programmes and to maximise community use of school premises and facilities.

Schools Building Projects.

1120. **Deputy Simon Coveney** asked the Minister for Education and Science the progress

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made by him in relation to school (details supplied) in County Cork since August 2009; if construction work is on course to begin before the end of 2009; the time scale of the construction work plans for this project over the next 12 months; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33196/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project for the school referred to by the Deputy has been approved to progress to tender and construction and is currently at an advanced stage of architectural planning.

An application has been made for planning permission and the Design Team are currently working on providing further information which was requested by the local authority. An application for a fire safety certificate has also been made.

Following receipt of Planning Permission, the Design Team will make a Stage 2(b) submission to my Department. When my Department has examined the stage 2(b) submission it will revert to the school regarding next steps in the tendering and construction of the new school. However, at this stage of the process, it is not possible to be definitive regarding a time scale for the commencement of construction work.

Institutes of Technology.

1121. **Deputy Brian O’Shea** asked the Minister for Education and Science if in view of recent developments (details supplied), he will make a decision in regard to the application of Waterford Institute of Technology for upgrading to university status; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33201/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The position is that applications have been received from three higher education institutions for designation as Universities; Waterford Institute of Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology and Cork Institute of Technology.

The issue of university designation does not just affect the institutions and the regions from which applications have been received; it also impacts on the future structure of the higher education system throughout the country. The Government wants 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 as well as the regions where they are based.

I have asked the strategy group on higher education to report to me with a vision and roadmap for the development of Ireland’s system of higher education for the next two decades.

That group is now critically examining the roles and relationships of higher education institutions so that the system can deliver the levels of efficiency, performance, innovation and growth that will optimise Ireland’s ‘smart’ economic recovery and social development.

There are no plans to advance any of the current applications for university status before the strategy group completes its work.

Higher Education Grants.

1122. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will review the decision taken by County Louth Vocational Education Committee to award a full adjacent third level trainee maintenance grant to the value of €1,370 to a person (details supplied) in County Louth, rather than a non-adjacent grant of €3,420; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33206/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Under the student support schemes, maintenance grants are payable at either the adjacent or the non-adjacent rate. The adjacent rate of maintenance grant is payable where the grant holder’s normal residence is 24 Km or less from the college which he/she is registered. The non-adjacent rate of maintenance grant is payable in all other cases, including all eligible mature students.

The decision on eligibility for student grants is a matter for the relevant assessing authority — i.e. the Local Authority or VEC. These bodies do not refer individual applications to my Department except, in exceptional cases, where, for example, advice or instruction regarding a particular clause in the relevant scheme is required.

If an individual applicant considers that she/he has been unjustly refused a maintenance grant, or that the rate of grant awarded is not the correct one, she/he may appeal, in the first instance, to the relevant local authority or VEC.

Where an individual applicant has had an appeal turned down, in writing, by the assessing authority, and remains of the view that the body has not interpreted the schemes correctly in his/her case, an appeal form outlining the position may be submitted by the applicant to my Department.

Schools Building Projects.

1123. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Education and Science the status with regard to the proposed construction of a new school at a school (details supplied) in County Cork; when he expects work to commence; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[33215/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I wish to advise the Deputy that in view of the current budgetary constraints I am not in a position to provide a definite date for the acquisition of a suitable site for the school referred to by the Deputy. On foot of my Department acquiring a suitable site, the proposed building project for the school will be considered in the context of the Department’s multi-annual school building and modernisation programme.

1124. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position in relation to the proposed new extension to a school (details supplied) in County Cork; when he expects work to commence on the project; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[33216/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I can confirm that an application for large scale capital funding for an extension has been made to my Department by the school to which the Deputy refers. The application has been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects and assigned an appropriate band rating. Information in respect of the current school building programme along with all assessed applications for major capital works, including the project referred to by the Deputy, are now available on my Department’s website at www.education.ie. A Schedule of Overall Accommodation has been agreed with the Board of Management to cater for a long term enrolment of 850 pupils.

The priority attaching to individual projects is determined by published prioritisation criteria, which were formulated following consultation with the Education Partners. There are four band ratings under these criteria, each of which describes the extent of accommodation required and the urgency attaching to it. Band 1 is the highest priority rating and Band 4 is the lowest. Documents explaining the band rating system are also available on my Department’s website.

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The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase 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.

1125. **Deputy Joanna Tuffy** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 218 of 12 February 2009, the progress in relation to the proposed new school building for a school (details supplied) in County Cork; when he expects work to commence on the project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33217/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Final tenders for the second bundle of Primary/Post Primary schools consisting of six schools including the school referred to by the Deputy were received by the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) on the 1st July 2009.

The tender evaluation process is nearing completion and it is expected that the preferred bidder will be announced shortly. Subject to the planning process it is envisaged that construction work on all six schools will commence in Spring 2010 and that the schools should be ready for occupation in September 2011.

School Transport.

1126. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 620 of 21 October 2008 and correspondence (details supplied), if he will clarify if the LUAS system is included within the remit of the school transport scheme and operates discounted fares for students between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years along similar lines to Dublin Bus and the DART; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33219/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): I can confirm that, following consultations between Bus Éireann which operates the School Transport Scheme on behalf of my Department and officials of the Railway Procurement Agency, children who are eligible for school transport under the terms of the School Transport Scheme may, following the approval of an application for transport to their local Bus Éireann School Transport Office, be facilitated with a school transport ticket to use the LUAS Public Transport System.

It is a matter for the operating company to determine the cost of tickets. However, the Deputy should understand that children who are eligible for school transport at primary level and availing of a transport service, travel free. Children who are eligible for transport at post-primary level and availing of a service, including students between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, are required to pay an annual charge, currently €300, unless the family is in possession of a valid medical card. The level of fares applicable for travel on the LUAS is, therefore, not an issue for individual students availing of transport under the School Transport Scheme.

Higher Education Authority Funding.

1127. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the budget of the Higher Education Authority recurrent funding for 2009; the budget for HEA recurrent funding in each year for the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33224/09]

1130. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the Higher Education Authority funding will be reduced as a result of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes proposal to merge the HEA and his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33227/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1127 and 1130 together.

The recurrent provision for the Higher Education Authority (HEA) for 2009 is some €6.236 million. Recurrent funding allocated by my Department to the HEA in each of the past ten years is set out in the attached table. These funds are used to meet the general running expenses of the Authority.

Planned expenditure levels for my Department will be considered as part of the Estimates and budgetary process for 2010. This will include consideration of the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, and the decisions on all of the issues arising, including that referred to by the Deputy, will be a matter for the Government. It would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage pending the outcome of these deliberative processes.

Higher Education Authority Recurrent Funding 1999-2008

Year	Recurrent Funding
	€m
2008	6.101
2007	5.936
2006	5.732
2005	5.210
2004	5.219
2003	4.801
2002	4.013
2001	4.595
2000	2.376
1999	2.206

1128. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the budget for the Higher Education Authority access funding for 2009; the budget for HEA access funding in each year for the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33225/09]

1129. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the envisioned budget for the Higher Education Authority access funding for 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33226/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1128 and 1129 together.

The Third Level Access Measure provides support for disadvantaged students through three sub-priorities: the Students Assistance Fund, the Fund for Students with Disabilities and the Millennium Partnership Fund.

The Higher Education Authority also provides institutions with recurrent funding to develop the necessary infrastructure and programmes of action which support wider access for people

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with a disability, mature students and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The table attached outlines the access allocations for the last decade. The provision for 2010 will be a matter to be decided within the Estimates process which is ongoing at this point.

HEA Access Funding (€000’s)

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Recurrent Funding for Access	3,465	4,296	5,172	6,145	7,415	7,235	7,736	8,347	8,770	9,035	9,035
Third Level Access Measure	2,651	3,319	9,053	14,758	13,486	14,043	13,882	14,975	17,319	17,984	17,984
Total	6,116	7,615	14,225	20,903	20,901	21,278	21,618	23,322	26,089	27,019	27,019

Question No. 1130 answered with Question No. 1127.

Higher Education Funding.

1131. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the initiatives that are in place to support international students in higher education; the funding that is in place to support international students in higher education; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33228/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The Government is committed to promoting Ireland as a centre for international education and a high quality educational experience for international students must be at the core of our offering. I recently announced my intention to establish a high level group on international education, which will initially focus on developing a national strategy for the promotion of international education. This body through collaboration with relevant stakeholders will aim to achieve economies and efficiencies of scale in the marketing and delivery of education and services to international students. The development of a statutory quality mark, to be awarded by the amalgamated qualifications body, will be a key plank of this strategy.

The quality mark regime will encompass wider dimensions of the individual’s learning experience, including recruitment, orientation, accommodation, support services and fees issues. The development of this quality mark will build on the Irish Higher Education Quality Network’s recently published code of practice and guidelines for provision of education to international students.

These guidelines outline agreed sector wide benchmarks in relation to recruitment, reception, education, pastoral care and welfare of international students and will provide institutions with a framework for setting their own education provision arrangements for international students.

School Curriculum.

1132. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Education and Science the steps he is taking to support media training for young people in view of the fact that this is an area that offers potential for employment growth; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33237/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Media education is a specific strand unit within the social, personal and health education programme for all primary school pupils. By sixth class pupils develop an understanding of how information is conveyed, what

may be deliberately excluded, the role of bias and the different messages promoted in advertising. The curriculum is designed to promote an increasingly critical and discerning attitude to advertising and media, their purposes and the messages they promote. This goes hand in hand with the strand unit on making decisions, so that children learn to examine critically the influences on their decision making and the consequences and processes involved.

While media studies is not a specific subject at second level, the skills of interpretation and analysis, the use of language in different contexts and genres and the influences on decision making are covered within the existing curricula and allow scope for exploring issues related to the media. For example, in junior certificate English students are required to think, respond and communicate in everyday contexts, including a diary, a journal, a radio programme, video film, drama, poem, essay etc. Through exposure to a range of literary and media genres, they develop a critical consciousness with regard to all language use and learn to focus on the choice of words and the reasons for and effects of these particular choices of words. The skills acquired in junior cycle are built on in senior cycle English where the term “language” includes verbal and visual forms of communication, including the role of media, film and theatre. Engaging with fiction, drama, essay, poetry and film in an imaginative, responsive and critical manner forms part of the approach.

These skills are also developed in history, through the critical examination of source documents. The emphasis is on the development of historical investigation skills and historical thinking, using evidence, and the need to look at history from different perspectives and as a dynamic process. The development of these critical and investigative skills can be transferred into many other areas of the curriculum and beyond. The skills of information processing, analysis and critical evaluation are also developed through the action project within Civic, Social and Political Education, and through the specific module on influences and decisions within Social Personal and Health Education, both of which are mandatory subjects in junior cycle. This is designed to help students understand the role of the media and the impact of social mores in the wider community on their decisions.

In the Transition Year Programme media studies is among the range of flexible options which can be taken by students. Overall, within our second level curricula, there is a key emphasis on the development of skills in research, data gathering, analysis, valuation and critical reflection which are important elements of effective learning.

These skills are further strengthened through provision in the further and higher education sectors, where an extensive range of post leaving certificate courses and degree programmes are available in media production, journalism, animation, radio, TV and film, performing arts, graphic design, digital media, photography, computing and art and design.

Third Level Fees.

1133. **Deputy Seán Ardagh** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a person (details supplied) in Dublin 12 who has completed their first year at university, and wishes to take a break from the course for one year, will be subject to fees when they return in a years time; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33263/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): As the Deputy will be aware I presented the technical report in relation to the introduction of a form of student contribution to my Cabinet colleagues recently. This report sets out the various options available which looks at available models and draws on experience with other systems that operate internationally. The report is intended to allow for an informed examination of the issue — including existing international experience, the revenue impact of potential approaches, costs, afford-

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ability, value for money for the taxpayer, associated implementation issues and policy issues that arise in the Irish context.

The Deputy will appreciate that I cannot comment on various scenarios that might or might not emerge in advance of Government consideration of the report.

Higher Education Grants.

1134. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will provide funding to students who are continuing Further Education and Training Award Council courses in tourism and business in institutes of technology here to enable them to complete their course. [33275/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The courses referred to by the Deputy are not eligible courses under my Department’s student maintenance grant schemes, which provide for grants only on a means-tested basis.

I understand that discussions are currently ongoing between Fáilte Ireland, Institutes of Technology Ireland and the Higher Education Authority in relation to the future management and administration of these courses and the levels of award to be made to graduating students.

Schools Building Projects.

1135. **Deputy Pádraic McCormack** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding the provision of a new school for a school (details supplied) in County Galway; if it will be included in the next available public private partnership bundle; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33295/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The school referred to by the Deputy is included in my Department’s PPP school building programme. A site has been purchased for the provision of a new school building.

My Department is now in the process of identifying what school projects are eligible for consideration for inclusion in the 4th bundle of PPP schools which I intend announcing as quickly as possible and the school in question is being considered in that context.

The nature of procurement via Public Private Partnership is that a Bundle of school projects is offered to the market together. The other issues which have to be considered in the timing and bundling of schools include outline planning permission being secured, geographical spread and the total committed cost of the proposed bundle.

The indicative timeframe for the delivery of a Bundle of Public Private Partnership schools currently stands at approximately 4 years for the date the Bundle is announced.

Residential Institutions Redress Scheme.

1136. **Deputy Tom Kitt** asked the Minister for Education and Science if in view of correspondence (details supplied), he will establish a distinct redress scheme for the survivors of the Magdalene laundries. [33307/09]

1281. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will take steps to establish a distinct redress scheme for survivors of the Magdalene laundries along the lines suggested by a group (details supplied); if this matter will be reconsidered in this context; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34560/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1136, 1281 together.

I am aware of the case being made by Justice for Magdalene. The position of the women who resided in the Magdalen laundries is one of the issues that has also been raised by groups representing survivors, following publication of the Ryan Report.

The position in relation to the Magdalen laundries under the existing redress arrangements, is that section 1(3) of the Residential Institutions Redress Act, 2002 provides that children who were sent to Magdalen laundries from institutions specified in the Schedule to the Act can be considered for financial redress if, as children, they were victims of abuse while resident in the laundries. This provision was included on the basis that the State was still responsible for the welfare and protection of children who were transferred to a Magdalen laundry from a State regulated institution.

As the Deputies will be aware, the Magdalen laundries were privately owned and operated establishments which did not come within the responsibility of the State and were not subject to State regulation or supervision. I would like to re-iterate my sincere apology for any offence caused by my inadvertent use of the term “employees” when referring to the women who worked in the laundries.

Special Educational Needs.

1137. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the action he will take in the case of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 5; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33312/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I assume the Deputy is referring to the discontinuation of the Special Class for pupils with a Mild General Learning Disability (MGLD) in the school in question.

The Deputy will be aware that teacher allocations to schools typically increase or decrease depending on pupil enrolment. In the case of classes for MGLD the normal pupil teacher ratio that applies is 11:1. My Department however permits schools to retain a teaching post where it has a minimum of 9 pupils in the class. This minimum was not fulfilled in the school referred to by the Deputy and therefore the school no longer qualifies to retain the class concerned.

The special class which has closed predates the 2005 General Allocation Model of allocating additional teacher support to schools to enable them to meet the needs of pupils with mild general learning disabilities as well as a number of other high incidence disabilities. All primary schools now have additional teaching support in place for this purpose.

All children with MGLD who were in the class that has been suppressed will be able to receive teaching support through the teaching resources allocated to primary schools under the General Allocation Model. Schools decide themselves how best to use this allocation based on the needs of the pupils and how to adjust their support in line with the changing needs of pupils as they mature. My Department provided a circular SP ED 02/05 to schools to assist them in deploying the General Allocation Model resources.

The Deputy will be aware that my Department’s policy is to support the inclusive education of students with special educational needs across the schools system. In this context, a range of supports are provided to schools to enable them cater for pupils with special educational needs. The supports available include additional teaching support, special needs assistant support, school transport and grants for the purchase of teaching materials and specialised equipment.

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The Deputy will also be aware that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through local special educational needs organisers (SENOs), is responsible for processing applications from primary and post primary schools for special educational needs supports. 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.

School Transport.

1138. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science when persons (details supplied) will be provided with school transport which was applied for in July 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33313/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): My Department has sanctioned a transport service for the pupils referred to by the Deputy, in the details supplied. Bus Éireann, which operates the school transport service on behalf of my Department, has advised that the service will commence shortly.

School Staffing.

1139. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary teachers in temporary positions in counties Longford and Westmeath during 1 September 2008 to 23 September 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33344/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Teachers are appointed in a temporary capacity to primary schools for various reasons. Examples are the replacement of teachers taking career breaks from teaching or replacing teachers on secondment arrangements. Temporary teachers may also be employed to fill short term vacancies pending the appointment of permanent replacements where teachers retire or resign from employment during the school year.

Data extracted from my Department’s payroll systems indicate that during the period 1st September 2008 to 23rd September 2009, 29 temporary appointments were made in County Longford and 55 in County Westmeath.

School Accommodation.

1140. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of prefab classrooms throughout the counties of Longford and Westmeath; the cost of same to the Exchequer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33345/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): There are a total of 45 prefab units, (ranging from 16m² to 473m²) being rented by schools in the Longford and Westmeath area. The total annual rental cost for all units is €824,215. It is anticipated that there will be a saving of at least €14m in expenditure on rental of temporary accommodation in 2009, compared to 2008. This clearly demonstrates the efforts being made by my Department to reduce spending in this area. The saving arises mainly from a reduction in the number of new rental contracts being entered into as a result of recent policy measures. The downward trend in expenditure on rented accommodation is expected to continue into 2010 and onwards.

Higher Education Grants.

1141. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Education and Science the criteria that a person (details supplied) in County Longford must meet to qualify for a third level maintenance grant; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33346/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The candidate referred to by the Deputy is seeking funding under the maintenance grants schemes for a repeat period of study. Clause 7.2 of the Higher Education Maintenance Grant Scheme States; “A Grant is tenable for the normal duration of the approved course and is renewable annually subject to satisfactory attainment and the approval of the Local Authority, subject to the terms of Clause 7.6. Grants may not be paid in respect of a repeat year of study on the same course. A Local Authority shall have discretion to waive this provision in exceptional circumstances, such as certified serious illness.”

Where funding in respect of a repeat period of study at the same level is awarded on the basis of exceptional circumstances, such as serious certified illness, it would be where the student himself/herself has suffered from a serious illness that has directly impacted on their ability to successfully complete the period concerned.

Officials of my Department received an appeal from the candidate referred to by the Deputy and upheld the decision of Longford County Council.

Schools Building Projects.

1142. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Education and Science the status of a school building project (details supplied) in Co Longford ; if approval and funding will be given as a mater of urgency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33347/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I am pleased to inform the Deputy that plans are well in train to re-locate the school to which he refers to alternative and more suitable accommodation. The planning and Building Unit of my Department is working closely with the school authority to ensure that the transfer to this accommodation is as smooth as possible.

With regard to the school’s application for a new building, this, in common with all such applications, has been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects and assigned an appropriate band rating. Information in respect of the current school building programme along with all assessed applications for major capital works, including the project in question, are now available on my Departments website at www.education.ie.

The priority attaching to individual projects is determined by published prioritisation criteria, which were formulated following consultation with the Education Partners. There are four band ratings under these criteria, each of which describes the extent of accommodation required and the urgency attaching to it. Band 1 is the highest priority rating and Band 4 is the lowest. Documents explaining the band rating system are also available on my Department’s website.

The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase 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.

Departmental Staff.

1143. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the staffing details of the inspectorate at both primary and post-primary level including the number of inspectors at each grade in each business area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33368/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The Inspectorate is a Division within the Department of Education and Science. While inspectors are generally recruited to work in either the primary or post-primary sector, the work of the Inspectorate is managed as a unified service headed by the Chief Inspector. The Inspectorate is divided into two subdivisions, each headed by a Deputy Chief Inspector. The Regional Subdivision is responsible for the delivery and management of section/evaluation services and related advisory activities in schools and centres for education. The Policy Support Subdivision is responsible for contributing to the development of Departmental policy across a range of areas, for supporting inspection/evaluation activity generally, and for operational services for the Inspectorate. Inspectors from the Policy Support Subdivision also contribute to the work of the Regional Subdivision by conducting inspection activity throughout the year.

The staffing of each subdivision is listed below.

Regional Subdivision

- 1 Deputy Chief Inspector
- 5 Assistant Chief Inspectors
- 18 Divisional Primary Inspectors
- 32 Primary Inspectors
- 17 Senior Post-Primary Inspectors
- 28.5 Post-Primary Inspectors

Policy Support Subdivision

- 1 Deputy Chief Inspector
- 4 Assistant Chief inspectors
- 12 Divisional Primary Inspectors
- 1 Primary Inspector
- 10 Senior Post-Primary Inspectors
- 2.5 Post-Primary Inspectors

One Assistant Chief Inspector and nine Divisional/Senior Inspectors are also assigned to the Directorate of Regional Services. They provide support and advice of a regional nature, liaise with educational bodies and educational providers within the regional catchment areas, conduct evaluations of centres for education and manage visiting teacher services.

A number of inspectors are assigned to work within other sections of the Department as follows:

- Planning and Building Unit (2 Senior Post-Primary Inspectors)

- Special Education Section (1 Divisional Primary Inspector)
- Teacher Education Section (1 Senior Post-Primary Inspector and 1 Divisional Primary Inspector).

In addition to the above, a small number of inspectors are currently on secondment or career break.

1144. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary inspectors who retired since the imposition of the embargo on promotion in the public service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33369/09]

1145. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of post primary inspectors who retired since the imposition of the embargo on promotion in the public service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33370/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1144 and 1145 together.

Since the implementation of the moratorium on recruitment and promotion in the Public Sector there has been a total of six retirements from the Inspectorate of my Department. Of these retirements, five were primary inspectors and one a post primary inspector.

Proposed Legislation.

1146. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science when he will commence section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33371/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I have indicated my intention to commence Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act in the near future. I have also indicated that the commencement of the section will provide for it to be regulated that a school may employ unregistered personnel on a time limited basis in exceptional circumstances.

I believe that the above proposed legislative arrangement reflects the situation facing schools today where it is not always possible, for a variety of reasons, to engage a registered teacher for substitution duty.

I intend that this proposed amendment will be facilitated under the Education (Patronage) Bill which is due to be published during the Autumn term of the Oireachtas.

Teaching Qualifications.

1147. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary teachers who began probation during the 2008/2009 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33372/09]

1148. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary school teachers who successfully completed the probationary process during the 2008/2009 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33373/09]

1149. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of years teaching experience of each teacher who successfully completed the probationary process during the 2008/2009 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33374/09]

1150. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary teachers who had their probationary process deferred during the 2008/2009 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33375/09]

1151. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary teachers who have to date applied to undertake the probationary process in the 2009/2010 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33376/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1147 to 1151, inclusive, together.

With regard to the 2008/2009 academic year, 2,469 applications were accepted for probation. Of that number, 2,324 have successfully completed the required professional element and my Department is currently in the process of checking that the service requirement has been fulfilled. 58 teachers deferred their probation for reasons such as maternity leave, sick leave or change of employment.

Schools were advised in June of the arrangements for probation in the current school year. A series of dates were nominated for submission of applications. The closing date for Round 1 applications was 30th June 2009. Round 2 closed on 11th September. Applications for Round 3 are to be submitted by 23rd October, and 21st December for Round 4. To date, 1,359 applications have been accepted for 2009/2010, from the first two rounds.

The information requested by the Deputy in relation to the number of years service of each teacher who completed the probationary process during the 2008/2009 academic year would involve an inordinate amount of administrative time to compile as it is not readily available within my Department.

Departmental Records.

1152. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding his plans to introduce a database of primary school pupils; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33377/09]

1161. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the work being progressed by him to improve systems in order to facilitate access to accurate and up-to-date information on individual schools, both to ensure more efficient use of official time and to reduce the administrative burden on schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33386/09]

1162. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the work being progressed by him to improve his information technology infrastructure and upgrade IT systems in order to enhance the capacity for ready retrieval of information including specific progress on a unified data model designed to rationalise, standardise and unify his Department’s main data holdings, in order to provide a solid foundation on which to build new systems including details of available financial, human and IT resources; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33387/09]

1163. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the work being progressed to improve his information technology infrastructure and upgrade IT systems in order to enhance the capacity for ready retrieval of information including the provision for the electronic return and management of data from schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33388/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1152 and 1161 to 1163, inclusive, together.

My Department is progressing work to improve systems within the Department to facilitate access to accurate and up-to-date information both to ensure more efficient use of official time and to reduce the administrative burden on schools. My Department began the process of rationalising internal databases a number of years ago. The Department’s unified data model (UDM) is based on 3 core entities, namely Educational Organisation, Pupil and Staff Member. The Educational Organisation aspect of the model was implemented in February, 2007. Essentially, the implementation facilitates the recording and maintenance of school details, such as address, in a central location. Work is under way on the development of the post primary element of the pupil entity and, subject to adequate resources, is scheduled to go live in October 2010.

My Department continues to seek to reduce the administrative overhead for schools through the use of information technology most notably in providing on-line facilities to streamline the collection of data and reduce the number of manual tasks. The esinet portal through which these on-line services are delivered already provides an On-Line Claims System (OLCS) which allows each primary school and Voluntary Secondary, Community and Comprehensive school record absences and submit claims to the Department for the payment of casual and non casual teachers and Special Needs Assistants. This system has significantly reduced the process of manual form filling at school level and manual data input at Department level.

In 2008 a Returns service was provided via esinet to enable post primary schools upload pupil and timetable data. Statistics section has dispensed with paper forms for the Annual Census of Primary Schools this year and has instead provided a form in spreadsheet version which schools can email back to the Department. This new system allows for more efficient completion of the census form by the school, as certain parts of the data such as totals for each category of pupil can be automatically calculated and cross checked. It will also allow for quicker provision of data to other areas of the Department for allocations purposes, thus negating the requirement for these areas to send a duplicate request to the schools.

Later this year a facility will be available to all schools, again via esinet to electronically transmit details of their school building stock to enable the Department compile an Inventory of School Accommodation. Other developments include the introduction of Geographic Information technology which has greatly improved the capacity of the Department to identify the location and quantity of new school accommodation needed to cater for population increases.

The development of a database for individual pupils at primary level remains an important goal for my Department, however it has not been possible to progress it as yet. Like any organisation, the level of progress will depend on available financial, human and IT resources and how they will need to be deployed given emerging priorities and wider public finance constraints.

1153. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science when the database containing details of the pilot project to create an inventory of school accommodation was last accessed prior to 2009 at which time data from this inventory was sought for audit review by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33378/09]

1154. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the software and licensing issues in relation to accessing the information database containing details of the pilot project to create an inventory of school accommodation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33379/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1153 and 1154 together.

The inventory to which the Deputy refers was a pilot project carried out in schools in County Kildare. It was intended that the results of this pilot project would be used by the Department to determine the merits, or otherwise, of expanding the inventory on a nationwide basis.

The project commenced in 2001 and was completed in 2002. Having evaluated the pilot project results, it was decided not to proceed with its expansion in view of the high costs associated with this at a time when there were more pressing priorities in terms of the available finance. It is important to point out that one of the findings of the pilot exercise showed that the data gathered in relation to the condition of the school buildings has relevance for a relatively short number of years. However, the information in the database was utilised and accessed within the Planning and Building Unit for so long as it was useful and relevant. In this regard it was last accessed two years ago. The floor layout plans and other drawing data gathered during the course of the pilot inventory is still largely relevant and can be used by the Department’s Technical staff as appropriate.

My Department’s licence for parts of the inventory software has lapsed and it does not intend renewing this given, as I have already said, that the information gathered in relation to the condition of the school buildings has limited relevance.

I am pleased to be able to inform the Deputy that arrangements are being made to conduct a survey of accommodation at primary and post-primary level which will establish the position relating to the extent of all accommodation. The specifications for this inventory are being finalised with a view to commencing the work at an early date.

School Accommodation.

1155. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the rented school accommodation at primary level including the date of installation, annual rent and supplier name and details for each school here on a county basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33380/09]

1156. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the rented school accommodation at post-primary level including the date of installation, annual rent and supplier name and details for each school here on a county basis; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33381/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1155 and 1156 together.

I will arrange to forward the information requested by the Deputy shortly. It is anticipated that there will be a saving of at least €14m in expenditure on rental of temporary accommodation in 2009, compared to 2008. This clearly demonstrates the efforts being made by my Department to reduce spending in this area. The saving arises mainly from a reduction in the number of new rental contracts being entered into. The downward trend in expenditure on rented accommodation is expected to continue into 2010 and onwards.

1157. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the prefabricated accommodation in primary schools where grant aid has been sanctioned for the purchase of a unit or units since January 2008 to date in 2009 including the name of every school grant aided, the date of purchase of each unit and the supplier name and details; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33382/09]

1158. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the prefabricated accommodation in post-primary schools where grant aid has been sanctioned for the purchase of a unit or units since January 2008 to date in 2009 including the name of every school grant aided, the date of purchase of each unit and the supplier name and details; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33383/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1157 and 1158 together.

Details of the schools approved for a devolved capital grant to provide temporary accommodation (with the option to provide permanent accommodation instead for the same funding) are given in the following tabular statement. The list of approvals covers the period 2008 and 2009 to-date and indicate the options being pursued by the schools. It is a matter for school authorities to decide which option best suits their needs. The Deputy will note that a number of schools have not yet indicated to my Department which option they intend to pursue.

The funding is provided on a devolved basis which empowers school authorities to manage these works with guidance from my 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. 70% of approved funding may be drawn down when a project goes to construction and the balance when a project is completed, subject to the necessary certification being supplied to my Department. My Department does not collect information from the schools regarding supplier details for units which have been purchased.

2008 — Prefab / Permanent Option Approvals — Primary & Post-Primary 01-10-2009

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Carlow	01415K	Scoil Phadraig, Rathoe	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Carlow	04077I	St. Brigid’s NS, Tullow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Carlow	13507I	Scoil Mhuire Lourdes, Tullow	1 × 80m ² ASD Unit	
Carlow	13607M	St Columba’s NS, Tullow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Carlow	17501Q	Scoil Binn an Choire	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Carlow	18424G	St. Joseph’s NS,	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cavan	08453H	Crubany NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cavan	08490N	St. Clare’s School, Ardmhuire	3 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Cavan	14073G	St Patricks NS, Castletara	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cavan	14399N	Kilgarry NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Cavan	16083T	St Mary’s NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cavan	16316Q	St. Mary’s NS, Arva	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Cavan	18059J	St. Anne’s NS, Bailieborough	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cavan	19363R	Mullahoran NS, Kilcogy	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cavan	19608V	St. Kilian’s NS, Mullagh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cavan	20172R	St. Joseph’s NS, Kingscourt	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Clare	04548V	Scoil Seanain Naofa, Clonlara	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Clare	14757N	Scoil na Mainistreach, Quin	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Clare	15042A	Ennis N.S	1 × classroom (relocated from Kilraine NS, Wexford)	prefab
Clare	16908S	Sixmile Bridge NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Clare	16946D	Parteen NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Clare	17517I	Doolin Mixed NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Clare	17801F	Scoil na Maighdine Muire, Broadford	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	prefab

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Clare	18032M	Clonmoney NS, Ennis	1 × 50m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Clare	18555V	Lissycasey NS, Ennis	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Clare	19233E	St. Clare’s	Refurb for 2 special needs rooms	
Clare	19274S	St Conaires School	Relocation of 1 × 80m ² Classroom	
Clare	19414I	St. Anne’s NS, Ennis	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Clare	19442N	Ruan Central National School	1x80m ² classroom	permanent
Clare	19698C	St. Aidan’s NS, Shannon	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Clare	19838P	Gaelscoil Mhicil Ciosog	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 2 × 25m ² Resource	Permanent
Clare	20075T	St. Mochulla’s NS, Ennis Rd.,Tulla	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	prefab
Cork	01867W	Castlelyons NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	02278I	Presentation NS, Millstreet	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Cork	04152T	Scoil Mhaoiliosa, Knockavilla, Upton	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	08972I	Castlelack NS	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	Permanent
Cork	09537S	Ballinadee NS	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	permanent
Cork	11249C	Burnfort NS, Mallow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	12004A	Mallow No. 1 School	1 × 80m ² Classroom	
Cork	12015F	Liscarroll NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	12395S	Rusheen NS	1 × 100m ² Unit	
Cork	12447L	Baltydaniel NS	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom for Autistic Unit	permanent
Cork	12456M	St. Molaga’s NS	1 × 80m ² classroom	
Cork	13450F	Rushbrooke NS	2 × 80m ² mainstream classrooms	prefab
Cork	13543M	Derrinacahara	1 × 80m ²	permanent
Cork	13728B	Castletownshend NS, Skibbereen	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	13980L	Togher BNS	2 × 25 m ² Resource Rooms	
Cork	14014N	Ballydesmond NS, Mallow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	14726C	St. Multose NS, Kinsale	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	14839P	Clondrohid NS, Macroom	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cork	15484J	SN An Chroi Naofa, Glounthanne	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Cork	15594Q	Grange NS, Fermoy	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	16246V	Dromclough NS, Bantry	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cork	16900C	St. Patrick’s SNS, Skibbereen	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cork	16901E	St. Patrick’s BNS, Skibbereen	1 × 100m ² Special Needs Unit	prefab
Cork	17103E	Scoil Chlochair Mhuire	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	prefab
Cork	17251T	Ovens National School	1 × Resource room relocation	prefab
Cork	17360B	SN Mhuire, Bothar Mala	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	17667E	St. Patrick’s NS, Whitechurch	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	17868O	Scoil Freastogail Muire	1 × 80sqm C/R	permanent
Cork	17876O	Presentation PS, Fermoy	1 × 100m ² Autistic Unit	
Cork	17950W	Holy Family NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	18377A	Scoil Iosaif Naofa, Fermoy	1 × 80m ² Autistic Unit	prefab
Cork	18497K	Scoil Inse Ratha, Little Island	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	18567F	St. Patrick’s NS, Inch, Killeagh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	18883P	Scoil iosagain Infants’ NS, Mallow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	19224D	Kilmeen NS	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	permanent
Cork	19256Q	Scoil Ghobnatan, Mallow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cork	19351K	Kilcredan NS, Ladysbridge	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Cork	19410A	St Killians Special School	2 × Resource Rooms	
Cork	19415K	Scoil An Athar Tadhg, Carraig na bhFear	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	
Cork	19672H	Scoil Mhuire na nGrast, Belgooly	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Cork	19761G	St. Peter's NS, Dungourney	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Donegal	10062E	Creelough NS, Letterkenny	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Donegal	12077E	Scoil Naomh Fiachra, Letterkenny	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Donegal	13563S	SN Chill Choinnigh, Glenties	1 × 16m ² Resource Room	permanent
Donegal	16242N	Scoil Phadraig Noafa	1 × 80m ² ASD Unit	prefab
Donegal	16820E	Scoil Cholmcille, Newtowncunningham	1 × 100m ² Classroom	prefab
Donegal	16880W	Scoil Naomh Colmcille, Carndonagh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Donegal	17607J	SN Seiseadh Ui Neill	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Donegal	18172F	Gleneely NS, Killygordon	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Donegal	18241V	Scoil Cholmcille, Drumman	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Donegal	18520C	Scoil Phadraig, Clonmany	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Donegal	18611F	Carrick NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Donegal	19685Q	St. Cartha's NS, Kilcar	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Donegal	19724A	Little Angels Special School, Letterkenny	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	17559B	St. Mary's NS, Garristown	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	03359N	Ballyroan BNS	3 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Dublin	13217W	Holy Family NS	1 × 80sqm C/R	prefab
Dublin	13217W	Holy Family NS, Rathcoole	2 × 80 m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Dublin	15569R	Scoil Moibhi, Skerries	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Dublin	16567S	St Brigids Convent NS	Pre Fab	
Dublin	17263D	SN Muire an Seanbhaile, Oldtown	3 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Dublin	17472M	Baile Falbach, Lusk	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Dublin	17595F	Cill Coscain NS	1 × 80m ² Classroom	prefab
Dublin	17978V	Naiscoil Ide, Raheny	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	18412W	St Patricks Girls NS — Donabate	1 × 80m ² Mainstream	
Dublin	19114T	Scoil Naomh Padraig, Rathfarnham	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Dublin	19374W	Jesus & Mary PS, Goatstown Road	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Dublin	19435Q	St Francis Xavier JNS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	19456B	St. Cronan's Junior NS, Swords	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Dublin	19505L	SN Oilibheir, Coolmine	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Dublin	19542R	St. Thomas JNS, Esker, Lucan	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Dublin	19566I	Our Lady Queen of the Apostles NS, Clondalkin	4 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Dublin	19590F	Scoil Mochua, Clondalkin	3 × 25 m ² Resource Rooms	prefab
Dublin	19707A	St Ronans NS	2 × 80m ² Classroom	
Dublin	19721R	Holy Family JNS, Swords	6 × 25m ² Resource Rooms	prefab
Dublin	19782O	St. Brigid's JNS, Tallaght	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	19837N	Drinnagh Castle PS, Long Mile Road	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Dublin	19850F	Scoil an Cheathair Alainn, Ladyswell	3 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Dublin	19878E	Holy Rosary PS, Tallaght	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Dublin	19924I	Harold's Cross NS, Clareville Road	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Dublin	20012S	Griffith Barracks Multi-denominational School,	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Dublin	20095C	Gaelscoil Bhrian Boromhe	2 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	prefab

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Dublin	20130B	St. Patrick’s NS, Diswellstown Rd., Castleknock	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Dublin	20141G	The Harold National School	2 × 80m ² C/R	prefab
Dublin	20145O	Swords Educate Together	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Galway	09069L	Bawnmore NS, Claregalway	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Galway	12095G	SN Antoine, Clifden	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Galway	12954F	Scoil Bhríde Lackagh, Turloughmore	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	15523Q	St. Joseph’s NS, Kinvara	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Galway	16943U	Nicholas NS,	Issued by Mairead Sheehey for ASD Unit	
Galway	16943U	St. Nicholas’NS, Claddagh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	17118R	SN Naomh Fursa, Headford	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	17280D	Athenry Boys’ NS, Knockaunglas	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Galway	17282H	Scoil na mBraithre	ASD unit	
Galway	17444H	St Josephs NS, Carrabane, Athenry	1 ASD Unit	prefab
Galway	17668G	Scoil na bhForbacha	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	18021H	SN an Chroi Ro Naofa, Belclare, Tuam	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	permanent
Galway	18042P	Presentation Primary School, Tuam	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Galway	18460K	Milltown NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Galway	18746F	Scoil Mhuire, Athenry	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	permanent
Galway	19388K	Clonberne NS, Ballinasloe	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Galway	19449E	St. Oliver Plunkett NS, Athenry	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Galway	19965W	Scoil Mhuire, Clarinbridge	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Galway	19994G	Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh,	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Galway	19997M	Scoil Bhríge agus Bhreandain Naofa, Corandulla	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Kerry	02418V	Knockaderry NS, Farranfore	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Kerry	15945T	Firies NS, Church Road, Firies	1 × 80m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25m ² Resource	permanent
Kerry	16217O	Scoil Bhreac Chluain, Annascaul	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kerry	17710C	Scoil an Chuileannaigh	1 ASD Unit	
Kerry	18832V	Castlemaine NS	1 × 80m ² Autistic Unit	
Kerry	19487M	Holy Cross Mercy School, Killarney	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	
Kerry	19512I	St. Oliver’s NS	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 50 m ² Resource	permanent
Kerry	19512I	St. Oliver’s NS	1 × 100m ² Classroom	permanent
Kerry	19957A	Dromclough NS,	Re-location of Prefab	prefab
Kerry	20013U	Gaelscoil Lios Tuathail	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	
Kerry	20158A	Tralee ETNS	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	
Kildare	15769C	Scoil Eimhin Naofa	1 × 80m ² Classroom	prefab
Kildare	16566Q	Scoil Naomh Brid	1 × 25 m ² Room	
Kildare	16706G	St. Joseph’s BNS	2 × 80m ² Classrooms	prefab
Kildare	17064U	Scoil Padriag	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kildare	17341U	Maynooth BNS	1 × 80m ² & 1 × 36m ² Classroom	
Kildare	17674B	St. Anne’s NS, Straffan	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Kildare	17968S	Two Mile House NS, Naas	1 × 50m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kildare	18288B	Scoil Mhicil Naofa, Athy	Temporary Accommodation	
Kildare	18449W	St Conleths NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Kildare	18650P	Newtown NS, Enfield	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kildare	18650P	Newtown NS, Enfield	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kildare	19675N	St. Brigid's NS, Kilcullen	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kildare	19797E	Scoil Bhride — Clane	1 × 80m ² Mainstream	
Kilkenny	16116I	St Colmans NS, Clara	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Kilkenny	16827S	St. Leonard's NS, Dunamaggin	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	permanent
Kilkenny	16875G	St. Patrick's NS, Kilmacow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kilkenny	17108O	St. John's Junior School, Michael Street	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kilkenny	17357M	Piltown NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kilkenny	17589K	Scoil Naisiunta Chiarain Naofa	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	prefab
Kilkenny	18660S	St Nicholas NS, Windgap	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom for Autistic Unit	permanent
Kilkenny	19626A	St. Canice's Co-ED NS, Granges Road	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Kilkenny	19856R	Gaelscoil Osraí	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Laois	07183W	Mountmellick Convent, St Joseph's	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Laois	16070K	Scoil Phadraig Naofa BNS, Mountmellick	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Laois	17493U	Rosenallis NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Laois	17617M	Killeshin National School	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Laois	18150S	Scoil an Fhraoich Mhoir, Portlaoise	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Laois	19286C	Scoil Mhuire Portlaoise	4 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Laois	19750B	Scoil Mhuire, Abbeyleix	2 × 80m ² Classroom, double ASD Unit	permanent
Leitrim	15194A	Scoil Naomh Caillin, Carrick-on-Shannon	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Limerick	06516S	Kildimo NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Limerick	09401Q	Monagea NS, Newcastle West	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Limerick	13459A	Galbally NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Limerick	14305B	Ballylanders NS	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	
Limerick	15226K	Caherline NS	Refurb for 1 classroom	permanent
Limerick	16444C	St. Patrick's Girls' NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Limerick	18612H	Ahalin NS, Ballingarry	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Limerick	19800N	Milford NS, Grange, Castletroy	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Longford	20124G	St. Mary's NS, Edgeworthstown	3 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Louth	01434O	St Colmcille's NS, Tullydonnell	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Louth	17862C	Realt Na Mara — Dundalk	2 × 80m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25m ² Resource	prefab
Louth	18107R	Realt Na Mara — Dundalk	1 × 80m ² ASD	prefab
Louth	18148I	Scoil Bhride, Dunleer	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Louth	18312S	Monksland NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Louth	19214A	St Marys Special School	3 × 80m ² Mainstream	prefab
Louth	19214A	St. Mary's Special School	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Louth	20163Q	Scoil Eoin Baiste	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Mayo	07054L	Cullen's NS, Mayo	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Mayo	12350T	SN na h-Aille, Ballinrobe	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Mayo	13145A	St. Colmcilles NS, Westport	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Mayo	13389F	St. Joseph's NS, Swinford	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Mayo	14205U	Mayo Abbey NS	Small Portocabin	prefab
Mayo	15257V	Quignamanger NS, Ballina	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Mayo	18070U	Muire gan Smal, Claremorris	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Mayo	18561Q	St Joseph’s NS, Rehins, Ballina, Mayo	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Mayo	18712L	Knockrooskey NS, Westport	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Mayo	18754E	SN Naomh Seosamh, Achill	1 × 80m ² Autistic Unit	prefab
Mayo	18848N	St. Peter & Paul NS, Foxford	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Mayo	18922W	Cloonliffen NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25m ² Resource	permanent
Mayo	19812U	Foxford NS,	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	permanent
Meath	01309L	St. Patrick’s NS, Slane	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	16100Q	St. Joseph’s Mercy Primary School, Navan	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Meath	17839H	Duleek Boys’ NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Meath	17840P	Duleek Girls’ NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Meath	17856H	Donore NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Meath	17947K	St Brigid’s NS, Boardsmill, Trim	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Meath	17969U	Scoil Mhuire — Navan	2 × 25m ² Mainstream	
Meath	17986U	St Joseph’s NS, Boyerstown	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Meath	18040L	St. Patrick’s NS, Slane	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Meath	18130M	St Patricks NS, Johnstownbridge	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Meath	18132Q	Scoil Mhuire, Kells	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Meath	18358T	St. Fiach’s NS, Ballinacree	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	permanent
Meath	18453U	St Michaels National School, Rathmolyn	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Meath	19486K	St Declan’s NS, Ashbourne	4 × 80sqm Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Meath	19813W	St. Dymna’s NS, Kildalkey	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	20032B	Dunboyne Jnr School	2 × 80m ² Mainstream rooms & 3 × 25 m ² Resource	
Meath	20033D	Dunboyne Snr School	3 × 80sqm Mainstream Classrooms	
Meath	20258E	Gael Scoil an Bhraidain Feasa	837 m ² Classrooms & ancillary	prefab
Monaghan	18256L	Scoil Bhríde, Silverstream	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Offaly	15325M	St. Patrick’s NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Offaly	17508H	Scoil Colmcille, Durrow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Offaly	17746A	St. Colman’s NS, Mucklagh, Tullamore	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Offaly	18057F	Scoil Mhuire, Kilcruttin Tullamore	2 × 80m ² mainstream classrooms	prefab
Offaly	18057F	Scoil Mhuire, Kilcruttin Tullamore	1 Portacabin	prefab
Offaly	18364O	Scoil Muire Banríon, Edenderry	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Offaly	19713S	Scoil Eoin Phoill, Tullamore	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Roscommon	14966W	Kilteevan NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Roscommon	15413J	Brideswell NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Roscommon	15557K	Scoil Muire gan Smal, Cloonfad, Ballyhaunis	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Roscommon	18395C	Cloonakilla NS, Athlone	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Roscommon	18626S	Glanduff NS, Athlone	1 x100m ² Classroom	prefab
Sligo	18053U	Sooley NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Sligo	18543O	Cloghogue NS, Castlebaldwin	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Sligo	18575E	Scoil Naomh Molaise, Grange	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Sligo	19964U	Scoil Mhuire gan Smal PS, Ballymote	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Tipperary	18345K	SN Iosef Naofa, Roscrea	1 × 80m ² mainstream classrooms	permanent
Tipperary	18379E	Barnane NS, Templemore	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Tipperary NR	04005G	Scoil Naomh Peadar, Horse & Jockey, Thurles	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	permanent
Tipperary NR	15560W	Bishop Harty NS, Nenagh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Tipperary NR	16344V	St. Mary's Junior Boys' School, Nenagh	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Tipperary NR	17296S	Ballinahinch NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Tipperary NR	18775M	St. Michael's NS, Holy Cross, Thurles	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Tipperary SR	11605V	St. Thomas the Apostle NS, Cashel	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Tipperary SR	15299O	Gaile NS, Thurles	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Tipperary SR	17694H	Cloneen NS, Clonmel	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 1 × 25 m ² Resource	permanent
Tipperary SR	17779P	Powerstown NS, Clonmel	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Tipperary SR	19305D	Tankerstown NS, Bansha	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Waterford	14989L	Passage East NS	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	
Waterford	18235D	St Marys BNS	1 × 25m ²	
Waterford	19955T	Presentation Primary School, Slievekeale	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Westmeath	08100U	St. Patrick's NS, Killucan	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Westmeath	17102C	Clonbonney NS, Athlone	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Westmeath	17167H	St Oliver Plunkett BNS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream classroom	
Westmeath	18036U	Scoil Dhiarmada, Castlepollard	1 × Resource Room	prefab
Westmeath	18640M	St. Joseph's NS, Killucan	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Westmeath	18744B	All Saints N.S. Mullingar	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Westmeath	19205W	St. Tola's NS, Delvin	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Westmeath	20063M	Scoil an Chlochair, Kilbeggan	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Wexford	08221J	St. Seanan's Primary school	2 × 74Sqm Units	prefab
Wexford	13335F	Court NS, Gorey	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Wexford	15367F	Riverchapel NS, Gorey	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Wexford	15407O	Ballythomas NS, Gorey	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	permanent
Wexford	16605A	Kilrane National School	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom for Autistic Unit	permanent
Wexford	16673R	Cushinstown NS, Foulksmills	1 × 81m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Wexford	16673R	Cushinstown NS, Foulksmills	1 × 81m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Wexford	17005E	Glynn NS, Glynn.	1 × 80m ² Mainstream	
Wexford	17858L	Kilanerin NS, Gorey	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Wexford	19352M	Scoil Realt na Mara, Kilmore	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Wicklow	10131U	St Josephs NS	2 × 65m ² Classrooms	
Wicklow	11372B	Scoil Mhuire, Réalt na Mara	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Wicklow	16634H	St. Laurence O'Toole's NS, Roundwood	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Wicklow	17304O	St Brigid's NS, Annacurra	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Wicklow	18242A	Scoil Aodán Naofa, Carnew	1 × 80 m ² Mainstream & 2 × 25 m ² Resource	permanent
Wicklow	18470N	Scoil Naomh Brid	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Wicklow	19339U	Stratford Lodge NS, Baltinglass	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Wicklow	19754J	Bray School Project, Killarney Road, Bray	1 × 80m ² ASD Unit	
Wicklow	20243O	Gaelscoil na Lochanna, Blessington	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	19671F	St Pauls NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Cavan	61051L	St. Clare's College, Ballyjamesduff	4 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Cork	62360G	CBS Midletown	2 × 49m ² Classrooms	prefab

[Deputy Batt O'Keeffe.]

County	Roll No	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Pre-fab
Cork	62421A	Presentation Secondary Mitchelstown	2 × 49m ² mainstream classrooms	Permanent
Cork	62460K	St. Francis' College, Rochestown	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Cork	62730N	St. Patrick's College	1 × 49m ² classroom	prefab
Cork	91499E	Kinsale Community School	3 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Donegal	62830R	St. Eunan's College	3 x49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Donegal	71140Q	Crana College, Buncrana	2 × 49m ² Classrooms	prefab
Donegal	71230R	Deele College, Raphoe	4 × 49m ² Classrooms	prefab
Donegal	71240U	Finn Valley College	1 × 80m ² ASD Unit	prefab
Dublin	70010V	Balbriggan Community College	3 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Dublin 13	76085N	Gaelcholaiste Reachrann, Tallaght	2 × 49m ² Classrooms	prefab
Galway	62880J	St. Joseph's College, Ballinasloe	1 × 80m ² ASD Unit & 1 × Domestic Science Room	
Galway	63040Q	Presentation College, Headford	6 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Galway	63050T	Seamount College	2 Mainstream	prefab
Galway	71250A	Colaiste Naomh Eoin	1 × 49m ² classroom	
Galway	76102K	Colaiste an Eachreidh, Athenry	2 x49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Kerry	61220I	St. Joseph's Secondary, Ballybunion	1 × 49m ² Classroom	prefab
Kerry	61450C	Presentation Secondary, Tralee	2 × 49m ² mainstream classrooms	permanent
Kildare	70730J	Árdscoil Rath Iomgháin, Naas	3 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Kildare	91372D	Scoil Mhuire Community School, Clane	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Limerick	64040V	St. Fintan's CBS, Doon	1 × 49m ² Classroom	prefab
Limerick	71850B	Drumcollogher Community College	2 Classrooms	
Louth	63870L	Drogheda Grammar School	1 × 49m ² classroom	
Mayo	64710R	Sacred Heart SS, Westport	1 × 49m ² classroom	
Mayo	72100J	St. Tiernan's College, Crossmolina	3 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Meath	71980O	O'Carolan College, Nobber	3 × 49m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	71990R	St. Oliver's Post Primary School	4x 49m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Monaghan	72180K	Inver College	2 × 49m ² Prefab	prefab
Offaly	65610S	Colaiste Choilm	2 × 80 m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Sligo	72310U	Coola Post Primary, Sligo	2 × 49m ² Classrooms	
Sligo	72350J	Nt Connaught College, Tubbercurry	2 pre-fabs	
Tipperary	65450W	CBS Thurles	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Tipperary	72400V	Comeragh College	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Tipperary	72470T	St. Sheelan's College	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Tipperary	72490C	Gairmscoil Muire	3 × 49m ² mainstream — approved in 2006	permanent
Tipperary	76069P	Coláiste Pobal Roscrea	1 × 49m ² Classroom	Permanent
Tipperary	65470F	Ursuline Secondary	3 × 100m ²	
Waterford	64922J	Stella Maris — Tramore	2 × 49m ² Mainstream	
Waterford	64923L	Tramore CBS	6 × 49m ² Portacabins	prefab
Waterford	72241E	St. Paul's Community College, Brown's Rd	1 × 80m ² Special Needs Unit	prefab
Westmeath	63221U	Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan	4 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Westmeath	63310T	St. Joseph's Secondary School, Rochfortbridge	2 x49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Westmeath	91501L	Moate Community School	1 × 49m ² Classroom	
Wicklow	70770V	St. Thomas' Community College, Bray	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	permanent
Cork	62380M	St. Mary's High School, Middleton	2x0 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent

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County	Roll No.	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Prefab
Carlow	18609	Scoil Fiontan Naofa, Rathmore, Tullow	2 × 60m ² Classrooms	
Carlow	01215C	Newtown/Dunleekney NS, Muinebheag	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Carlow	16938E	Fr. Cullen's NS, Tinryland	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cavan	11205F	Killeshandra NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Cavan	17625L	Knocktemple NS	2 × 80m ² Classroom	Permanent
Cavan	17625L	Knocktemple NS, Knocktemple, Virginia	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms & 1 × 80m ² ASD Unit	prefab
Cavan	18393V	Crossreagh NS, Crossreagh, Mullagh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cavan	19608V	St. Killian's NS, Mullagh, Kells	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Clare	14757N	Scoil na Mainistreach	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Clare	18624O	Killaloe Girls' Convent Primary School,	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	Permanent
Cork	04953H	Ballyhass NS, Cecilstown, Mallow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	08828B	Kilcorney NS	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	Permanent
Cork	11262R	Dromina NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Cork	12041G	St. John the Baptist NS, Midleton	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom (Existing)	prefab
Cork	12281D	Walterstown NS, Walterstown, Cobh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	13450F	Rushbrooke NS, Cobh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	13662U	Scoil Mhuire Naionain	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	13779S	Dromahane NS, Mallow	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	13976U	St. Matthias NS, Ballydehob	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Cork	14116V	Kilbrittan NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	14839P	Clondrohid NS, Clondrohid, Macroom	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Cork	15550I	Ballyheada NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	17024I	Scoil na Croise Naofa, Mahon	2 × 80m ² Second Hand Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Cork	17363H	Scoil Cros tSeain	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Cork	17600S	Scartleigh NS, Saleen, Cloyne	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom & 1 × 25m ² Resource	prefab
Cork	18100D	Lisgriffin NS, Goleen, Skibereen	1 × Resource Room	
Cork	18713N	Scoil Naomh Fionan, Nohoval, Belgooly	Replacement of 2 × Pre-fabs & 1 × Resource Room	
Cork	19672H	Scoil Mhuire na nGrast	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cork	19989N	Scoil Mhuire na Trocaire, Castle Orchard, Buttevant	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Cork	20024C	Bun Scoil Mhuire, Youghal	4 × Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Cork	04118T	Bishop Ahern NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Donegal	16672P	St Patricks NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Donegal	18076J	Scoil Mhuire Gan Small	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Donegal	18605K	St. Patrick's BNS, Carndonagh	1 × 25m ² HSCL/ Principal's Office + 1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom For GCEB (Giving Children an Even Break)	
Donegal	19724A	Little Angels Special School, Knocknamona, Letterkenny	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Donegal	19971R	Gaelscoil Adhamhain	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Donegal	12077E	Scoil Naomh Fiachra	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Donegal	16138S	Raphoe Central NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Dublin	19617	St Martins De Porres	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Dublin	02872U	St Mary NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	

[Deputy Batt O'Keeffe.]

County	Roll No.	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Prefab
Dublin	17263D	St. Mary's NS, Oldtown	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Semi-Permanent
Dublin	17507F	St Patricks NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	17936F	St John the Baptist SBNS	2 × Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	19006Q	Belgrove BNS	4 × 80m ² Classroom (replacement)	prefab
Dublin	19474D	St. Colmcille's JNS, Knocklyon, Templeogue	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	19503H	Scoil Chronain	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Dublin	19503H	Scoil Chronain	1 × 80m ² mainstream classroom	
Dublin	19549I	St Fintians NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Dublin	19742C	St. Colmcille's SNS, Knocklyon, Templeogue	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Dublin	19991A	GS na Camoige, Clondalkin	6 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms & Ancilliary Accommodation	prefab
Dublin	20223I	GS Eiscir Riada, Bothar an Ghrifin, Leamhcán	Refurb of old Science Lab and Home Economics Room	
Galway	05754G	Craughwell NS, Galway	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Galway	12954F	Scoil Bhríde	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	13365O	Scoil Mhuire, Oranmore	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Galway	13416F	SN Leitir Meallain, Leitir Meallain	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	13914V	Scoil Naomh Seosaimh, Buaille Beag, Bearna	3 × 80m ² Classrooms, Learning Support Room & Resource	
Galway	14383V	SN Padriah Naofa	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Galway	15027E	Eglis NS, Eglis, Ahascragh, Ballinasloe	1 × 16m ² Learning Support Unit & 1 × 12m ² Changing/Wash	prefab
Galway	16071M	Scoil Chroí Naofa	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	16936A	Scoil Padriag naofa	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	16943U	Scoil Nioclais Naofa, An Cladach	1 × 16m ² Learning Support Room	
Galway	17221K	SN Cholmcille Naofa, Castlegar	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom & 1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Galway	17506D	St. Brendans N.S., Duniry, Kylebrack, Loughrea	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	17547R	St. Brendan's NS, Woodford, Loughrea	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	17668G	Scoil na bhForbacha	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Galway	18268S	Killeeneen NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	19380R	Kilkerrin NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Galway	19401W	Scoil Chaitriona, Renmore	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Galway	19803T	Scoil Sheamais Naofa, Bearna	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Galway	19965W	Scoil Mhuire — Clarinbridge	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kerry	10049M	Loughguitane NS	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	Permanent
Kerry	13615L	Scoil Eoin	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Kerry	17012B	SN an Fhossa	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kerry	17710C	Cullina NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kildare	06209J	Athy Model School, Dublin Road, Athy	1 × 25m ² Resource Room (May be changed to rental, if cheaper)	prefab
Kildare	09414C	St. Laurences NS, Ballitore	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kildare	13328I	St. Patrick's NS, Morristown, Newbridge	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Kildare	17341U	Maynooth BNS	3 × 80m ² Classrooms	
Kildare	17567A	Allen NS, Kilmeague, Naas	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kildare	17873H	St. Conleth's Infant PS, Newbridge	Replacement of 2 × 80m Mainstream Classrooms	
Kildare	17931S	St Brigids NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	

County	Roll No.	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Prefab
Kildare	18092H	Cadamstown NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Kildare	18430B	Robertstown NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Kildare	18445O	SN Scoil Treasa	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Kilkenny	16485Q	St. Brendans NS, Newmarket, Hugginstown	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Kilkenny	19856R	Gaelscoil Osrai, Loch Bui	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	prefab
Laois	13741Q	Rath NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Laois	13741Q	Rath NS, Ballybrittas, Portlaoise	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Laois	15933M	Camross NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Laois	18150S	Scoil an Fhraoich Mhoir, The Heath, Portlaoise	Re-location of 2 Classroom Pre-fabs	prefab
Laois	18206T	The Rock NS	2 × 80m ² Classroom	
Laois	19286C	Scoil Mhuire, Portlaoise	2 Storey Unit	prefab
Laois	19747M	Scoil Bhríde, Knockmay, Portlaoise	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	prefab
Laois	20071L	Scoil Bhríde	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Laois	20100P	Kolbe Special School	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Laois	20169F	Castletown NS	1 × 80m ² Classroom	
Leitrim	01125B	St Josephs	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Leitrim	19423J	St. Patrick's NS, Drumshanbo	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Limerick	09927I	St. Joseph's NS, Granagh	1 × Resource Room	prefab
Limerick	11955C	Coolcappa NS, Coolcappa, Ardagh	1 × 50m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Limerick	16946D	Parteen NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Limerick	20181S	GS an Raithin	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Limerick	20233L	Scoil Chaitriona, Cappamore	Remove & replace 25m ² Pre-fab	prefab
Longford	17561L	SN Samhthann, Ballinalee	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Longford	19467G	St. Mel's NS, Ardagh	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Longford	19987J	Scoil Mhuire, Newtownforbes	Buy-out of existing Rented Temporary Accommodation — Double Classroom Building	prefab
Longford	20124G	St Marys, Edgeworthstown	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Louth	14578N	Collon National School, School Lane, Collon, Co. Louth	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Louth	17726R	Tullyallen NS, Tullyallen, Drogheda	Retention of pre-fabs	prefab
Louth	18148I	Scoil Bhríde, Dunleer	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Mayo	07075T	St Feichins NS	1 × 35m ² Resource Room	Permanent
Mayo	13667H	St. Josephs NS, Bonniclon, Ballina	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Mayo	14671D	Creevagh NS, Carrowmore, Lackin, Ballina	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	prefab
Mayo	19387I	St Dympna's	removal & storage of 1 × 32m ² Prefab	n/a
Mayo	16904K	Lankill NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	01421F	Kilskyre NS, Kells	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Meath	17175G	St. Ultan's NS, Bohermeen, Navan	Retention of pre-fab	prefab
Meath	17480L	Kentstown NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	17520U	Robinstown NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	17520U	Scoil Mhuire, Robinstown PS, Robinstown, Navan	1 × 25m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Meath	18413B	Scoil Naomh Treasa	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Meath	19867W	Gael Scoil na Rithe	2 × Mainstream Classroom (buy-out of rented c/r)	prefab
Meath	20082Q	Gaelscoil Thulach na nOg, Br. Ruisc, Dun Buinne	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom & 1 × 25m ² Resource Room	prefab
Monaghan	00359V	St. Louis Girls' National School, Park Road, Monaghan	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom & 1 × 25m ² Resource Room	prefab

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No.	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Prefab
Monaghan	10429W	Scoil Mhuire, Rockcorry	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Monaghan	13632L	Annalitten NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Monaghan	19469K	St. Oliver Plunkett NS, Loughmourne, Castleblayney	ASD Unit	Permanent
Monaghan	19736H	Scoil Phadraig, Corduff, Carrickmacross	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	prefab
Offaly	17637S	St Josephs, Ballingar	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Offaly	20267F	Scoil Bhríde	3 × 80m ² Classrooms	
Roscommon	18454P	Corrigeenroe NS, Boyle	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Sligo	15337T	Scoil Naomh Mhuire, Castlegal	1 × 25m ² Resource Room	
Sligo	19495L	Carbury NS, The Mall	1 × 16m ² Resource Room	
Tipperary	15008A	Shronell NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Tipperary	16111V	Killusty NS, Fethard	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Tipperary	18326G	SN Naomh Pádraig, Kilcass, Clonmel	1 × 50m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Tipperary	18345K	SN Iosaf Naofa	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Tipperary	19422H	Cloughjordan NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Tipperary	20085W	GS Charraig na Siuire, Carrick-on-Suir	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Waterford	01711O	Kilrossanty NS, Kilmacthomas	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Waterford	16748W	Kill NS, Kill	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Waterford	18235D	St. Mary’s BNS, Ferrybank, Waterford	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom & 1 × 25m ² Learning Support/Resource Room	
Waterford	18380M	Faithlegg NS, Faithlegg	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Waterford	18488J	Scoil Naomh Gobnait	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Waterford	19885B	Gaelscoil Philib Barun, Tramore	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	prefab
Waterford	19970P	Portlaw NS	1 × 100m ² Mainstream/Resource	
Westmeath	17182D	St. Michael’s NS, Castletown-Geoghegan, Mullingar	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Westmeath	18212O	Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire	1 × 185 sqm ASD Unit + play area	Permanent
Westmeath	18640M	St. Josephs NS, Rath Ghuaire, Killucan	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Westmeath	19205W	St Tolas NS	2 × 80m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Wexford	12841P	St Patricks NS	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Wexford	12841P	St. Patrick’s NS, Ballyroebuck	1 × Resource Room	Permanent
Wexford	18387D	St. Catherine’s NS, Ballyhack, Arthurstown, New Ross	1 × 25m ² Classroom	
Wexford	18687P	Ballyduff NS, Ballyduff, Camolin	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom & Purchase of existing pre-fab	
Wexford	18707S	Castlebridge NS, Castlebridge	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	Permanent
Wexford	19317K	St. Anne’s NS, Rathangan, Duncormick	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Wexford	19419S	Gorey Central School, Charolte Row, Gorey	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Wicklow	17826V	SN Coroinne Muire	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Wicklow	18489L	Tinahely NS, Tinahely	1 × 80m ² Mainstream Classroom	
Cavan	61051L	St. Clare’s College, Ballyjamesduff	4 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms, Toilet Facilities and Relocation of Rented Pre-fabs	
Cavan	70350W	St. Bricin’s College, Belturbet	1 × 49m ² Classroom	
Cork	62140P	St Aloysius College	2 × 49m ² Classroom	
Cork	62360G	Christian Brothers SS, Middleton	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Cork	62370J	Middleton College, Middleton	2 × 49m ² Classroom	prefab
Cork	62540I	Deerpark CBS	Refurbishment of ASD Unit	
Cork	62730N	St Patricks, Gardiner Hill	6 × 49m ² classrooms	prefab
Cork	70990M	Colaiste an Chraoibhin, Fermoy	2 × 49m ² Classrooms & 1 × 90m ² Autistic Unit	
Cork	71101G	St Aidans CC	2 × 49m ² Classrooms	

County	Roll No.	School	Classrooms	Permanent Build or Prefab
Cork	719090E	Rossa College	1 × 100m ² ASD Unit	
Cork	70931T	Scoil Mhuire	1 × 49m ² Classroom	
Donegal	62861F	Columba College	4 × 49m ² classrooms	prefab
Donegal	91408V	Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola, An Fálcarrach	Replacement of Pre-fabs	Permanent
Dublin	60050E	Oatlands College, Mount Merrion	5 × Mainstream Classrooms & 2 × Science Labs	
Dublin	60070K	Dominican College, Sion Hill, Blackrock	10 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Dublin	70020B	Grange Community School	1 × 100m ² ASD Unit	
Galway	62880J	St Josephs Secondary, Garbally	7 × 49m ² Classrooms	prefab
Kerry	61410N	Presentation Secondary School, Miltown	1 × Double Unit	
Kerry	70560K	Gaelcholaiste Chiarrai, Tra Li	1 × 49m ² Classroom	prefab
Kildare	70730J	Ardcoil Rath Iomghain, Rathangan	3 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Kilkenny	70600T	Colaiste Mhuire, Johnstown	3 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	
Kilkenny	70641K	Colaiste Pobail Osrai, Bothar Urmhumhan	Replacement of Temporary Accommodation	prefab
Limerick	71790	Desmond College, Newcastle West	2 × 49m ² Classrooms	
Limerick	71810M	St. Michael's College, Cappamore	Replacement of Woodwork Room	
Limerick	71850B	Drumcollogher CC	1 technology room	
Longford	71710I	Ardcoil Phadraig	1 × ASD / SNU	
Louth	71760A	Drogheda College of Further Ed'	4 × 49m ² classrooms + ancillaey	
Mayo	64640W	St Josephs Secondary	1 × 49m ² Classroom	
Meath	71980O	O'Carolans College	2 × 49m ² , 1 × 49m ² Special Needs Room & 1 × 98m ² Lab	
Monaghan	76091I	Colaiste Oiriall, Ard Fea, Muineachan	4 × 49m ² Classrooms	prefab
Offaly	65582Q	St Marys, Edenderry	4 × 49m ² classrooms	
Offaly	91491L	St. Brendan's Community School, Birr	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Sligo	65140H	Scoil Mhuire	1 × 49m ² Classroom	prefab
Sligo	72360M	Ballinode College	Buy-out of 4 existing rented classrooms	prefab
Waterford	91509E	Blackwater Community School	4 × 49m ² classrooms	
Westmeath	63221U	Mean Scoil an Clochair	1 × 90m ² ASD Unit	prefab
Wexford	63640R	Christian Brothers SS, Thomas Street	2 × 49m ² Mainstream Classrooms	Permanent
Wexford	71610E	Bridgetown VS, Bridgetown	Buy-out of Existing Pre-fab	prefab

School Enrolments.

1159. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the details of the 7,000 additional pupil places in September 2008 in 26 new schools using off-site construction including the name and address of the schools concerned, enrolment in 2008, enrolment in 2009, the schools which were built on permanent sites and the schools which were located on temporary sites; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33384/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): The following table provides the details requested by the Deputy with the exception of enrolments for 2009/2010 which are not yet available as the returns have not yet been received from schools. The list includes 27 schools as there was a further 8 classroom school delivered late in 2008 in Saggart, under the rapid delivery programme.

This was delayed from making the initial programme owing to the necessity to carry out archaeological testing in response to a Condition imposed in the Grant of Planning Permission issued by South Dublin County Council.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

	County	Roll No.	School	Enrolments 2008/2009 school year
Permanent Sites				
1	Dublin	20241K	Scoil Choilm, Porterstown Rd, Dublin 15	154
2	Dublin Fingal	20247W	Scoil Grainne Community NS, Phibblestown, Dublin 15	74
3	Dublin	20252P	Gaelscoil Baile Brigin, Castlelands, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin	113
4	Dublin	20282B	Bracken Educate Together National School, Castlelands, Co. Dublin	169
5	Dublin	20302E	Thornleigh Educate Together National School, Thornleigh Green, Swords, Co. Dublin	27
6	Dublin	20303G	Lucan East Educate Together National School, Kishogue Cross, Lucan, Co. Dublin	88
7	Dublin	20307O	Skerries Educate Together National School, Skerries, Co. Dublin	34
8	Kildare	20159C	Gaelscoil Nás na Riogh, Naas, Co. Kildare	164
9	Louth	20294I	Aston Village Educate Together National School, Aston Village, Drogheda, Co. Louth	61
10	Offaly	20189L	Tullamore Educate Together National School, Collins Lane, Tullamore, Co. Offaly	87
11	Westmeath	19848S	St. Etchen’s National School, Kinnegad, Mullingar Road, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath	423
12	Westmeath	20188J	Mullingar Educate Together National School, Rathgowan, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	210
13	Kildare	16705E	Scoil Phadraig Naofa, St. John’s Lane, Athy	287
14	Wexford	20165U	Gaelscoil Mhoshíológ, An Chraobhach, Bóthar Charn an Bhua, Guaire, Co. Loch Garman	164
15	Wexford	20214H	Gorey Educate Together NS, Kilnahue Lane, Gorey	183
16	Wicklow	20300A	Greystones Educate Together National School, Blacklion, Greystones	41
17	Wicklow	20301C	Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath, Black Lion, Greystones	24
Temporary Sites				
18	Carlow	20295K	Carlow Educate Together NS, Unit 5, Shamrock Business Park, Graiguecullen	25
19	Dublin	15315J	St. Georges National School, Balbriggan, Dublin 15	194
20	Dublin Fingal	16675V	Mulhuddart NS, Tyrellstown, Dublin 15	199
21	Dublin	20176C	Rush & Lusk Educate Together National School, Hanna’s Avenue, Blakes Cross, Corduff, Lusk, Co. Dublin	163
22	Dublin City	20304I	St. Francis of Assisi, Belmayne, Dublin 13	22
23	Dublin City	20308Q	Belmayne Educate Together National School, Balgriffin Park, Belmayne, Dublin 13	15
24	Laois	20081O	Gaelscoil Phortlaoise, Bóthar Maighéan Rátha, Portlaoise, Co. Laoise	207
25	Kildare	20292E	Maynooth Educate Together, Celbridge Road, Maynooth,	22
26	Kildare	20257C	Scoil Naomh Padraig, Hazelhatch Road, Celbridge	138
27	Dublin	17055T	Scoil Mhuire, Saggart, Co. Dublin	242

Schools Building Projects.

1160. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the details of the eight new primary schools and one new post-primary school planned for September 2009 as

reported in the Annual Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33385/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The first phase of a new post-primary school building with accommodation for up to 350 pupils has been completed and is in operation. The building’s flexible design allowed for the opportunity to provide sufficient accommodation for a new start-up primary school as part of the first phase. This accommodation is available for use as a new primary school in 2010 if the demand is there. The design allows for the accommodation to revert for post-primary use in the future, as required.

With regard to the remaining seven primary schools I can confirm the following: four schools have been completed and handed over to the relevant school authorities; one school has been partially handed over with the remaining accommodation to be handed over at the end of the month; one school is due to be handed over in the next week and the final school is currently out to tender and is expected to be on site in the fourth quarter of 2009. I understand that the delay in the provision of the latter school was due to planning issues arising.

Details of the schools are provided in the following table.

County	Roll No.	School	Accommodation	Status
Primary				
Cork	00512D	Middleton Convent NS	16 classroom school	Complete
Cork	20335T	Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Rochestown	8 classroom school	Complete
Dublin City	20131D	Dublin 7 Educate Together, Grangegorman	16 classroom school + Special Needs Facilities	Complete
Kildare	20192A	Scoil Atha Í, Athy	8 classroom school	Complete in October
Kildare	20271T	Scoil na Naomh Uilig, Rickardstown, Newbridge	16 classroom school — due to go on site end of 2009	At tender stage
Louth	20146Q	Le Cheile ET, Mornington, Drogheda	16 classroom school + General Purpose Room	Complete
Wexford	20214H	Gorey ET	8 classroom extension + General Purpose Room + Special Needs Facilities	Partially handed over with the remaining accommodation to be handed over end October
Post-primary				
Fingal	76129H	Ardgillan Community College, Balbriggan	New post-primary school providing 350 places plus provision for primary use.	Complete

Questions Nos. 1161 to 1163, inclusive, answered with Question No. 1152.

1164. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects, including name and address, assigned a band rating of 1.1 indicating a new school or extension in a developing area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33389/09]

1165. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects, including name and address, assigned a band rating of 1.2 indicating accommodation for special needs students; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33390/09]

1166. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects, including name and address, assigned a band rating of 1.3 indicating a school that is structurally unsound; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33391/09]

1167. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the steps he has taken to ensure that in schools assigned a band rating of 1.3, indicating a school that is structurally unsound, the health and safety of pupils and teachers is not compromised; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33392/09]

1168. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he is satisfied that in all schools assigned a band rating of 1.3, indicating a school that is structurally unsound, the health and safety of pupils and teachers is not compromised; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33393/09]

1169. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects assigned a band rating of 1.4 indicating a rationalisation project, including the names addresses and enrolment of schools in each project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33394/09]

1170. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 2.1 indicating a major extension of existing school and extensive refurbishment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33395/09]

1171. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 2.2 indicating a major extension of existing school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33396/09]

1172. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 2.3 indicating extensive refurbishment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33397/09]

1173. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 2.4 indicating an extension of existing school and moderate refurbishment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33398/09]

1174. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 2.5 indicating an extension of existing school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33399/09]

1175. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 2.6 indicating moderate refurbishment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33400/09]

1176. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 3.1 indicating ancillary accommodation for special education and some improvements only; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33401/09]

1177. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 3.2 indicating ancillary for special education only; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33402/09]

1178. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 3.3 indicating deficit or ancillary and some improvements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33403/09]

1179. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 3.4 indicating deficit or ancillary; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33404/09]

1180. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects including name and address assigned a band rating of 3.5 indicating improvement works; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33405/09]

1181. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects assigned a band rating of 4 including the name and address of each school and when the application was made for each project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33406/09]

1182. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the proposed school building projects not yet assigned a band rating including the name and address of each school and when the application was made for each project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33407/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1164 to 1182, inclusive, together.

Information on the current school building programme and on applications on hand for major capital works is available on my Department’s web-site at www.education.ie. The following tabular statements (Table 1 and Table 2 respectively) provides the additional information requested by the Deputy.

Every application for major capital works is initially given a provisional priority band rating. A definitive band rating is assigned to a project when it is being considered for commencement of architectural planning.

With regard to projects banded as 1.3, indicating that a building is structurally unsound, I can inform the Deputy that there are currently two projects with such a band rating which are at an advanced stage of architectural planning. There are a further two schools at application stage which are listed as being provisionally in band 1 on my Departments web-site by virtue of being described in their applications as structurally unsound. The names and addresses of these schools are included in the following tabular statement. In relation to schools which may have buildings which are structurally unsound, it is open to those schools to apply to the Planning and Building Unit of my Department for emergency works funding for capital works of an urgent nature. Grants from this fund are available for very urgent works, primarily of a major health and safety nature, to schools that require them. Two of the schools concerned have availed of funding in this manner to address immediate issues relating to their buildings.

Applications are received by my Department on an ongoing basis and as part of the initial assessment process are assigned a provisional band rating. The attached tabular statement (Table 3) contains details of a small number of applications which have been received this year and for which the assessments have not yet been completed.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Major projects in Architectural Planning and Construction by priority band rating.

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Carlow	70420R	Carlow Vocational School	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Clare	15042A	Ennis National School, Ennis, Co Clare	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Cork	16746S	Ballygarvan NS , Ballygarvan, Co Cork	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Cork	18279A	St Mary’s Church of Ireland NS (formerly Carrigaline N. S. Carrigaline, Co. Cork)	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Cork	19415K	Scoil an Athar Tadhg, Carraig na Bhfear, Co Chorcaí	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Cork	62460K	St Francis Capuchin College, Rochestown, Co Cork	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Cork	91388S	Carrigaline Community School, Carrigaline, Co Cork	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Donegal	16672P	St. Patricks Primary School, Lurgybrack, Co. Donegal.	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Donegal	18052S	Scoil Mhuire gan Smal, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Donegal	19971R	Gaelscoil Adhamhnain, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Donegal	62830R	St Eunan’s College, Letterkenny, Co Donegal	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Belgard)	19817H	St. Mary’s NS, Woodview, Esker, Lucan, Co Dublin	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Belgard)	60263V	St Josephs College, Lucan, Co Dublin	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	00697S	St Brigid’s NS, Castleknock	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	17961E	Scoil Náisiúnta Lusca, Lusk, Co Dublin	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	18046A	Scoil Bhríde Boys NS Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	18047C	Scoil Bhríde Girls NS Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	18778S	SN Naomh Mochta National School, Clonsilla	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	19535U	St Cronin’s Senior NS, Brackenstown, Swords, Co Dublin	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	19545A & 19636D	St Patrick’s Junior and Senior Schools, Corduff, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	19624T	Scoil Cairtriona NS, Kenure, Rush, Co Dublin	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	19660A	Rush NS, Rush, Co Dublin	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	20095C	Gaelscoil Bhrian Boróimhe, Swords, Co Dublin	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	20145O	Swords Educate Together NS, Applewood, Swords, Co Dublin	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	20161M	Donabate Educate Together, Ballisk Common, Donabate, Co. Dublin	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	20240I	Hansfield NS	Detailed Design	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	76062B	Castleknock Community College, Carpenterstown Road, Castleknock, Dublin 15	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Belgard)	13447Q	Scoil Mhuire, Lucan, Co. Dublin	Detailed Design	1.1

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	20190T	Holy Trinity National School, Sandyford, Dublin 18	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Galway	16937C	SN Fursa, Fursa, Co na Gaillimhe	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Galway	19795A	Tirellan Heights NS, Headford Road, Galway	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Galway	19994G	Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh, Cnoc Na Cathrach,	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Galway	62960H	St Joseph's College	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Kildare	09414C	St Laurence's NS, Crookstown	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Kildare	18988G	St Raphael's Special Sch, Celbridge, Co Kidare	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Kildare	20271T	Scoil na Naomh Uilig, Rickardstown, Newbridge, Co Kildare	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Laois	17064U	Scoil Pdraig, Ballylinan, Athy, Co. Laois	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Laois	19747M	Scoil Bhríde NS, Knockmay, Portlaoise	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	18762D	Scoil Réalt na Mara Boys, Mornington Drogheda, Co Louth	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	18767N	Scoil Réalt na Mara Girls, Mornington Drogheda, Co Louth	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	19215C	Scoil Náisiúnta Ard Mhuire C, Ballsgrove, Drogheda, Co Louth	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	19479N	Rathmullen Junior National School, Rathmullen, Drogheda, Co Louth	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	19673J	St Joseph's National School, Avenue Road, Dundalk, Co Louth	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	19678T	St Paul's Senior National School, Rathmullen, Drogheda, Co Louth	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Meath	16100Q	Mercy Convent NS, Navan, Co Meath	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Meath	19671F	St Paul's NS, Abbeylands, Navan, Co Meath	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Meath	20215J	St Paul's National School, Tankardstown, Ratoath, Co Meath	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Westmeath	17903N	Cornamaddy NS, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	In early Architectural Planning	1.1
Westmeath	18864L	Scoil Náisiúnta an Cusán, Athlone, Co Westmeath	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Westmeath	19848S	St. Etchin's NS, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Westmeath	63290Q	Loreto College, Mullingar	Detailed Design	1.1
Cork	20106E	Scoil Nioclais, Frankfield, Grange	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	60010P	Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Galway	62970K	Coláiste Iognáid SJ Bothar na Mara	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Kildare	17674B	SN Aine Naofa, Ard Cloc, Straffan	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Kildare	20114D	Scoil Brid, Naas	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	63870L	Drogheda Grammar School	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Meath	17821L	Scoil Nais Mhuire Naofa, Enfield, Co Meath	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Offaly	65610S	Colaiste Choilm, O’Moore Street, Tullamore, Co Offaly	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Carlow	18363M	SN Muire gan Smal, Green Lane	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	19898K	Gaelscoil an Duinnigh, Feltrim, Swords	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Kildare	11976K	Scoil Choca Naofa, Kilcock, Co. Kildare	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Kildare	20058T	Sc Uí Fhiach, Maynooth	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	18069M	Naomh Seosamh, Mell, Drogheda	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Louth	20205G	St Marys Parish School, Drogheda	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Mayo	20046M	Gaelscoil Na Cruaiche, Cathair na Mart, Co. Mayo	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Meath	20180Q	Scoil Eoin National School, Navan	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Waterford	20050D	Gaelscoil na Deise, Grace Dieu Road, Waterford	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Waterford	20160K	Waterford Educate Together NS	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	20202A	Balbriggan ET	At Tender Stage	1.1
Dublin (Fingal)	76104O	Donabate Community College	At Tender Stage	1.1
Kildare	13350A	Scoil Bhríde, Athgarvan	At Tender Stage	1.1
Kildare	18654A	Caragh NS, Naas	At Tender Stage	1.1
Kildare	20271T	Scoil na Naomh Uilig, Rickardstown, Newbridge	At Tender Stage	1.1
Louth	19598V	Muire na nGael NS, Bay Estate, Dundalk	At Tender Stage	1.1
Meath	00885T 20200T	Ratoath Jnr NS, Ratoath Ratoath Snr NS, Ratoath	At Tender Stage	1.1
Waterford	19629G	Holy Cross School, Ballycarnane, Tramore	At Tender Stage	1.1
Wexford	71630K	Vocational College, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford	At Tender Stage	1.1
Clare	13418J	Ballyea Mixed NS, Sn Baile Aodha	Construction 2009	1.1
Cork	20335T	Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Rochestown	Construction 2009	1.1
Dublin	20231H	St. Benedicts Ongar NS, Littlepace	Construction 2009	1.1
Dublin	20247W	Scoil Ghráinne Community National School, Phibblestown	Construction 2009	1.1
Dublin	76098W	Pobail Scoil Setanta, Phibblestown	Construction 2009	1.1
Kildare	00779U	Presentation Convent, Maynooth	Construction 2009	1.1
Kildare	17662R	Scoil Bhríde Kill NS	Construction 2009	1.1
Kildare	20192A (16705E)	Scoil Atha Í, Athy	Construction 2009	1.1
Kildare	61710C	Meánscoil Iognáid Ris, Naas	Construction 2009	1.1
Meath	16646O	St Marys Convent NS Trim	Construction 2009	1.1
Meath	20216L	Scoil Oilibheir Naofa, Laytown	Construction 2009	1.1
Wexford	20214H	Gorey ET	Construction 2009	1.1
Cavan	19439B	Holy Family S S, Cootehill, Co Cavan	In early Architectural Planning	1.2
Cork	13828F	St Columba’s Boys National School, Douglas, Co Cork	In early Architectural Planning	1.2
Dublin (City)	19373U	St Michaels Hse Sp Sch, Raheny Rd, Dublin	In early Architectural Planning	1.2

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Dublin (City)	19819L	St. Laurence O'Toole Special School, Aldborough Parade, North Strand, Dublin 1	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.2
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	19355S & 20028K	Ballyowen Meadows, C/O Mary Immac Sch For Hearing Impaired Boys and Setanta Special School, Beech Park, Stillorgan, Co Dublin	In early Architectural Planning	1.2
Galway	19401W & 19468	Scoil Caitriona Jnr & Snr, Renmore, Galway	In early Architectural Planning	1.2
Galway	20042E	Scoil an Chroi Naofa, Ballinasloe, Co Galway	In early Architectural Planning	1.2
Longford	19429V	St Christopher's SS, Battery Road, Longford	In early Architectural Planning	1.2
Meath	91508C	Boyne Community College, Trim, Co Meath	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.2
Wexford	19240B	St Patrick's Special School, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford	Commencing Architectural Planning	1.2
Wexford	20003R	St Aidans Parish School, Enniscorthy	In early Architectural Planning	1.2
Wicklow	19522L	St. Catherines SS, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.2
Donegal	19333I	Dooish NS, Ballybofey	Construction 2009	1.2
Mayo	19387I/ 19773N	St. Dympnas and St Nicholas Special Schools	Construction 2009	1.2
Dublin (City)	09932B	Stanhope St Convent, Stanhope Street, Dublin 7	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.3
Galway	63070C	St Raphael's College, Loughrea, Galway	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.3
Kildare	70650L	Athy Community College (St. Bridgets Post Primary School)	Construction 2009	1.3
Limerick	16237U	Dromtrasna NS Abbeyfeale	Construction 2009	1.3
Carlow	11135K	St. Mary's NS, Bagenalstown, Co Carlow	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Carlow	17501Q	Bennykerry NS, Bennykerry, Co. Carlow	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Cavan	18857O	S N Carraig A Bruis, Virginia, Co Cavan	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Cork	62640M	St. Angela's College, St. Patrick's Hill, Cork	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Cork	81008W	Ashton School, Blackrock Road, Cork.	Detailed Design	2.1
Donegal	18219F	SN Chonail, Machaire Chlochair, Bun Beag, Co Dhun na nGall	Detailed Design	2.1
Dublin (Belgard)	19474D	St. Colmcille's Junior NS, Knocklyon, Templeogue, Dublin 16	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Dublin (Belgard)	19742C	St. Colmcille's Senior NS, Knocklyon, Templeogue, Dublin 16	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Dublin (Belgard)	19878E	Ballycragh NS, Ballycragh, Firhouse, Tallaght, Dublin 24	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Dublin (City)	19727G	St Mary's Central NS, Belmont Ave, Donnybrook, Dublin 4	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Galway	17668G	SN Na BhForbacha, An Spideal, Co na Gaillimhe	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Kerry	61410N	Presentation Secondary School Miltown (Kerry)	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Kildare	16705E	Scoil Pádraig Naofa, St John's Lane, Athy, Co Kildare	Commencing Architectural Planning	2.1
Kildare	18018S	Bunscoil Bhríde NS Rathangan	In early Architectural Planning	2.1

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Laois	17617M	Scoil Chomhgain Naofa, Killeshin, Co.Laois	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Louth	18635T	St Buite’s NS, Tenure, Dunleer, Co. Louth	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Louth	63920A	Dundalk Grammar School, Dundalk, Co Louth	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Meath	02905J	SN Naomh Padraig, Baile Bacuin, Enfield, Co Meath	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Meath	71960I	Community College, Dunshaughlin, Co Meath	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Tipperary	72370P	Borrisokane Community College, Borrisokane, Co Tipperary	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Tipperary	72440K	Nenagh Vocational School, Dromin Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Waterford	64970U	Presentation Secondary School, Waterford	Detailed Design	2.1
Westmeath	17025K	SN na nDun, Mullingar, Co Westmeath	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Westmeath	17932U	Odhran Naofa, Sonna, Co. Westmeath	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Westmeath	18505G	Naomh Clar, Tobberclair, Glasson, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Wexford	17450C	S N Mhaodhoig, Poll Fothair, Fiodh Ard	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Wexford	17913Q	SN Mhuire Baile Bearna	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Wexford	71600B	Coláiste Abbain, Adamstown, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford	In early Architectural Planning	2.1
Wicklow	20016D	Gaelscoil Ui Cheadaigh. Bray, Co. Wicklow.	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Wicklow	61790D	St Brendan’s College, Woodbrook, Bray, Co Wicklow	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Laois	07442U	Convent of Mercy NS, Borris in Ossory	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Tipperary	15696B	Silvermines National School	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Clare	14830U	Barefield N.S., Ennis	At Tender Stage	2.1
Dublin (City)	18646B	Springdale NS, Lough Derg Rd., Raheny	At Tender Stage	2.1
Westmeath	17089N	Cluain Maolain NS, Cluain Maolain, An Uaimh	At Tender Stage	2.1
Wicklow	10111O	Lacken National School, Lacken, Blessington, Co Wicklow	At Tender Stage	2.1
Donegal	16642G	Clonmany Mixed NS	Construction 2009	2.1
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	70030E	Senior College, Dun Laoghaire	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.1
Cork	17609N	Rathcormac NS, Rathcormac	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Cork	19993E	Gaelscoil An Ghoirt Alainn, Aibhinne Murmont, Cork City	Detailed Design	2.2
Dublin (City)	60660I	St Patricks Cathedral G.S, St Patricks Close, Dublin 8	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Dublin (City)	70020B	Grange CC (Linked to 76085N)	In early Architectural Planning	2.2
Dublin (City)	76085N	Gaelcholáiste Reachrann, Bóthar Mhainistir Na Gráinsí, Domhnach Míde	In early Architectural Planning	2.2
Dublin (Fingal)	17914S	St. Oliver Plunkett NS, Malahide, Dublin.	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	18451J	Scoil Lorcaín, Eaton Square, Monkstown, Co. Dublin	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	19374W	Garran Mhuire, Goatstown, Dublin 14	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	60180R	Christian Brothers College, Monkstown Park, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Galway	08512U	Iomair NS, Killimor, Galway.	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Galway	63090I	Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew, Co Galway	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Kilkenny	61580P	Loreto Secondary School, Granges Road, Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Laois	14260F	Abbeyleix Sth NS, Abbeyleix, Co Laois	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Mayo	13667H	St. Josephs NS, Bonniclon, Ballina, Co. Mayo	Detailed Design	2.2
Mayo	64570E	Our Lady's Secondary School, Belmullet, Co Mayo	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Meath	17213L	SN Mhuire, Ma Nealta, Ceannanus Mor, Co Meath	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Offaly	17637S	S N Sheosaimh Naofa, Beal Atha Na Gcarr, Tullamore	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Sligo	19495L	Carbury NS, The Mall, Sligo	Detailed Design	2.2
Sligo	65170Q	Summerhill College, Sligo, Co Sligo	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Wicklow	09760V	Powerscourt NS, Powerscourt, Enniskerry, Co Wicklow	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	81001L	Newpark Comprehensive School, Blackrock	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Cavan	06998Q	SN Tulach a Mhile, Corlough	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Donegal	71240U	Stranorlar Vocational School (Finn Valley College)	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.2
Kildare	16345A	Scoil Bhríde, Nurney, Co. Kildare	At Tender Stage	2.2
Limerick	13026P	Kilfinane National School	At Tender Stage	2.2
Roscommon	01607T	SN Cor Na Fola	At Tender Stage	2.2
Westmeath	18812P	Loch an Ghair NS Mullingar	At Tender Stage	2.2
Wicklow	61800D	Presentation College, Bray	At Tender Stage	2.2
Mayo	72050U	St. Brendan's College, Belmullet	Construction 2009	2.2
Carlow	17127S	St. Joseph's NS, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.3
Cork	62690E	Scoil Mhuire, 2 Sydney Place, Wellington Road, Cork	Detailed Design	2.3
Dublin (Belgard)	19782O & 19834	St Brigid's NS and St Aidan's NS, Brookfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24	In early Architectural Planning	2.3
Galway	91412M	Scoil Phobail, Clifden, Co Galway	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.3
Kerry	17646T	SN Uaimh Bhreanainn, Traighlí, Co Chiarraí	Detailed Design	2.3
Kerry	61320M	Coláiste Bhréanainn, Cill Airne, Co Chiarraí	In early Architectural Planning	2.3
Longford	91436D	Moyne Community School, Moyne, Co Longford	In early Architectural Planning	2.3
Louth	91441T	Ardee Community School, Ardee, Co Louth	In early Architectural Planning	2.3
Cavan	61060M	St Patrick's College, Cavan, Co. Cavan	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.3
Longford	71690F	Ballymahon Vocational School	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.3
Meath	19253K	Wilkinstown NS, Wilkinstown	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.3
Donegal	17268N	SN An Br M O Cleirigh, Creevy, Ballyshannon	At Tender Stage	2.3

[Deputy Batt O'Keeffe.]

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Dublin (Belgard)	18324C	Scoil Bride C, Palmerstown	At Tender Stage	2.3
Cavan	81005Q	St Aidans Comprehensive School, Cootehill, Co Cavan	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Cork	13450F	Rushbrook NS, Cobh, Co. Cork	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Cork	17667E	Patrick's National School, Whitechurch, Co Cork	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Cork	19351K	Kilcreadan NS, Ladysbridge, Castlemartyr, Co.Cork	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Cork	62310O	De La Salle College, Macroom, Co Cork	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Dublin (Belgard)	60341P	Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Dublin (Belgard)	60860Q	Our Lady's School, Templeogue Road, Terenure, Dublin 6W	Detailed Design	2.4
Dublin (City)	13815T	Howth Rd Mxd NS, Howth Rd, Clontarf, Dublin 3	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Dublin (City)	17976R & 17977T & 17978V	Scoil Assaim, Scoil Aine & Scoil Ide Raheny	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Dublin (City)	19006Q & 17936F	Eoin Baisde NS, Seafield Road, Clontarf, Dublin.	Detailed Design	2.4
Dublin (Fingal)	60370W	St. Fintan's High School, Dublin Road, Sutton, Dublin 13	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Dublin (Fingal)	81002K	Mount Temple Comprehensive School, Malahide Road, Dublin 3	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	60650F	St Andrews College, Booterstown, Co Dublin	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Galway	12706J	SN Sailearna, Indreabhán, Co na Gaillimhe	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Galway	15071H	SN Cillini Dioma, Loughrea, Co Galway	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Galway	19506N	Cappatagle Central School, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway	Detailed Design	2.4
Kerry	61440W	C.B.S. Secondary School, The Green, Tralee, Co. Kerry	Detailed Design	2.4
Limerick	17445J	Scoil Lile Naofa, Kileely, Limerick	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Limerick	18991S	J F K Memorial School, Ennis Rd, Limerick	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Limerick	64240G	St Munchin's College, Corbally, Limerick	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Mayo	64660F	Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co Mayo	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Mayo	91461C	Ballyhaunis Community School, Knock Road, Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Monaghan	64820B	St Louis Secondary School, Monaghan, Co Monaghan	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Offaly	18267Q	Croinchoill NS, Birr, Co. Offaly	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Tipperary	17779P	Powerstown NS, Clonmel, Co Tipperary	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Tipperary	65240L	Presentation Secondary School, Ballingarry, Thurles, Co. Tipperary	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Tipperary	65440T	Our Ladys Secondary School, Templemore, Co. Tipperary	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Tipperary	65470F	Ursuline Secondary School, Thurles, Co. Tipperary	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Wexford	17017L	SN Phadraig, Crossabeg, Co Wexford	Detailed Design	2.4

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating
Wexford	63660A	Loreto Secondary School, Spawell Road, Wexford, Co Wexford	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Wicklow	70740M	Arklow Community College	In early Architectural Planning	2.4
Cork	18786R	Sc Iosagain, Farranree	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Kilkenny	15160G	Marymount N.S., The Rower, Inistioge	At Tender Stage	2.4
Monaghan	18028V	Corr a Chrainn NS, Corr a Chrainn	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Roscommon	65100S	Scoil Mhuire, Strokestown, Co Roscommon	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Waterford	20076V	Bunscoil Bhothar na Naomh, Lismore	In Advanced Architectural Planning	2.4
Limerick	64201T	Ardscoil Ris, Nrth Circular Rd, Limerick	At Tender Stage	2.4
Offaly	17523D	SN Cronain Naofa, Dromakeenan	At Tender Stage	2.4
Meath	17964K	SN Mhuire Naofa, Rathfeigh	Construction 2009	2.4
Monaghan	72190N	Castleblaney College, Dublin Road, Castleblaney, Co Monaghan	In early Architectural Planning	2.5
Dublin (City)	16964F	Scoil Mhuire Ogh 1, Loreto College, Crumlin Rd, Dublin 12	At Tender Stage	2.5
Monaghan	07751K	Monaghan Model School, Monaghan, Co Monaghan	In advanced Architectural Planning	2.6
Offaly	72530L	Ard Scoil Chiarain Naofa, Frederick St., Clara, Co Offaly	In early Architectural Planning	2.6
Donegal	91409A	Pobail Scoil, Gweedore, Co. Donegal	In advanced Architectural Planning	4.1
Tipperary	72430H	Scoil Ruaine, Killenaule, Co. Tipperary	In advanced Architectural Planning	4.1
Mayo	76060U	Davitt College, Castlebar	Construction 2009	4.1

Major project in Architectural Planning and Construction with a band rating of 1.4 (including enrolments).

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating	Enrolment
Donegal	20150H	Holy Family NS, Ballyshannon, Donegal	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	144
Dublin (City)	20228S	St.Laurence O'Toole Girls School, 49 Seville Place, North Wall, Dublin 1	In early Architectural Planning	1.4	105
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	60092U	Clonkeen College, Blackrock, Co Dublin	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	516
Galway	20199O	Oughterard NS, Oughterard, Co. Galway	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	223
Kerry	20197K	Kenmare NS, Kenmare, Co. Kerry	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	315
Laois	20071L	Scoil Bhride, Rathdowney, Co Laois	Detailed Design	1.4	240
Limerick	20193C	Scoil Mocheallog, Kilmallock, Co Limerick	In early Architectural Planning	1.4	316
Longford	20124G	St Mary's NS, Edgeworthstown, Co Longford	In early Architectural Planning	1.4	372
Longford	20128O	St. Matthews Mixed NS, Ballymahon, Longford.	Detailed Design	1.4	210
Mayo	20142I	Scoil Iosa, Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo	In advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	266
Waterford	20170N	Scoil Choill Mhic Thomaisin, Kilmacthomas, Co. Waterford	In early Architectural Planning	1.4	147

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No.	School	Current Status	Band Rating	Enrolment
Cork	20105C	Star of the Sea Primary School, Passage West	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	343
Dublin (City)	20139T	Inchicore NS, Sarsfield Road, Dublin 10	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	215
Kerry	20196I	Ballybunion NS	In Advanced Architectural Planning	1.4	152
Donegal	20054L	Scoil Eoghan, Moville	Construction 2009	1.4	211
Laois	91550B	Mountrath Community School	Construction 2009	1.4	726

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Carlow	01415K	Rathoe Ns Rathoe (Carlow)	New School	1.1
Cavan	08453H	S N Cruabanai Cruabanai (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cavan	08490N	St Clares Primary School Cavan (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cavan	16083T	Virginia Mixed NS, Virginia	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cavan	19608V	St. Killians National School, Mullagh	New School	1.1
Cavan	61051L	St Clare’s College Ballyjamesduff (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cavan	70390L	Virginia College Virginia (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cork	00512D	Midleton Convent N S Midleton (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cork	15484J	Glounthaune Mixed N.S. Glounthaune (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cork	15781P	Ballintemple N S Ballintemple N S (Cork City)	New School	1.1
Cork	16684W	Scoil Na Mbraithre Midleton (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cork	17600S	S N Na Scairte Leithe Saleen Cloyne (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cork	20107G	Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann, Midleton, (Cork County)	New School	1.1
Cork	62360G	Christian Brothers Secondary School Castleredmond (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Cork	62460K	St Francis Capuchin College Rochestown (Cork County)	New School	1.1
Cork	91388S	Carrigaline Community School Waterpark Road (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Donegal	12077E	Scoil Naomh Fiachra Letterkenny (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Donegal	18625Q	Scoil Colmcille, Convent Road, Letterkenny	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Donegal	19313C	Glenswilly National School, Newmills, Letterkenny	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Donegal	19927O	Scoil Mhuire B & C, Stranorlar	New School	1.1
Dublin	19515O	St Teresa’s National School, Balbriggan	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin	19542R & 19676P	St Thomas National School & Scoil Aine Naofa, Esker, Lucan	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin	19660A	Rush NS. Rush, Co Dublin	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin	19702N	St Thomas’s JNS, Jobstown , Tallaght	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin	19865S	Archbishop Ryan Junior National School, Balgaddy, Lucan	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin	70080T	Lucan Community College, Esker Drive, Lucan	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin	91301D	Holy Family CS, Rathcoole	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Belgard	13217W	Holy Family National School Rathcoole (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	1.1

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Dublin Belgard	16461C	Caisleain Nua Liamhna Newcastle Lyons (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Belgard	17055T	S N Naomh Mhuire Saggart (Dublin Belgard)	New School	1.1
Dublin Belgard	20187H	Archbishop Ryan Senior N S Balgaddy (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Belgard	20223I	Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada Bóthar An Ghrifín (Dublin Belgard)	New School	1.1
Dublin Belgard	20274C	Esker Educate Together Ns (Dublin Belgard)	New School	1.1
Dublin Belgard	91301D	Holy Family Community School Killeel Road (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Fingal	15315J	St Georges N S St Georges N S (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	16970A	St Molaga Senior Ns Bremore (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Fingal	16972E	S N Peadar Agus Pol N Balbriggan (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	19435Q	St Francis Xavier J N S Roselawn Road (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Fingal	20095C	Gaelscoil Brian Boroimhe Coill Na Núll (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	20145O	Swords Educate Together Ns Applewood (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	20161M	Donabate/Portrane Educate Together Ballisk Common (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	20201V	Tyrrelstown Educate Together Powerstown Road (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	20240I	Hansfield National School Hansfield (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	20252P	Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín Sunshine House (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	70120F	St Finians Community College (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Fingal	76062B	Castleknock Community College Carpenterstown Road (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Dublin Fingal	76128F	Hansfield Community College Hansfield (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	76129H	Ardgillan Community College Castlelands (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dublin Fingal	76130P	Luttrelstown Community College (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.1
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	02872U	Sandyford Mixed National School, Woodside, Sandyford	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Galway	04506F	Scoil Iósaif Naofa, Oranmore	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Galway	05754G	Sn Creachmhaoil Craughwell	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Galway	12954F	SN Bhríde, Lackagh, Turloughmore	New School	1.1
Galway	13365O	Scoil Mhuire, Oranmore	New School	1.1
Galway	17613E	S N Caitriona Naofa Eachdruim (Galway County)	New School	1.1
Galway	17759J	Menlo National School, Menlo, Castlegar	New School	1.1
Galway	18089S	Scoil Naomh Mhuire/Maree NS, An Gharran, Oranmore	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Galway	19858V	Gaelscoil Dara, Brothers of Charity, Galway City	New School	1.1
Galway	19998O	Gaelscoil De Hide, Oran Mor	New School	1.1
Galway	20211B	Claregalway Educate Together N S Cloonbiggen Road (Galway County)	New School	1.1

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Galway	63001G	Jesus & Mary Secondary School Salerno Secondary School, Salthill	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Galway	91498C	Gort Community School Gort (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kerry	18247K	S N Mhuire Na Mbraithre Tralee (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	06209J	Athy Model School	New School	1.1
Kildare	15040T	Mercy Convent Primary School Naas (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	15040T	Mercy Convent NS, Naas	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	17254C	Scoil Chorbain Naas (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	17254C	St Corban's Primary School, Naas	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	17341U	Maynooth B N S Maynooth (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	17341U	Maynooth Boys' NS	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	18644U	Straffan N S Straffan (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	18666H	Tiremohan National School, Donadea, Naas, (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	19794V	Scoil Mochua, Aghards, Celbridge, (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	19796C	St Patricks BNS, Clane	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	19797E	Scoil Naisiunta Bhride Prosperous Road (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	20114D	Scoil Bríd Oldtown (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	20192A	Gaelscoil Átha Í A.F.C. Bhaile Átha Í (Kildare)	New School	1.1
Kildare	20257C	Sc Naomh Padraig, Celbridge	New School	1.1
Kildare	70680U	St. Conleths Vocational School, Newbridge	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Kildare	70700A	Maynooth Post Primary School Moyglare Rd (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Laois	13386W & 18828H & 19286C	Scoil An Chroi Naofa, St Paul's NS & SN Mhuire, Portlaoise	New School	1.1
Limerick	19336O	Scoil Phoil Naofa, Dooradoyle, Limerick	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Limerick	20181S	Gaelscoil An Raithin Dooradoyle Road (Limerick City)	New School	1.1
Louth	16208N	Termonfeckin Mixed NS, Termonfeckin	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Louth	71760A	Drogheda Inst. Of Further Education The Twenties (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Meath	17705J	Scoil Cros Ban, Whitecross, Julianstown	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Meath	17839H	S N Bheinn Naofa B Duleek (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Meath	17840P	S N Bheinn Naofa C Duleek (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Meath	18106P	SN Na Trionoide Naofa Lios Muilinn	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Meath	20017F	Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, Laytown, Co Meath	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Meath	20164S	Navan Educate Together Ns Commons Road (Meath)	New School	1.1
Meath	20179I	St Stephens Ns C/O St Marthas College (Meath)	New School	1.1
Meath	76103M	Colaiste Na Hinse Laytown (Meath)	New School	1.1
Offaly	18057F	Scoil Mhuire Tullamore	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Offaly	72560U	Tullamore College, Riverside, Tullamore	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Westmeath	20002P	Gaelscoil An Mhuilinn An Muileann Cearr (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Westmeath	71410T	Athlone Community College, Retreat Road, Athlone	New School	1.1
Wexford	16605A	Kilrane N S Kilrane (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	1.1

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Wexford	20214H	Gorey Educate Together Ns St Walerans (Wexford)	New School	1.1
Wicklow	17091A	S N Muire Blessington (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Wicklow	17223O	S N Muire Is Gearard Enniskerry (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	1.1
Carlow	17514C	S N Cluain Na Gall Clonegal (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Cavan	17326B	S N Naomh Feidhlim Cavan (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Cavan	17625L	Cnoc An Teampaill Virginia (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Clare	17563P	Ballybrohan N S Ogonnelloe (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Clare	20041C	St. Senan's Primary School, Convent of Mercy, Kilrush	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Cork	09161W	Our Lady Of Mercy N S Bantry (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Cork	12015F	Liscarrol N S Mallow (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Cork	18217B	Padre Pio National School, Churchfield, Cork City	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Cork	18458A	St Bernadettes Spec Sch Bonnington (Cork City)	New School	1.2
Cork	18483W	School Of The Divine Child Ballintemple (Cork City)	New School	1.2
Cork	19203S	Nmh Pol Special School Montenotte (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Cork	19410A	St Killians Spec Sch Adj To: Bishopstown Comm Sch (Cork City)	New School	1.2
Cork	19788D	St Kevins School The Rectory (Cork City)	New School	1.2
Cork	20162O	Sonas Special Primaryjunior School Carrigaline (Cork County)	New School	1.2
Donegal	11843O	S N Neill Mor Killybegs (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Donegal	19967D	Scoil Iosagain, Buncrana	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Donegal	71140Q	Crana College Crana Road (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Dublin	18671A	St Michaels Hse Special School, 17 Grosvenor Road, Rathgar	New School	1.2
Dublin	19032R	Stewarts Hospital Special Sch, Palmerstown, Dublin 20	New School	1.2
Dublin	20053J	Cheeverstown Special School, Templeogue, Dublin 6W	New School	1.2
Dublin Belgard	19590F	Physically Disabled Children Deansrath (Dublin Belgard)	New School	1.2
Dublin Belgard	20010O	St Roses Special School C/O Scoil Aengusa Sns (Dublin Belgard)	New School	1.2
Dublin City	17944E	St Marys School For Deaf Girls Dominican Convent (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Dublin City	18317F	Central Remedial Clinic Vernon Avenue (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Dublin City	19039I	St Vincents Home Ns Navan Rd (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Dublin City	19594N	Youth Encounter Project 41 Main St (Dublin City)	New School	1.2
Dublin Fingal	18210K	St Michaels House Special School Baldoyle (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.2
Dublin Fingal	19757P	St Michaels Spec Sch Hacketstown (Dublin Fingal)	New School	1.2
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	18815V	Our Lady Of Lourdes School Rochestown Ave (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	New School	1.2
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	20121A	St John Of God Special School Glenageary (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	New School	1.2
Galway	19201O	Holy Family School Renmore (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Galway	19567K	Scoil Aine St Anne S Special Sch (Galway City)	New School	1.2
Galway	20000L	Galway Educate Together N.S. Thomas Hynes Rd (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Galway	20070J	Rosedale School Woodlands Centre (Galway City)	New School	1.2
Kerry	19512I	St Olivers Ns Ballycasheen (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Kildare	18093J	S N Cloch Rinncé Cloch Rinncé (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Kildare	19277B	St Annes Special School The Curragh (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Kildare	19675N	St Brigids N S Kilcullen (Kildare)	Special Needs	1.2
Kildare	91371B	Leixlip Community School Celbridge Road (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Kilkenny	00788V	Lisdowney N S Ballyragget (Kilkenny)	Special Needs	1.2
Kilkenny	19210P	Mother Of Fair Love Spec School James Street (Kilkenny)	New School	1.2
Kilkenny	19626A	St Canices Central N S Kilkenny (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Kilkenny	20132F	The High Support Special School C/O Seville Lodge (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Laois	19750B	Scoil Mhuire, Abbeyleix	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Limerick	19587Q	St Augustines Spec Sch Augustinian Priory (Limerick City)	New School	1.2
Limerick	19603L	St Gabriels School Springfield Drive (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Limerick	19719H	Mid West School H Imp Rosbrien (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Longford	14386E	Stonepark NS, Longford	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Longford	18178R	St Josephs Convent Longford (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Longford	19987J	Scoil Mhuire N S Newtownforbes (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Louth	19214A	St Marys Special Sch Drumcar (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Mayo	19248R	St Anthonys Special Sc Humbert Way (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Mayo	19375B	St Brids Special Sch Pavilion Road (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Mayo	19451O	Newport Central Baile Ui Bhfiachain (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Mayo	19812U	Foxford Central Ns Foxford (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Meath	05630L	Scoil Mhichil Na Buachailli Scoil Na Mbrathar (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Meath	19560T	St Marys Special School Johnstown (Meath)	New School	1.2
Meath	20032B	Dunboyne Junior N S Dunboyne (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Meath	20033D	Dunboyne Senior N S Dunboyne (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Meath	71980O	O'Carolan College Nobber,	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Meath	91508C	Boyne Community School Trim (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Offaly	20099K	Offaly School Of Special Education Tullamore(Offaly)	New School	1.2
Sligo	19206B	Sch Of Immaculate Conc Cregg House (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Tipperary	06658P	Kildangan N S Cill An Daingin Pocon (Tipperary N.R.)	Special Needs	1.2
Tipperary	09190G	Boher National School, Ballina	Extension & SNU	1.2
Tipperary	15299O	Gaile N S Holycross (Tipperary S.R.)	Special Needs	1.2
Tipperary	19230V	Cormaic Special School Cashel (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	1.2

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Tipperary	19370O	St Annes Special Sch Roscrea (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Tipperary	19615S	Scoil Aonghusa Cashel (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Waterford	19108B	St Martins Special Sch Ballytruckle (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Waterford	19244J	St Josephs Special Sch Parnell Street (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Waterford	19282R	St Johns Special Sch Dungarvan (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Waterford	19970P	Portlaw N.S., Co. Waterford	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Wexford	63640R	CBS, Thomas Street, Wexford Town	Extension & SNU	1.2
Wicklow	19573F	St Laurences N S St Laurences N S (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	1.2
Kilkenny	61520U	St. Brigid's College, Callan	Extension/Refurb	1.3
Waterford	18681D	Christ Church National School, Lower Newtown, Waterford	Extension/Refurb	1.3
		Please see separate table for Applications which have been provisionally assigned a band 1.4 priority rating (with enrolments).		
Carlow	02124E	Scoil Nais Molaise Old Leighlin (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Carlow	04077I	Scoil Nais Bhríde Grange (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Carlow	18424G	Scoil Nais Iosef Naofa Carlow (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Carlow	61130H	St. Mary's College, Knockbeg	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Carlow	PPC1002	Traveller Training Centre Carlow (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cavan	18833A	S N Lathrach Lathrach (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Clare	04919H	Cratloe National School	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Clare	16677C	Bunscoil Na Mbraithe Ennis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Clare	16908S	Sixmilebridge National School	New School	2.1
Clare	18225A	S N Mhuire Miliuc Luimneach (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Clare	18227E	Scoil Mhuire Naisiunta Cora Finne (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Clare	18846J	An Daingin (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	01867W	Castlelyons B N S Fermoy (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	09872J	Cloghoola Mixed N S (Cork)	New School	2.1
Cork	12456M	Timoleague N S Bandon (Cork County)	New School	2.1
Cork	13375R	Scoil Bhríde Cros Mhathuna (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	13512B	Scoil Mhuire Lourdes 13512B Carrigaline (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	14839P	Clondrohid N S Clondrohid (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	16271U	Watergrasshill National School	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	16876I	S N Caipin Iniscein (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	17363H	Sn Cros Tseain Bun An Tabhairne (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	17527L	Scoil Bhrugh Thuinne Churchtown (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	17639W	Scoil Na Mbraithe Mitchelstown (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	17848I	SN Mhuire National School, Gleann An Phreachain, Glenville	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	18428O	S N Baile Nora Baile Nora (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	18497K	Little Island Ns Little Island (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	18535P	St. Johns Girls N S Ballea Rd (Cork County)	New School	2.1
Cork	18713N	S N Fionan Na Reanna Nohoval (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Cork	19730S	St Oliver’s National School, Ballincollig Road, Ballyvolane	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	62130M	Coláiste An Chroí Naofa Carraig Na Bhfear (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	62170B	Sacred Heart Secondary School Convent Of Mercy (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	62301N	Colaiste An Phiarsaigh Gleann Maghair (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	62421A	Presentation Secondary School Mitchelstown (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	71050P	St Colman’s Community College Youghal Road (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Cork	91499E	Kinsale Community School Kinsale	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Donegal	17945G	Scoil Naomh Chaitriona, Ballyshannon	New School	2.1
Donegal	91408V	Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola An Fálcarrach (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dublin	17472M	Baile Falbach, Lusk	New School	2.1
Dublin City	18282M	Sn Paroiste Maitiu Nfa (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dublin City	18632N	S N Eoin Bosco Nai Buac Navan Rd (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dublin City	20012S	Griffith Barracks Multi D School The Old Guardhouse (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dublin City	70170U	Crumlin College Of Further Education Crumlin Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dublin Fingal	12358M	Swords Borough N S Swords Borough N S (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dublin Fingal	15569R	Scoil Moibhi Milverton (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	19949B	Muslim NS, Clonskeagh	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	60030V	Blackrock College Blackrock (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Galway	12095G	S N Naomh Antoine Baile Chonraoi (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Galway	18125T	Scoil Naomh Mhuire An Creagan (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Galway	71340B	Galway Technical Institute Father Griffin Road (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Galway	81012N	Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiaráin An Cheathrú Rua (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kerry	13615L	Scoil Eoin, Balloonagh, Tralee, Co Kerry	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kerry	18702I	Spa National School, Tralee	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kildare	15957D	St Patrick’s Boys NS, Rathangan	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kildare	18445O	S N Scoil Treasa Kilshanroe (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kilkenny	16445E	St Patricks NS, Boneyarrow	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kilkenny	16875G	S N Naomh Padraigh Strangmills (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kilkenny	17253A	S N Caislean An Cumair Castlecomer (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kilkenny	17589K	S N Chiaran Naofa Stoneyford (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kilkenny	18078N	Scoil Bhríde B&C Paulstown	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kilkenny	19856R	Gaelscoil Osrai Loch Bui (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Kilkenny	76082H	Abbey Community College Abbey Rd (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Laois	17692D	Sraid Bhaile Boys N S Sraid Bhaile (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Laois	18150S	Fraoch Mor NS Fraoch Mor	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Leitrim	71560P	Lough Allen College, Drumkeerin	Extension/Refurb	2.1

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Limerick	16444C	Scoil Pdraig Naofa C Dublin Road (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Limerick	19966B	St Josephs Drumcollogher (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Limerick	64300V	Scoil Carmel O'Connell Avenue (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Longford	07518E	Scoil Cnoc An Mharcaigh, Longford	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Louth	01554B	Baile an Phusta NS, Smarmore	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Louth	14069P	Dun Dealgan N S Jocelyn Street (Louth)	New School	2.1
Louth	17965M	S N Bhríde Ard Achaidh (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Louth	19223B	S N Pdraig Baile Ui Ir (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Mayo	11725I	Beheyemore N S Ballina (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Mayo	13389F	Sn An Trian Lair Beal Atha Na Muiche (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Mayo	16832L	Muirisc Ns Muirisc (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Mayo	16904K	S N Lann Cille Cathair Na Mart (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Meath	01309L	Stackallen NS, Stackallen	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Meath	17623H	Scoil Nais Ui Gramhna Athboy (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Meath	17856H	Scoil Naomh Mhuire Donore	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Meath	19813W	Kildalkey Central NS, Kildalkey	New School	2.1
Monaghan	09186P	Scoil Mhuire Machaire Airne (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Monaghan	18401R	Scoil Mhuire Glasloch (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Offaly	15923J	Cloneyhurke N S Cloneyhurke (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Offaly	17508H	S N Naomh Cholumchille Durrow (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Offaly	18364O	S N Muire Bainrion Edenderry (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Offaly	18795S	S N Mhuire Cul An Airne (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Roscommon	18395C	S N Cluain Na Cille Athlone (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Sligo	18053U	Soeey N S Sughaidh (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Sligo	18979F	S N Ursula Strandhill Road (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Sligo	72310U	Coola Post Primary School Riverstown (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Tipperary	16276H	Carrig National School, Ballycommon, Nenagh	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Tipperary	18345K	S N Iosef Naofa Cor An Bhile (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Tipperary	18435L	Sacred Heart Primary School, Newline, Roscrea, Co Tipperary	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Tipperary	18486F	S N Cill Siolain Cill Siolain (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Tipperary	18538V	Scoil Mhuire Caislean Nua (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	01711O	S N Cill Rosanta Cill Mhic Thomais (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	07737Q	Villierstown N S Cappelquin (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	16748W	S N Na Cille Cill Mhic Thomais Fhinn (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	17159I	S N An Garrain Bhain Dungarbhain (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	17570M	S N Na Bhfíodh Cill Mhic Thomais (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	18167M	S N Aine Nfa Seafíeld Bonmahon (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	19953P	St Marys Ns Dungarvan (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Waterford	64990D	St. Angela's Ursline Convent	Extension/Refurb	2.1

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Waterford	72240C	Central Technical Institute Parnell Street (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Westmeath	17102C	Cluain Buinne N S Cluain Buinne (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Westmeath	17708P	Sc Ciarain (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Westmeath	18640M	Naomh Iosef N S Rath Ghuaire (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Westmeath	63300Q	Wilson’s Hospital School Multyfarnham	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	05070W	S N Baile Muirne Ballymurn (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	15940J	Tombrack N S Tombrack (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	17005E	S N An Gleanna Glynn (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	18010C	S N Mhuire Baile Daithi (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	18387D	S N Catriona Nfa Ballyhack (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	18687P	Ballyduff N S (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	18707S	Castlebridge N S Castlebridge (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	63570W	Coláiste Bride Enniscorthy (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	63600F	Christian Brothers Secondary School Mountgarrett (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wexford	71620H	Vocational College Bunclody Bunclody (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wicklow	14045B	Carysfort Mixed National School, Arklow	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wicklow	18054W	Hollywood N S Hollywood (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Wicklow	18470N	Naomh Brid N S Cnoc An Eanaigh (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.1
Carlow	01116A	Baile An Chuilinn N S Muinebeag (Carlow)	New School	2.2
Cavan	20026G	Gaelscoil An Cabhain Scouts Den (Cavan)	New School	2.2
Cavan	70350W	St Bricin’s Vocational School Belturbet (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cavan	70380I	Breifne College Cootehill Rd (Cavan)	New School	2.2
Cavan	76087R	Cavan Institute Main St (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Clare	14757N	S N Mhainistir Chuinche Quin (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Clare	16186G	Inch N S Ennis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Clare	17583V	S N Cnoc An Ein Inis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Clare	19559L	Christ Ri Cloughleigh (Clare)	New School	2.2
Clare	19849U	Gaelscoil Donncha Rua Sionna (Clare)	New School	2.2
Clare	19999Q	Gaelscoil Ui Choimin An T-Ionad Oige (Clare)	New School	2.2
Clare	20086B	Ennis Educate Together Ns Gort Road (Clare)	New School	2.2
Clare	62000W	Mary Immaculate Secondary School Lisdoonvarna (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	01692N	Firmount Mixed N S Donoughmore (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	06342L	Vicarstown Mixed N S Vicarstown (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	10724B	South Abbey Ns Youghal (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	12004A	Mallow No 1 N S Shortcastle (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	12041G	St John The Baptist N S Midleton (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	12147W	S N An Aird Clonakilty (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	12473M	Greenmount Monastery Ns Scoil Muire Na Ngras (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	12505W	Kilbarry N S Macroom (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Cork	13234W	Cloughdub N S Cloughdub (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	13663W	Lower Glanmire N S Glanmire (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	13889C	Shanbally N S Rinn Scide (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	15165Q	Ballintotas N S Castlemartyr (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	15594Q	Grange Fermoy N S Fermoy (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	16648S	Ath Treasna G N S Ath Treasna (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	17156C	Scoil Naomh Aine (Cork)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	17505B	S N Cill Ruadhain Glanmire (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	17950W	Shanagarry N S Shanagarry (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	18829J	S N Chobh Chionn Tsaile Cionn Tsaile (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	19404F	Sn Mhuire Ballyhooley (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	19526T	Sn Cill Dairbhre (Cork)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	19833F	Gaelscoil Chorain (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	19839R	Gael Scoil Ui Riordain Cul Rua (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	19851H	Gaelscoil De Hide Mainistir Fhearmai (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	19881Q	Gaelscoil Carrig Ui Leighinn, Carrig Ui Leighinn, Co Chorcai	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	19909M	Gaelscoil Peig Sayers Unit 42 North Point Business Park (Cork City)	New School	2.2
Cork	20006A	GS Chloich na Coillte, Sraid na Scoile	New School	2.2
Cork	20009G	Gaelscoil Dr M Ui Shuilleabhain An Sciobairin (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	20025E	Gaelscoil Droichead Na Bandan C/O G.A.A. Pavilion (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	20049S	Ringaskiddy Lower Harbour N S Ringaskiddy (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	62260C	Coláiste Cholmáin Mainistir Fhearmuí (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	62470N	Mount St Michael Rosscarbery (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	70990M	Coláiste An Chraoibhin Duntaheen Road (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Cork	71124S	Coláiste Daibhéid An T-Ardán Theas (Cork City)	New School	2.2
Cork	76067L	Colaiste Pobail Naomh Mhuire Cill Na Mullach (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Cork	ED40245	Dunmanway Education Centre Dunmanway (Cork County)	New School	2.2
Donegal	07143K	Monreagh N S Monreagh (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Donegal	16819T	S N Gort An Choirce Leitir Ceanainn (Donegal)	New School	2.2
Donegal	18371L	Scoil Mhuire An Craosloch (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Donegal	18737E	Scoil Bhríde, Conmhagh, Lifford, (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Donegal	20096E	Gaelscoil Na Gceithre Maistri Baile Dun Na Ngall (Donegal)	New School	2.2
Donegal	20097G	Gaelscoil Bhun Crannach Bun Crannach (Donegal)	New School	2.2
Donegal	71244F	Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.2

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Donegal	ED40023	Donegal Education Centre Donegal (Donegal)	New School	2.2
Dublin	03359N	Ballyroan B N S, Ballyroan, Rathfarnham	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dublin	11583O	St Andrews NS, Malahide, Co Dublin	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dublin	19430G	Scoil an Tsearchtar Laoch, Ballymun Road, Dublin 11	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dublin	20015B	Gaelscoil Bhaile Munna, 187 Bothar Choultraí, Baile Munna	New School	2.2
Dublin	20052H	GS Cholmcille	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dublin Belgard	12014D	St Andrews N S Lucan (Dublin Belgard)	New School	2.2
Dublin Belgard	19872P	Scoil Chaitlin Maude Cnoc Mhuire (Dublin Belgard)	New School	2.2
Dublin Belgard	20043G	Gaelscoil Chnoc Liamhna Halla Na Ngasoga (Dublin Belgard)	New School	2.2
Dublin City	17279S	Scoil Muire Haddington Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dublin City	19907I	Gaelscoil Mologa Bothar Chlareville (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dublin City	19926M	Gaelscoil Cholaiste Mhuire 4 Cearnog Pharnell (Dublin City)	New School	2.2
Dublin City	20047O	Gaelscoil Bharra Naomh Fionnbarra C.L.G. (Dublin City)	New School	2.2
Dublin City	20131D	Educate Together Ns (Dublin City)	New School	2.2
Dublin City	20152L	North Dublin Muslim Ns Project (Dublin City)	New School	2.2
Dublin City	20168D	Glasnevin Educate Together Ns Church Avenue (Dublin City)	New School	2.2
Dublin City	60450U	Coláiste Mhuire Bothar Rath Tó (Dublin City)	New School	2.2
Dublin Fingal	16675V	Mulhuddart Ns Mulhuddart Village (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dublin Fingal	20176C	Rush And Lusk Educate Together Ns Hanna’s Avenue (Dublin Fingal)	New School	2.2
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	16352U	St Brigids Boys N S Foxrock (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	New School	2.2
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	16353W	Sr Brigid’s Girls National School, The Park, Cabinteely	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	18647D	S N San Treasa The Rise (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	20056P	Gaelscoil Phadraig Ascaill Shileann (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	New School	2.2
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	60891E	Our Ladys Grove Goatstown Road (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Galway	04515G	Scoil An Linbh Iosa St Francis St (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Galway	11675T	S N An Eanaigh B Ballyglunin (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Galway	15027E	S N Na Heaglaise Atha Eascrach (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Galway	16804G	Sn Chlair Na Gaillimhe Baile Clar Na Gaillimhe (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Galway	17807R	Sn Cathair Geal, Cathair Geal, Tuam, Co Galway	New School	2.2
Galway	18112K	Scoil Naomh Eanna Bullan (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Galway	18746F	Sn Muine Mhea Athenry (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Galway	19449E	St Oliver Plunketts Ns Newcastle (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Galway	19965W	Scoil Mhuire Clarinbridge Co Galway	New School	2.2
Galway	20061I	Gaelscoil Iarfhiltha Community Centre (Galway County)	New School	2.2
Galway	20123E	Gaelscoil Riabhach Baile Locha Riach (Galway County)	New School	2.2
Galway	63050T	Seamount College Kinvara (Galway County)	New School	2.2
Kerry	09260B	S N Lios Teilic Traili (Kerry)	New School	2.2
Kerry	15945T	Firies Mxd N S Killarney (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Kerry	16217O	An Bhreac Chluain B Annascaul (Kerry)	New School	2.2
Kerry	16898S	SN Breandan Noafa, Cathair Ui Mhodhrain, Traighli, Co Chiarrai	New School	2.2
Kerry	17710C	S N An Chuilleanaig Killarney (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Kerry	18247K	S N Mhuire Na Mbraithe (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Kerry	19957A	Dromclough N S Listowel (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Kerry	20013U	Gaelscoil Lios Tuathail Lios Tuathail (Kerry)	New School	2.2
Kerry	20158A	Tralee Educate Together Ns Collis Sandes House (Kerry)	New School	2.2
Kildare	11893G	St Davids Ns Dublin Road (Kildare)	New School	2.2
Kildare	16707I	Scoil Naisiunta Naomh Pheadar Monasterevan (Kildare)	New School	2.2
Kildare	16817P	Brannoxtown N S Brannockstown (Kildare)	New School	2.2
Kildare	17968S	Ursaille Naofa Teach An Da Mhile (Kildare)	New School	2.2
Kildare	70660O	Curragh Post-Primary School Mcswiney Road (Kildare)	New School	2.2
Kilkenny	17566V	S N Bhridhe Kells (Kilkenny)	New School	2.2
Kilkenny	70641K	Colaiste Pobail Osrai (Kilkenny)	New School	2.2
Laois	15446B	Trummera N S Trummera (Laois)	New School	2.2
Laois	20081O	Gaelscoil Phort Laoise Gort Bhfraoch (Laois)	New School	2.2
Leitrim	71540J	Carrigallen Vocational School Carrigallen (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Limerick	16712B	Scoil Naomh Iosaf Adare (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Limerick	17212J	Scoil Nais Cnoc Aine (Limerick County)	New School	2.2
Limerick	18600A	S N Ma Rua Ma Rua (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Limerick	19931F	Gaelscoil Sheoirse Clancy (Limerick City)	New School	2.2
Limerick	19956V	Gaelscoil Sairseal Sraid An Droichid (Limerick City)	New School	2.2
Limerick	20148U	Gaelscoil Chaladh An Treoigh Chaladh An Treoigh (Limerick County)	New School	2.2
Limerick	20234N	Childrens Ark, Midwest Regional Hospital, (Limerick County)	New School	2.2
Limerick	42650D	Rathkeale Senior Travelling Centre Rathkeale (Limerick County)	New School	2.2
Limerick	71840V	Colaiste Chiarain Croom (Limerick County)	New School	2.2
Limerick	ED40101	Limerick Education Centre Limerick (Limerick City)	New School	2.2
Longford	00860D	Forgney National School, Moyvore	New School	2.2
Longford	17561L	Samhthann N S Ballinalee (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Longford	20083S	Gaelscoil An Longfoirt Fearann Uí Dhuagáin (Longford)	New School	2.2
Longford	63760E	Meán Scoil Muire Convent Road (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Louth	11072M	S N Naomh Peadar Bolton Street (Louth)	New School	2.2
Mayo	04796R	Brackloon N S Westport (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Mayo	07054L	Cullens National School, Knockduff, Beal Atha An Fheadha	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Mayo	12568A	Sn Inbhear Barr Na Tra (Mayo)	New School	2.2
Mayo	19972T	S N Uileog De Burca Clar Chlainne Mhuiris (Mayo)	New School	2.2
Mayo	20084U	Gaelscoil Bheal An Atha Corraí Mhuireann (Mayo)	New School	2.2
Mayo	20256A	Scoil Náisiúnta Thuar Mhic Éadaigh Trianláir (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Mayo	64520M	St. Mary’s Secondary School, Ballina	New school	2.2
Mayo	76060U	Davitt College Springfield (Mayo)	New School	2.2
Meath	17930Q	S N Seachnail Naofa Dunshaughlin (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Meath	20051F	Gaelscoil Na Boinne Dublin Road (Meath)	New School	2.2
Meath	20082Q	GS Tulach na nÓg, Dunboyne	New School	2.2
Meath	20258E	Gaelscoil An Bhraidain Feasa (Meath)	New School	2.2
Meath	71970L	St. Fintinas Post Primary School Longwood (Meath)	New School	2.2
Monaghan	10429W	Scoil Mhuire Rockcorry (Monaghan)	New School	2.2
Monaghan	17099Q	S N Naomh Iosef Carraig Mhachaire Rois (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Monaghan	19936P	Gaelscoil Ultain An Cnoc (Monaghan)	New School	2.2
Monaghan	64760J	St Louis Secondary School Carrickmacross (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Monaghan	76095Q	Monaghan Institute Of Further Education (Monaghan)	New School	2.2
Offaly	17746A	Scoil Colmain Naofa Muclach (Offaly)	New School	2.2
Offaly	17827A	Scoil Phadraig Portarlinton (Offaly)	New School	2.2
Offaly	18537T	S N Ros Com Rua (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Roscommon	17094G	S N Rath Cruachan Beal Atha Na Gcearr (Roscommon)	New School	2.2
Roscommon	18626S	An Gleann Duibh NS, Kiltoom, Athlone	New School	2.2
Roscommon	20126K	Gaelscoil De Hide Cnoc Na Cruibe (Roscommon)	New School	2.2
Sligo	14636B	Carraroe N S An Ceathru Rua (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Sligo	17725P	S N Bhríde Carn (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Sligo	18575E	S N Molaoise Grainseach (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Sligo	20044I	Gaelscoil Chnoc Na Re Bothar Baile Ui Dhugain (Sligo)	New School	2.2
Sligo	65130E	St Marys College Ballysadare (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Tipperary	07048Q	Mohober N S Mohober (Tipperary S.R.)	New School	2.2
Tipperary	12540B	Clonmore N S Templemore (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Tipperary	17296S	S N Baile Na Hinse Birdhill (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Tipperary	18322V	S N An Droma Thurles (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Tipperary	20007C	Gaelscoil Chluain Meala Baile Gaelach (Tipperary S.R.)	New School	2.2
Tipperary	20085W	Gaelscoil Charraig Na Siuire (Tipperary S.R.)	New School	2.2
Waterford	17535B	Fionnabhair NS, Fenor, Co. Waterford	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Waterford	19885B	Gealscoil Philib Barun Teach Realt Na Mara (Waterford County)	New School	2.2

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Waterford	64930I	C.B.S. Mount Sion (Waterford City)	New School	2.2
Westmeath	01731U	Ballynacargy Mixed N S Ballynacargy (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Westmeath	10857U	Castlepollard Paroc.N S Castlepollard (Westmeath)	New School	2.2
Westmeath	16092U	Athlone N S Unit 5 (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Westmeath	17327D	Curraghmore N S Curraghmore (Westmeath)	New School	2.2
Westmeath	18036U	Diarmada N S Castlepollard (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Westmeath	63221U	Meán Scoil An Chlochair Kilbeggan (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Westmeath	63310T	St Joseph's Secondary School Rochfortbridge (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Wexford	15177A	Carrigduff Nat School Carrigduff (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Wexford	16673R	S N Baile Cuisin Cushinstown Ns (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Wexford	17768K	S N Baile An Caisleain Castletown (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Wexford	17800D	S N Seosamh Nfa Bree (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Wexford	17841R	Sn Mhuire Ballyhogue (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Wexford	18684J	S N Bhaile Mhuirne Murrintown (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.2
Wexford	20057R	Gaelscoil Inis Corthaidh Inis Corthaidh (Wexford)	New School	2.2
Wexford	20165U	Gaelscoil Mhoshiolog Clonattin (Wexford)	New School	2.2
Wicklow	01782O	S N Naomh Padraig Bearna Chle (Wicklow)	New School	2.2
Wicklow	16027J	S N Muire Stratford On Slaney (Wicklow)	New School	2.2
Wicklow	20045K	Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin An Casadh Meidhreach (Wicklow)	New School	2.2
Wicklow	20080M	Gaelscoil An Inbhir Mhoir Fernbank Park (Wicklow)	New School	2.2
Wicklow	20178G	Wicklow Educate Together Ns Marine House (Wicklow)	New School	2.2
Carlow	91356F	Tullow Community School The Mullawn (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Cork	62440E	Scoil Na Mbráithre Chríostaí Bakers Road (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Donegal	17828C	Scoil Adhamhnain Rathbhoth (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Donegal	91406R	Carndonagh Community School Carndonagh (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Dublin Belgard	70130I	Greenhills College Limekiln Avenue (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Dublin City	60700R	Scoil Chaitriona Bóthar Mobhí (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Dublin Fingal	60100Q	Castleknock College Castleknock (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Galway	63130R	Colaiste Chroi Mhuire An Spideal (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Kildare	15870O	Scoil Chonnla Phadraig Newbridge (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Limerick	64200R	Colaiste Mhichil Sexton Street (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Limerick	64260M	Laurel Hill Secondary School FcJ Laurel Hill (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Louth	19246N	S N An Tslanaitheora B Ard Easmuinn (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.3

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Louth	19247P	S N An Tslanaitheora C Ard Easmuinn (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Louth	91441T	Ardee Community School Ardee (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Mayo	64510J	St Muredachs College Sligo Road (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Mayo	64590K	Naomh Iosaef Clochar Na Trócaire (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Offaly	07949I	S N Osmann Birr (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Offaly	91491L	St.Brendan’s Community School Birr (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Sligo	65150K	Jesus & Mary Secondary School Enniscrone (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Tipperary	72470T	St. Sheelan’s College Templemore (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Tipperary	72480W	St. Ailbe’s School Rosanna Road (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Wexford	63620L	St. Mary’s Secondary School Irishtown (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.3
Carlow	19784S	St Laserians Mxd Ns Leighlinbridge (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Carlow	61120E	St Mary’s Academy Cbs Station Rd (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Carlow	61140K	St. Leo’s College Convent Of Mercy (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cavan	91351S	Bailieborough Community School Bailieborough (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Clare	14468G	Kilmaley N S Ennis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Clare	18555V	Lissycasey N S Ennis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Clare	20075T	St Mochullas N.S. Ennis Road (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Clare	62010C	St. Joseph’s Secondary School Spanish Point (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Clare	62020F	St. Joseph’s Secondary School Tulla (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Clare	70860W	St Michael’s Community College Kilmihill (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Clare	70901K	St Anne’s Community College (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	04118T	Bishop Ahern National School, Leamlara, (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	10047I	Macroom Convent N S Macroom (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	11496T	Seandroma B N S Rathluirc (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	13976U	St Matthias N S Church Road (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	14198D	Naomh Eoin Easpal Mayfield (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	15346U	S N Baile An Mhuirne Carrig An Adhmaid (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	17152R	S N Cnoc Sceach Clanna Caoilte (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	17168J	S N Inis Eoghanain Inis Eoghanan (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	17251T	Ovens N S Ovens (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	17804L	S N Cnoc Na Manach Minane Bridge (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	19256Q	Scoil Ghobnatan Mallow (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	19557H	Caheragh Ns Caheragh (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	19595P	St Marys Central School Enniskeane (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Cork	19714U	Mhuire Ar Chnoc Haoine Knocknaheeny (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	20024C	Bun Scoil Mhuire, O'Brien's Place, Youghal, (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62060R	Bandon Grammar School Bandon (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62090D	Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal Blarney (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62270F	Loreto Secondary School Fermoy (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62370J	Midleton College Midleton (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62380M	St Mary's High School Midleton (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62530F	North Monastery Secondary School Our Lady's Mount (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62692I	Christ King Girls' Secondary School Half Moon Lane (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	62730N	St Patricks College Gardiner's Hill (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	70920O	Colaiste Ghobnatan, Baile Mhic Ire, Co Chorcaí	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	70931T	Scoil Mhuire Béal Atha An Ghaorthaidh (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	70950A	Clonakilty Community College Clonakilty	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Cork	91391H	St Peter's Community School Passage West (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	16821G	Clochar Pdraig Naofa Carndonagh (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	17241Q	S N Domhnach Mor Castlefin (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	17260U	Scoil An Leinbh Iosa Killymard (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	18131O	S N Muire Gan Smal Ard Aratha (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	19310T	Scoil Naomh Earnan (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	19959E	Scoil Naomh Fionan Whitecastle (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	62770C	Scoil Mhuire Secondary School St. Oran's Road (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	71230R	Deele College Raphoe (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Donegal	91409A	Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair Doirí Beaga (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Belgard	00729F	Clochar Loreto N S Grange Road (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Belgard	19574H	Marley Grange Ns Divine Word Ns (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Belgard	60121B	Moyle Park College Clondalkin (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Belgard	60272W	The Kings Hospital Palmerstown (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Belgard	60630W	St Kilian's Deutsche Schule Roebuck Road (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin City	19589U	Gaelscoil Inse Chor 700-701 An Cuarbhothar Theas (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin City	60770P	St Mary's Secondary School Holy Faith Convent (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin City	60800V	Loreto College Crumlin Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin City	70290H	Ballsbridge College Of Further Education (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Dublin Fingal	17569E	Blessed Oliver N S Baile An Ridire (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Fingal	17928G	Sn N Saibheastar Nfa Malahide (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Fingal	19549I	St Fintans Ns St Fintan N S (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Fingal	19660A	Rush Ns Rush (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Fingal	60343T	St Joseph's Secondary School Convent Lane (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dublin Fingal	91315O	Scoil Phobail Chuil Mhin Cluain Saileach (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	06200O	Boosterstown Boys	New School	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	18863J	Dominican Convent Special School, Blackrock, (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	20141G	The Harold School Eden Road (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	60050E	Oatlands College Mount Merrion	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	60070K	Dominican College, Sion Hill	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	60090Q	Rathdown School Glenageary (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	61010U	Wesley College Ballinteer (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	70050K	Dun Laoghaire College Of Further Education (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	03607G	Sn Aindreis Noafa, Baile Locha Riach, (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	14394D	Sn Cill Fheicin, Gort (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	15523Q	S N Naomh Iosef Bothar An Chlochair (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	16071M	Scoil Chroi Naofa Athenry (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	17574U	Sn Naomh Ciarain, Connamara, (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	17782E	S N Bride Naofa Sean Tallamh (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	19241D	Dominican Convent Taylor Hill (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	19996K	St Brendans Ns Portumna (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	63040Q	Presentation College Headford (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	63101K	St Pauls Oughterard (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	63171I	Mercy College Woodford (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	71280J	St Brigids Vocational School Loughrea (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Galway	91411K	Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara Carna (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kerry	02418V	Knockaderry N S Farranfore (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kerry	03132I	S N Sliabh A Mhadra Ballyduff (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kerry	11746Q	Castlegregory Mxd N S Castlegregory (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kerry	61220I	St. Joseph's Secondary School Doon Road (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kerry	61301I	Coláiste Íde Baile An Ghóilín (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.4

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Kerry	61360B	The Intermediate School Iveragh Road (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kerry	91504R	Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra Rathmore (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	13328I	Newbridge 2 N S (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	13902O	Hewetsons N S Clane (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	16302F	St Brigids N S Ballysax (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	16706G	St Josephs Bns Kilcock (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	17872F	St Conleths And Marys N S Newbridge (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	18288B	Scoil Mhichil Naofa Athy (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	61690W	Cross And Passion College Kilcullen (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kildare	70670R	Colaiste Lorcaín Castledermot (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kilkenny	16827S	Scoil San Lionard Dunnamaggin (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kilkenny	17108O	St Johns Infants N S Kilkenny (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kilkenny	61560J	St Kieran's College Secondary School (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kilkenny	70600T	Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Kilkenny	70610W	City Vocational School New Street (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Laois	07183W	St Josephs Girls N.S. Davitt Road (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Laois	16070K	Mountmellick Boys N S Mountmellick (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Laois	71470O	Clonaslee Vocational School Clonaslee (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Laois	91426A	Community School Mountmellick (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Leitrim	19423J	St. Patrick's Ns (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Leitrim	71570S	Vocational School Drumshanbo (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Leitrim	81013P	St. Clare's Comprehensive School Manorhamilton (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Leitrim	91496V	Community School Carrick-On-Shannon (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	09306W	Croom National School Croom (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	11422N	Mahoonagh N S Castlemahon (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	16443A	Scoil Pdraig Naofa B Dublin Road (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	16913L	Scoil Na Naoinean Eas Geiptine (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	19667O	Our Lady Of Lourdes N S Rosbrien (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	19894C	An Mhodh Scoil Ascail Ui Chonaill (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	64280S	Salesian Secondary School Fernbank (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Limerick	64310B	Villiers Secondary School North Circular Road (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Longford	14650S	Cloontagh Mixed N S Cloontagh (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Longford	71710I	Ardscuil Phadraig Granard (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	17862C	Realt Na Mara Sois. Mill Street (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	63841E	St Mary's Diocesan School Beamore Road (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	63850F	Our Ladys College Greenhills (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Louth	63860I	Sacred Heart Secondary School Sunnyside (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	63880O	Colaiste Rís Sraid An Tséipéil (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	63890R	St Mary’s College Dundalk (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	63900R	St Vincent’s Secondary School Seatown Place (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	63910U	St Louis Secondary School Dun Lughaidh (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	71761C	St Oliver’s Community College Drogheda (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Louth	71770D	Ó Fiaich College Dublin Road (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	13145A	S N Naomh Colm Cille Westport (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	13174H	St Columbas N.S. Inishturk (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	14205U	S N Mainistir Muigheo Claremorris (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	18070U	Convent Of Mercy N.S. Claremorris (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	18561Q	S N Naomh Ioseph Raithini (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	64500G	Balla Secondary School Balla (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	64640W	St Joseph’s Secondary School Foxford (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	64690O	Scoil Muire Agus Padraig Swinford (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	64691Q	Coláiste Mhuire Tuar Mhic Éadaigh (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Mayo	72160E	Carrowbeg College Westport (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Meath	15104T	Bride Naofa N S Cannistown (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Meath	17480L	S N Baile Cheant Baile Cheant (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Meath	18132Q	S N Muire Carlanstown (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Meath	19018A	Dangan Mixed N S Dangan (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Meath	19476H	St Oliver Plunkett Ns Navan (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Meath	19867W	Scoil Na Rithe Dun Seachlainn (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Monaghan	00359V	St. Louis Girls National School Park Road (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Monaghan	64770M	Our Lady’s Secondary School Castleblayney (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Monaghan	72180K	Inver College Carrickmacross (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Offaly	16013V	Edenderry Convent N S St Marys Road (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Roscommon	14966W	Kilteevan N S Roscommon (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Roscommon	15083O	St Marys Convent N S Roscommon (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Roscommon	15557K	Cloonfad N S Ballyhaunis (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Sligo	15217J	Ardkeerin N S Riverstown (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	01594N	St Johns Roscrea (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	04005G	S N Naomh Peadar Horse And Jockey (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	16810B	Eochaille Ara N S Newtown (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	16835R	S N Naomh Treasa Borrisoleigh (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	18379E	Barnane N S Templemore (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	18775M	S N Micheal Naofa (Tipperary)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	65380E	St Mary’s Secondary School Nenagh (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Tipperary	65460C	Presentation Secondary School Thurles (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	72400V	Comeragh College Greenside (Tipperary S.R.)	New School	2.4
Tipperary	72450N	St Joseph's College Newport (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	72490C	Vocational School Castlemeadows (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Tipperary	76069P	Colaiste Phobáil Ros Cré Corville Rd (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Waterford	15046I	St Stephens N S Waterford (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Waterford	18380M	S N Faiche Liag Portlairge (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Waterford	18793O	Sc Naomh Eoin Le Dia Passage Road (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Waterford	76066J	Meánscoil San Nioclás Rinn O Gcuanach (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Westmeath	05916G	Tyrellspass Mixed National School	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Westmeath	17189R	Rath Eoghan N S Rath Eoghan (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Westmeath	19008U	Scoil Phadraig Baile An Mhuileann (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Westmeath	63190M	Marist College Retreat Road (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Westmeath	63280N	St Finian's College Mullingar (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wexford	17858L	S N Coill An Iarainn Kilanerin (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wexford	18558E	S N Baile An Phiarsaigh Drinagh (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	11372B	Brittas Bay Mxd N S Brittas Bay (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	12529N	St Saviours N S Rathdrum (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	14398L	The Glebe Ns Wicklow (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	17500O	S N Muire Mxd Barndarrig (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	17826V	Na Coroine Muire Mxd Ashford (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	18118W	Coolfancy N S Cul Fhasaigh (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	19734D	St Francis N S Newcastle (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	20039P	Scoil Naomh Iosaf Baltinglass (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	61820J	Loreto Secondary School Vevay Rd (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	70760S	Blessington Community College Naas Rd (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Wicklow	81016V	East Glendalough School Station Road (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.4
Carlow	17053P	Bishop Foley Memorial School Carlow (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cavan	14336M	Searcog I N S Shercock (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cavan	16316Q	St Marys N S Arva (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cavan	19679V	S N Aodhain Naofa An Babhun Bui (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cavan	70360C	St. Mogue's College Bawnboy (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Clare	16946D	Sn An Phairtin Mixed Parteen (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	04230N	Scoil Naomh Eoin Ballincurrig (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	09537S	Ballinadee N S Bandon (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	12447L	Baltydaniel N S Mallow (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	12967O	Inchigeela N S Inchigeela (Cork County)	New School	2.5

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Cork	13779S	S N Dhrom Athain Mallow (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	14116V	Kilbrittain Mixed N S Kilbrittain (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	14816D	Scoil Lachtain Naofa (Cork)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	15701O	Bartlemy National School, Rathcormac, Fermoy, (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	15903D	Killavullen Ns, Mallow (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	16259H	Kilcolman N S Enniskeen (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	17313P	Our Lady Of Lourdes Ballinlough (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	19224D	S N Cillmin Cillmin (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	19637F	Scoil Fionnbarra Beal Atha Ghaorthaidh (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	62560O	Coláiste Chríost Rí Capwell Road (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	62580U	Coláiste An Spioraid Naoimh Bishopstown (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	62661U	Mount Mercy College Model Farm Road (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Cork	76064F	Glanmire Community College Glanmire (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	04809A	Scoil An Aingil Choimheadai An Cheididh (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	18129E	Scoil Naomh Peadar (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	18251B	Ayr Hill N S Ramelton Ramelton (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	18520C	Scoil Phadraig Rath Seince (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	18605K	Scoil Naomh Padraig Boys Carndonagh (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	19518U	S N Naomh Baoithin Sc Naomh Baoithin (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	62861F	St Columbas College Stranorlar (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	76084L	Moville Community College Carrownaff (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	81011L	The Royal And Prior School Raphoe (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Donegal	91407T	Rosses Community School Dungloe (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Belgard	60561G	St Michaels College Ailesbury Road (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Belgard	91510M	St. Colmcille’s Community School Scholarstown Rd (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	04992R	Scoil An Croi Naofa Glasnevin (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	11894I	Scoil Mhuire 15 Gilford Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	16577V	St Brigids Convent Glasnevin (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	16860Q	Corpus Christi N S Home Farm Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	17367P	Scoil Mhuire Gns Navan Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	17912O	S N Eoin Bosco Buach Navan Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	18342E	Sn Louise De Marillac Ballyfermot (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	18817C	S N Brighde Cullenswood House (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Dublin City	60500J	Marian College Ballsbridge (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	60910F	Alexandra College Milltown (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin City	60991I	Our Lady Of Mercy Secondary School Mourne Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	09492W	Balscadden N S Balscadden (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	16267G	St Patricks Boys National School Portrane Road (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	16332O	St Patricks Snr Mixed Skerries (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	18412W	S N C Naomh Padraig Donabate (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	18976W	S N Cholmille B Swords (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	18977B	S N Cholmille C Swords (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	19601H	St Philip The Apostle Junior N S Mountview (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	19643A	St Philips Senior N S Mountview (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	60120W	Mount Sackville Secondary School Chapelizod (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dublin Fingal	70010V	Balbriggan Community College Pine Ridge (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown	19723V	Queen Of Angels Primary School Wedgewood (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	13914V	Scoil Naomh Iosef Rathun (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	14377D	S N Cill Conaill Cill Conaill (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	14420B	S N Naomh Padraig Tully (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	15331H	S N Baile Nua Maigh Chuilinn (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	16293H	S N Cill Richill Baile Locha Riabhach (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	16982H	S N Ath Eascrach Chuain Beal Atha Na Sluagh (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	17444H	S N Seosamh Naofa An Ceathru Bhan (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	17789S	S N Cill Tartain Gort Inse Guaire (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	18332B	Scoil Naomh Padraig Magh Locha (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	18636V	S N Bheanain Tuam (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	19529C	Scoil Mhuire Maigh Cuilinn (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	19803T	Sn Seamus Naofa Bearna (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	62870G	Presentation College Athenry (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	63100I	Calasanctius College Oranmore (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	71270G	Gairmscoil Mhuire Athenry (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	71300M	Gairmscoil Éinne Oileain Arann Cill Rónain (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	71310P	Gairm Scoil Chilleáin Naofa Cnoc Breac (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	71320S	Gairmscoil Fheichin Naofa Corr Na Mona (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Galway	71370K	Coláiste Ghobnait Inis Oírr (Galway County)	New School	2.5

[Deputy Batt O'Keeffe.]

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Galway	71380N	Gairmscoil Na Bpiarsach Ros Muc (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	04062S	Listowel Presentation Primary Listowel (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	12832O	Scoil Mhuire B Killorglin (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	17012B	S N An Fhossa Killarney (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	19384C	Ardfert Central N S Ard Fhearta (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	19631Q	Gaelscoil Mhic Easmainn Rath Ronain (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	19941I	Gaelscoil Faithleann Cill Airne (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	61250R	Meanscoil Phadraig Naofa Castleisland (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	68070E	Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kerry	68075O	Mean Scoil Nua An Leith Triuigh Caislean Ghriaire (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kildare	16845U	Rathcoffey N S Rathcoffey (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kildare	17873H	S N Connlaodh Naofa N Newbridge (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kildare	17931S	S N Brighde Ticknevin (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kildare	18130M	St Patricks Ns Johnstownbridge (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kildare	18430B	S N Baile Roibeaird (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kildare	18650P	Newtown Ns Enfield (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kilkenny	16116I	S N Naomh Colmain Clarach Higginstown (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kilkenny	16485Q	St Brendans Mixed N S Hugginstown (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kilkenny	61510R	Coláiste Éamann Rís Callan (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kilkenny	61590S	Presentation Secondary School Loughboy (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Kilkenny	91360T	Community School Castlecomer (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Laois	63420D	Scoil Iosaif Cbs Portarlinton (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Leitrim	15194A	Naomh Caillin Fiodhnach Foxfield (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Leitrim	17233R	Manorhamilton B N S Scoil San Clar (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Limerick	06516S	Kildimo National School Kildimo (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Limerick	16264A	Abbeysteale B N S 1 Abbeysteale (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Limerick	17076E	Scoil Mhuire Gleann Ruadh (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Limerick	18367U	S N Toinn An Tairbh Cappamore (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Limerick	19475F	St Brigids Ns Singland (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Limerick	64250J	Presentation Secondary School Sexton Street (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Limerick	71930W	Limerick Senior College Mulgrave Street (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Longford	19467G	Saint Mels Saint Mels (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Louth	63840C	St. Joseph's C.B.S. Newfoundwell Rd (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Louth	71750U	Bush Post Primary School Riverstown (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	13797U	Lecanvey N S Westport (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Mayo	14671D	S N Na Craobhaighe Carrowmore-Lacken (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	15257V	Quignamanger N S Ballina (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	18175L	S N Beannchair Carrowmore (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	18542M	S N Naomh Padraig Castlebar (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	19832D	Scoil Raifteiri Faiche An Aonaigh (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	19903A	Kiltimagh Central Kiltimagh (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	20037L	S N Padraig Naofa Louisburgh (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	64700O	Rice College Castlebar Road (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	64710R	Sacred Heart School Westport (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	72100J	St. Tiernan's College Crossmolina (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Mayo	91494R	St Louis Community School Kiltimagh (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Meath	10801Q	Drumbarragh N S Drumbarragh (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Meath	17203I	S N Ultain Naofa Domhnach Padraig (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Meath	19768U	Scoil Mhuire Ashbourne (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Monaghan	16923O	Urbleshanny N S Urbleshanny (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Monaghan	18494E	St Louis Infant School Park Road (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Offaly	10353P	Charleville N S (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Offaly	18406E	S N Proinsias Naofa Clarach (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Offaly	19638H	Coolderry Central Ns Brosna (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Roscommon	65080P	C.B.S. Roscommon Abbeytown (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Sligo	02013S	Ballintogher N S Ballintogher (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Sligo	15004P	Scoil Asicus Lar Easa (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Sligo	15571E	Kilglass N S Enniscrone (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Sligo	19408N	Rathcormack N S Rathcormack (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Sligo	19964U	Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal Ballymote (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Sligo	72320A	Coláiste Iascaigh Easkey (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Tipperary	15560W	Bishop Harty Ns Ballinree (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Tipperary	16344V	St Marys Jnr B N S Nenagh (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Tipperary	18135W	Scoil Angela Ursuline Convent (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Tipperary	18213Q	S N Leamhach Thurles (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Tipperary	19645E	St Oliver Plunketts Ns Heywood Rd (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Waterford	16976M	S N Deaglan Portlairge (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Westmeath	14603J	Rochfortbridge Convent Rochfortbridge (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Westmeath	19205W	Naomh Tola N S Coill Uailleach (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Westmeath	63191O	St Aloysius College The Park (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wexford	06959G	Clonroche N S Clonroche (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wexford	13335F	Court N S Court (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wexford	15407O	Sn Baile Thomais Baile Thomais (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wexford	18280I	Scoil Naomh Ioseph Gorey (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wexford	18824W	St Iberius N S Davitt Road (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wexford	91492N	Gorey Community School Esmonde Street (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	2.5

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Wicklow	17181B	St Josephs N S Templeraíney (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wicklow	18242A	Carnew N S Carnew (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wicklow	18489L	Tinahely N S (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wicklow	19339U	Stratford Lodge Ns Baltinglass (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wicklow	70770V	St Thomas’ Community College Novara Avenue (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wicklow	70790E	Coláiste Bhríde Carnew Carnew (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Wicklow	91376L	St. Killian’s Community School Ballywaltrim (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	2.5
Carlow	61150N	Presentation / De La Salle College Royal Oak Road (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Cork	16159D	Mallow Con N S Mallow (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Cork	16377N	St Marys National School Orilia Terrace (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Cork	62180E	Coliste Mhuire, Cobh (Cork)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Cork	81009B	Boherbue Comprehensive School Boherbue (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Dublin Belgard	19465C	St Kevins Boys Kilnarnagh (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Dublin Belgard	19466E	St Kevins Girls Kilnarnagh (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Dublin City	09750S	St Josephs Boys N S Terenure (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Dublin Fingal	60021U	St Marys Secondary School Baldoye (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Dublin Fingal	91316Q	Blakestown Community School Blanchardstown (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Kerry	70560K	Gaelcholáiste Chiarraí Tobar Mhaigh Dor (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Mayo	05215W	S N Croi Iosa Ballina (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Offaly	72530L	Ard Scoil Chiarain Naofa Frederick St. (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Tipperary	17332T	St Marys Parochial School Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	2.6
Cavan	11205F	Killeshandra 2 N S (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Cavan	14320U	Corlea N S Kingscourt (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Cavan	19418Q	Castlerahan Central Ns Castlerahan (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Cavan	19527V	Cabra Central N S Cabra (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Clare	10568N	S N Cuibhreann Cill Chaoi (Clare)	New School	3.1
Clare	13870E	Kilkishen N S Sn Muire Na D Chomhairl (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Cork	02114B	S N Baile Ui Ghiblin Mitchelstown (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	15770K	S N Naomh Naille Na Caologa (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	16138S	Raphoe Central N S Raphoe (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	16608G	Killybegs Common N S The Commons (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	16837V	S N Duchoraidh Duchoraidh (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	16850N	St Garvan’s N.S. Drum Halla (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	17040G	Sn Naomh Samhthann Drumdoit (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	17057A	Dromcaoin Bealach Fheid Dromcaoin (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	18058H	Scoil Naomh Seosamh Rathdomhnaill (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Donegal	18286U	S N Na Hacraí Ailt An Chorrain (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	19009W	Craanford N S Craanford (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Donegal	19228L	S N Naomh Brid Na Dunaibh (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Dublin Belgard	20166W	Griffreen Valley Educate Together Ns (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Dublin Belgard	60902G	St Pauls Secondary School Greenhills (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Dublin City	18205R	S N An Pharoiste Finglas (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Dublin City	19668Q	St Francis Senior N S Priorswood (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Dublin City	60520P	Belvedere College S.J 6 Great Denmark Street (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Dublin City	91344V	Rosmini Community School Grace Park Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Dublin Fingal	60383I	Coláiste Choilm Dublin Road (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Galway	08958O	S N An Eanaigh Cailini Ballyglunin (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Galway	10095T	S N Naomh Treasa Killure (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Galway	12946G	S N Coilm Cille Ros-A-Mhil (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Galway	13528Q	Sn Oilean Droim Leitir Mor (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Galway	15835M	St Brendans N S Loughrea (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Galway	19973V	Scoil Mhuire Clifden (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Kerry	08530W	Lauragh National School Killarney (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Kerry	19536W	Holy Family (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Kildare	15599D	St Brigids Primary School Kildare Town (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Kildare	15769C	Monasterevan Convent Monasterevan (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Leitrim	08673V	The Hunt N S Castle Street (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Leitrim	18181G	St. Hugh's N.S. Dowra (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Limerick	18872K	Scoil Ide Corbally (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Louth	01434O	S N Columcille Tullydonnell (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Louth	01553W	Louth Mixed N S Louth (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Mayo	13659I	Beacan Mixed N S Bekan (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Mayo	14808E	Irishtown N S Claremorris (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Mayo	16021U	Lisaniska N S S N Lios An Uisce (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Mayo	16122D	Knock N S Claremorris (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Mayo	16173U	Kinaffe N S Swinford (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Mayo	16283E	S N Pol A Tsomais Beal An Atha (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Meath	11039O	Kilbeg N S Kilbeg (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Meath	11978O	Scoil Mhuire Ns Moylagh (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Meath	16143L	S N Pheadair Agus Phoil Drumconrath (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Meath	17560J	S N Seosamh Naomtha Dun Doire (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Meath	18037W	S N Mhuire Baile Ui Earain (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Offaly	02413L	S N Naomh Eoin An Rath (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Roscommon	16427C	Clonown N S Athlone (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Roscommon	16816N	Attyrory N S Ballinasloe (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Sligo	15342M	S N Naomh Mhuire Ceis Chorainn (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	3.1

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County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Tipperary	00590A	Borrisoleigh B N S Borrisoleigh (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Tipperary	15008A	Shronell N S Lattin (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Tipperary	17244W	S N Naomh Ruadhain Lorrha (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Waterford	15540Q	Ballyduff B 2 N S Ballyduff (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Westmeath	08100U	S N Phadraig Baile Eamainn (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Westmeath	17182D	Mhichil Naofa N S Castletown-Geoghegan (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Westmeath	19650U	Scoil Cholmain Naofa Bellview (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Wexford	03633H	Scoil Náisiúnta Bhantiarna Lourdes Bunclody (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Wexford	16833N	Kiltealy N S Kiltealy (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Wicklow	00973Q	Grange Con N S Grange (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Wicklow	10131U	Moin An Bhealaigh N S Moin An Bhealaigh (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	3.1
Cavan	16767D	Coronea N S Arva (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cavan	16959M	S N Corrabha Glangevlin N S (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cavan	17440W	S N Naomh Maodhog Cill Na Bheart (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	08241P	Scropul N S Mullagh (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	15981A	Lakyle N S Whitegate Via Limerick (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	16870T	Scoil Na Mbraithe Ennistymon (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	16930L	Scoil An Sraith S N Tulach Brach (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	18109V	S N Inis Cealtrach Mountshannon (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	19043W	New Quay Ns Burren (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	19551S	Inchironan Central Ns Crusheen (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	19838P	Gael Sc Mhichil Chiosog Inis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	01272O	S N Chuan Doir Chuan Doir (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	03993O	S N Breac Maigh Castlelyons (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	11931L	S N Ioseph Drinagh (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	12382J	Curriglass Ns Curriglass (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	13728B	Castletownsend Mxd N S Skibbereen (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	14813U	Roscarbery Con N S Roscarbery (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	15646J	Coomhola N S Bantry (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	17794L	S N An Phaire Youghal (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Cork	18468D	Scoil Mhuire Caislean Ui Dhonnabhain (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Donegal	01733B	Ardara Mixed N S Ardara (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Donegal	17721H	Scoil Treasa Naofa Malainn (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Donegal	19686S	St Macartans Central Bundoran (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Dublin Belgard	19221U	Scoil Naomh Aine Clondalkin (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Dublin City	18968A	St Malachys B N S Edenmore (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Dublin City	19895E	Scoil Mhuir S Iosaf St Marys Place (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Dublin City	19928Q	Ranelagh Multi Denom Ns Ranelagh Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.2

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Galway	07551C	Ballinderreen Mxd N S Ballinderreen (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	09833W	S N Leitirgeis Leitirgeis N S (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	11261P	Scoil Mhuire An Tuairin (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	15228O	S N Padraig Naofa Corr Gharra (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	16091S	Gort Inse Guaire B N S Gort Inse Guaire (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	16750J	Parochial N S Cearnog Ti Na Cuairte (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	17689O	S N Tir An Fhaidh Leitir Mor (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	17770U	S N Naomh Colmain Carna (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	17919F	Aibhistin Naofa Cluain Tuaiscirt (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	19283T	Ballymacward Central Sc Ballymacward Central Sc (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Galway	19544V	Kilchreest Central Sch Kilchreest (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kerry	09837H	Black Valley National School Beaufort (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kerry	14366V	Loughfouder N S Knocknagoshel (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kerry	15592M	Sn Ceann Tra Meascaithe Ceantra (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kerry	15978L	Curraheen Mxd N S Glenbeigh (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kerry	16014A	St Finians An Corain (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kerry	19448C	S N Realt Na Mara Tuath O Siosta (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kildare	18449W	St Conleths N S Derrinturn (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kilkenny	16230G	S N Lisnafunchin Castlecomer (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Kilkenny	70620C	Coláiste Cois Siúire Mooncoin (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Laois	12231L	Rush Hall Mixed N S Portlaoise (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Laois	13937K	Stradbally Convent Stradbally (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Leitrim	16474L	Carrigallen N S Carrigallen (Leitrim)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	07222G	Banogue National School Croom (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	11809O	S N Cnoch A Deaga Ballylanders (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	14305B	Ballylanders N S Kilmallock (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	14516O	Feale View N S Abbeyfeale (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	17487C	Scoil Nais Cathaircinnlis (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	17593B	Scoil Naomh Mhuire Cnoc Ui Coileain (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	18530F	Askeaton Senior Ns Askeaton (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	18612H	Scoil Mhuire Achadh Lin (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Limerick	64150F	Glenstal Abbey School Murroe (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Mayo	18002D	Drumgallagh N S Ballycroy (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Mayo	19808G	Tavrane Central Ns Kilkelly (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Meath	17652O	Scoil Oilibheir Naofa Coillcluana (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Meath	18195R	St Finian N S Clonalvy (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	3.2

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Offaly	15325M	Clonbullogue N S Clonbullogue (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Offaly	16435B	St Ciarans Mixed N S Ballycumber (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Offaly	18115Q	S N Mhuire Cluain Na Ngamhain (Offaly)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Roscommon	19368E	S N Naomh Ciaran Scoil Naomh Ciaran (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Sligo	18543O	S N Clochog Castlebaldwin (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Sligo	19340F	St Josephs Special Sch Ballytivan (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Tipperary	07245S	Cullen N S Cullen (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Tipperary	13210I	St Josephs National School Ballingarry (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Tipperary	14460N	Killea N S Templemore (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Tipperary	19937R	Gaelscoil Aonach Bothar Naomh Chonlain (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Wexford	01840C	St Canice S Convent Rosbercon (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Wexford	14777T	Kilmyshall N S Kilmyshall (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Wexford	14900P	Gusserane N S Gusserane (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Wicklow	17265H	Rathdrum Boys N S Rathdrum (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	3.2
Clare	19700J	Lisdoonvarna N S Lisdoonvarna (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Clare	70830N	Ennis Community College Ennis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Cork	04054T	Ballindangan Mixed N S Mitchelstown (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Cork	11992I	Whitegate Mixed N S Midleton (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Cork	12263B	Gogginshill N S Ballinhassig (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Cork	13662U	Dunmanway Convent Inf Dunmanway (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Cork	17888U	S N Na Trionoide Bealad Rossmore (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Cork	18237H	Maria Assumpta G N S Ballyphehane (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Donegal	03294L	S N Caiseal Na Gcorr Gort A Choirce (Donegal)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Dublin City	60550B	Chanel College Coolock Village (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Dublin City	61020A	Stratford College 1 Zion Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Dublin City	70240P	Kylemore College Kylemore Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Dublin Fingal	60810B	Loreto College Swords (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	19901T	Boosterstown N S Cross Ave (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Kildare	18063A	S N Naomh Lorcaín Levitstown (Kildare)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Kilkenny	17758H	Scoil Mhichil Naofa Crosspatrick (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Limerick	20094A	Scoil Chríost An Slanaitheoir Baile An Gharraí (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Limerick	64290V	Ardscóil Mhuire Corbally (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Louth	18126V	S N San Nioclás Tigh Banán (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Louth	18312S	S N Talamh Na Manach Talamh Na Manach (Louth)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Monaghan	10718G	Billis National School Billis (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Monaghan	17686I	Scoil Mhuire Bns Castleblaney (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Monaghan	19434O	Latton Latton Ns (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	3.3

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Sligo	14051T	Stokane Ns Enniscrone (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Sligo	17641J	S N Realt Na Mara Rosses Point (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Tipperary	02237R	Dualla N S Dualla (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Tipperary	07358I	S N Sceichin A Rince An Chuir Doite (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Tipperary	17783G	S N Chuir Doighte Cahir (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Tipperary	19294B	Lisvernane N S Galbally (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Waterford	17525H	Dunmore East Convent Ns Dunmore East (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Waterford	19955T	S N Na Toirbhirte Clochar Na Toirbhirte (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Westmeath	19350I	S N Chruimin Naofa Muilte Farannain (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Wexford	12841P	St Patricks N S Ballyroebuck Ns (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Wexford	16841M	S N Nmh Brighde Blackwater (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Wexford	19352M	Sc Nais Realta Na Mara An Chill Mhor (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Wicklow	15676S	Padraig Naofa B N S St Patricks Road (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Wicklow	18502A	S N Naomh Brid Talbotstown (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	3.3
Carlow	17462J	Scoil Nais Mhichil Baile Nua (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cavan	08948L	Milltown N S Belturbet (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cavan	19378H	Ballynarry N S Ballyheelan (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cavan	19871N	St Patricks N S Killinagh (Cavan)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Clare	18339P	Sn Iosef Naofa An Mhaigh (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Clare	18639E	S N Baile Na Cailli Ennis (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Clare	19338S	Flagmount Central Ns Flagmount Central Ns (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	02278I	Millstreet Convent N S Millstreet (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	10523O	Fermoy Adair N S Fermoy (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	17079K	S N Carraig An Ime Macroom (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	17281F	Togher N S Dunmanway (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	17754W	S N Naomh Eoin B Ballincollig (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	17755B	Scoil Naomh Mhuire C Ballincollig (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	17761T	S N Mhuire Araglinn (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	18100D	Lisgriffin N S Goleen (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	18246I	S N Baile Muine Ballineen (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	18734V	Realt Na Maidine Ballypnehane (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	19906G	Cork N School Project Grattan Street (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Cork	19978I	Maulatrahane Central Ns Leap (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Dublin City	16759E	S N Mhuire Na Mbrathar Marino (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Dublin City	19583I	St Josephs Senior N S St Josephs Senior Ns (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Dublin City	19766Q	Scoil Iosagain/Mhuire Mount La Salle (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Dublin City	19767S	Scoil Mhuire/Seosamh Mount La Salle (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4

[Deputy Batt O'Keeffe.]

County	Roll Number	School	Application for	Band
Dublin City	19954R	North Bay Educate Together Ns Greendale Avenue (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Dublin City	60420L	Árdscoil Rís Griffith Avenue (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Dublin Fingal	01170G	S N Na H-Aille The Naul (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Galway	15958F	St. Josephs N.S. Woodford (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	01396J	Tulloha National School Kenmare (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	10755M	Scoil An Fhirtearaigh Tra Li (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	11363A	Scoil Atha Na Mblath Killarney (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	18832V	Castlemaine N S Castlemaine (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	19917L	Gaelscoil Naomh Aogain Bothar Luimnigh (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	19986H	S N Eoin Baiste Garrai Na Dtor (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	61450C	Presentation Secondary School Tralee (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kerry	70540E	Causeway Comprehensive School Causeway (Kerry)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kilkenny	16028L	Thomastown Convent Ns Thomastown (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Kilkenny	17093E	S N Bhreandain Naofa Nagh Coillidhe (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Laois	18513F	Naomh Pdraig N S Doire Liaim Oig (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Limerick	20184B	Galvone Ns Kennedy Park (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Mayo	14195U	An Gleanna Mhoir S N Crossmolina (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Monaghan	14071C	Drumgossett N S Drumgossett (Monaghan)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Tipperary	11470B	Slieveardagh N S The Commons (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Tipperary	13678M	Killurney N S Ballypatrick (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Tipperary	14181J	Poulicapple N S Callan (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Tipperary	17703F	S N Ard Croine Nenagh (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Tipperary	18443K	S N Iosef Naofa Eaglais (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Tipperary	20062K	Scoil Mhuire Borrisokane (Tipperary N.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Tipperary	72390V	Vocational School Cappawhite (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Waterford	14568K	Killea Boys N S Dunmore East (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Waterford	19814B	Scoil Gearbhain Straid Emmett (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Westmeath	17236A	Boher N S Boher (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Wexford	11986N	Convent Of Mercy Pairc An Chinneideach (Wexford)	Extension/Refurb	3.4
Limerick	16715H	St John The Baptist Boys N S Downey Street (Limerick City)	Extension/Refurb	3.5
		Please see separate table with Applications provisionally assigned a band rating in Band 4 (with date of application received).		

Applications which attract Band 1.4 provisional band rating due to Rationalisation.

Roll No.	School Name and Address	Enrolments
14052V	Kanturk B N S Kanturk (Cork County)	117
17087J	S N An Chlochair Kanturk (Cork County)	187
18000W	Naomh Mhuire B Carrigtwohill (Cork County)	257
19855P	Gaelscoil Chluain Dolcain Bothar Nangor (Dublin Belgard)	273
19991A	Gaelscoil Na Camoige Aras Chronain (Dublin Belgard)	228
70100W	Coláiste Chilliain Bóthar Nangor (Dublin Belgard)	399
07546J	Goldenbridge Convent Goldenbridge (Dublin City)	251
68073K	New Girls Secondary School Tuam (Galway County)	765
68074M	New Boys Secondary School Tuam (Galway County)	581
18821Q	Milltown Monastery Milltown (Kerry)	45
20112W	Caherciveen N S Caherciveen (Kerry)	173
20255V	Bunscoil McAuley Rice	286
18547W	Faolan Naofa N S Baile Ui Ruain (Laois)	39
13386W	SN an Chroi Naofa, Portlaoise (Laois)	345
19286C	SN Naomh Mhuire, Portlaoise (Laois)	367
18828H	St. Pauls N.S., Portlaoise (Laois)	397
91519H	Ballinamore Community School Ballinamore (Leitrim)	293
20233L	Scoil Catriona, Cappaghmore	94
18259R	Lanesborough Primary School Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál (Longford)	71
20230F	Scoil Phadraic Westport (Mayo)	306
20289P	St. Cynoc's National School Ferbane (Offaly)	195
20122C	Scoil Mhuire & Iosaf National School, Colloney, Sligo.	106
08903M & 13014I	Fethard Convent NS & Naomh Pdraig NS, Fethard	204
10120P & 18716T	Cahir BNS & Cahir GNS, Cahir	481
20198M	Templemore Ns Templemore (Tipperary N.R.)	244
12007G & 18235D	Ferrybank Convent NS & Scoil Mhuire An Port Mor NS, Ferrybank	398
20116H	Glor Na Mara NS, Tramore	478
12372G & 16741I & 17457Q	Michael St NS & CBS NS & Naomh Iosaf NS, New Ross	718
20208M	St Josephs And St Ernans Wicklow Town (Wicklow).	222

Applications for major capital works in Band 4

County	Roll No.	School	Application for	Provisional Band rating	Date of Application
Tipperary	04620D	Thomastown N S Thomastown (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	09/02/2000
Kilkenny	05437R	Presentation Convent G.N.S. Mooncoin (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	26/04/2007
Tipperary	11453B	Lisnamrock N S Coalbrook (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	09/02/2000
Tipperary	12180U	Presentation Primary School Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	15/02/2000
Carlow	13607M	St Columbas N S Tullow (Carlow)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	08/05/2007
Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	14586M	Carysfort Ns Convent Road (Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	18/04/2006
Kilkenny	16204F	S N An Moinin Rua Caislean An Chumair (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	15/06/2001
Kilkenny	16865D	Clontubrid Mixed N S Freshford (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	13/10/2005

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

County	Roll No.	School	Application for	Provisional Band rating	Date of Application
Tipperary	17486A	S N Cleireachain Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	07/07/2005
Cork	18587L	Scoil Mhuire Banrion Mayfield (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	23/05/2000
Limerick	19323F	S N Beal Atha Grean Kilmallock (Limerick County)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	19/12/2005
Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	60081P	Rockford Manor School Stradbrook Rd (Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	27/11/1998
Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	60130C	Loreto Abbey Secondary School Dalkey (Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	27/01/2000
Dublin City	60290B	St Pauls College Sybil Hill (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	01/03/2002
Dublin Fingal	60380C	St Dominic’s High School Santa Sabina (Dublin Fingal)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	21/08/2000
Dublin City	60510M	St Johns College De La Salle Le Fanu Rd (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	28/07/2004
Dublin Belgard	60640C	Sandford Park School Ltd Sandford Road (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	19/12/2000
Dublin City	60791A	St Marys Secondary School St Brigids Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	22/04/1998
Dublin City	60890C	St Louis High School Charleville Road (Dublin City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	28/03/2000
Kilkenny	61550G	Meánscoil Na Mbráithre Criostaí Sráid Shéamais (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	29/06/1998
Wicklow	61860V	Dominican College Wicklow (Wicklow)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	08/02/1999
Cork	62210K	Nagle Rice Secondary School Doneraile (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	04/03/2003
Cork	62330U	Patrician Academy Mallow (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	09/11/2000
Cork	62691G	Regina Mundi College Douglas Road (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	15/04/1999
Galway	62900M	Coláiste Mhuire Ballygar (Galway County)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	27/11/2000
Galway	62981P	Coláiste Einde Threadneedle Road (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	01/05/2008
Galway	63000E	Presentation Secondary School Presentation Rd (Galway City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	24/09/2004
Meath	64360Q	St. Joseph’s Secondary School (Meath)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	08/03/2000
Waterford	64950O	De La Salle College Newtown (Waterford City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	10/11/1999
Tipperary	65490L	The Abbey School Station Road (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	30/04/2007
Kilkenny	70640I	Grennan College Ladywell St (Kilkenny)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	09/03/2001
Clare	70880F	St Joseph’s Community College Carrigholt Rd. (Clare)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	22/11/2001
Cork	71030J	Mcegan College Macroom (Cork County)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	03/05/2001
Cork	71122O	Colaiste Stiofán Naofa Tramore Road (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	01/11/1997
Westmeath	71430C	Columba College Killucan (Westmeath)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	06/12/2005
Laois	71520D	St Fergal’s College Dun Laoighre/ Rathdowney (Laois)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	30/03/2007
Longford	71720L	Lanesboro Community College Lanesboro (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	24/11/2006

County	Roll No.	School	Application for	Provisional Band rating	Date of Application
Longford	71730O	Templemichael College Templemichael (Longford)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	01/08/2006
Mayo	72070D	McHale College Achill Sound (Mayo)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	20/04/2000
Waterford	72230W	St Declan's Community College Kilmacthomas (Waterford County)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	10/04/2006
Sligo	72360M	Ballinode College Ballinode (Sligo)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	29/04/1998
Tipperary	72420E	Central Technical Institute Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	26/05/2000
Dublin Belgard	91335U	Tallaght Community School Balrothery (Dublin Belgard)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	10/12/2001
Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	91343T	St. Tiernan's Community School Parkvale Dun Laoighre/ Rathdown	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	10/05/2000
Cork	91400F	Mayfield Community School Old Youghal Road (Cork City)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	10/09/2004
Roscommon	91493P	Castlerea Community School Castlerea (Roscommon)	Extension/Refurb	Band 4	07/01/2002

Applications on Hand 5th October 2009 — currently being assessed.

Roll No.	School Name & Address	Date Received	Description
17230L	S N Cnoc Rua, Cavan	07/04/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
09750S	St. Joseph's Boys N S, Terenure, Dublin 6.	20/04/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
16936A	S N Naomh Padraig, Cregmor, Claregalway, Co Galway	29/05/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
17968S	Ursaille Naofa, Naas, Co Kildare	26/03/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
17650K	S N Ide, Athy Co Kildare	04/06/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
18494E	Clochar Lughaidh NAI, Monaghan Town	05/02/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
20267F	Scoil Bhríde Primary School, Edenderry, Co Offaly	16/02/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
16291D	Clooncagh N S., Roscommon	12/02/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
08100U	S N Phadraig, Killucan, Co Westmeath	04/02/2009	Application for Major Capital Works
17500O	S N Muire Mxd, Kilbride, Co Wicklow.	22/04/2009	Application for Major Capital Works

1183. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the new circumstances including name and address being experienced throughout the construction industry; the challenges arising for the primary buildings unit and external design consultants in terms of the operation and management of large public tender competitions and the management of projects on-site; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33408/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): As the Deputy will be aware, the construction industry has experienced a change in trading conditions in the last year. This has resulted in certain changes for the operation and management of large public tender competitions and the management of projects for my Department.

The reduction in demand generally in the construction industry has resulted in welcome reductions in prices being quoted in tenders for large scale projects. In addition, the number of contractors seeking to pre-qualify for inclusion in tender lists has increased.

The larger number of applications being received requires a greater amount of time and resources to be allocated to the assessment of such pre-qualification submissions.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

In addition, the more difficult trading conditions mean that the Department has to be aware of the risk of successful tenderers not being able to secure the necessary bonds etc. required before the contract can be awarded.

My Department is also aware of an increased risk of contractor insolvency arising mid-contract due to constrained credit availability and generally difficult trading conditions.

The introduction of the new Public Works Contracts and associated documentation has, as anticipated by my Department, proved to be a major change for the public sector construction industry. Consultancy firms, already affected by large scale redundancies, have taken time to adjust to the implications of the changes, notwithstanding the efforts of my Department to ease the transition, through briefing sessions and guidance documentation.

Contractors, in order to secure projects in the current market conditions, appear to be taking an extremely competitive approach to the risk elements transferred to the contractor under the new form of contract. External design consultants will have the increased challenge of ensuring that building quality is maintained, notwithstanding this competitive approach.

1184. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he made decisions on project progression in the school building programme that did not accord with recommendations made to him by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33409/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The progression of school building projects, whether to commence architectural planning or to proceed to tender and construction, is undertaken with regard to a range of factors including the availability of funding and the priority attaching to projects.

During the process to make a final selection of projects for the purposes of developing a school building programme, I consult with, and am advised by, officials in my Department.

Consistent with this, I will be liaising with my officials over the coming months to formulate a school building programme for 2010.

Teaching Qualifications.

1185. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teachers who qualified as primary teachers in Northern Ireland who were appointed to temporary positions in primary schools in each of the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33410/09]

1186. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teachers who qualified as primary teachers in Northern Ireland who were appointed to permanent positions in primary schools in each of the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33411/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1185 and 1186 together.

Information relating to appointments in temporary or permanent positions by teachers who qualified in Northern Ireland is not available on my Department’s systems.

However, I will arrange for information in relation to the number of appointments of EU qualified teachers to permanent and temporary posts in primary schools to be forwarded to the Deputy.

School Staffing.

1187. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the steps he will take to ensure that all teaching positions in primary schools whether temporary, permanent or substitute will be filled by a fully qualified teacher; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33412/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The recruitment and appointment of personnel to fill teaching posts is a matter for the authority of each individual school, subject to agreed procedures.

It is the policy of my Department that only qualified personnel should be employed. Unqualified personnel should not be appointed except in exceptional circumstances and then only when all avenues for recruiting qualified personnel have been exhausted.

Teaching Qualifications.

1188. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction who undertook the Scrudú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge during the 2008/2009 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33413/09]

1189. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction who passed the Scrudú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge during the 2008/2009 academic year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33414/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1188 and 1189 together. My Department has made enquiries with Marino Institute of Education and the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction and who undertook all or part of the Scrudú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG) during the 2008/2009 academic year was 589. The SCG consists of 4 modules and candidates may take different modules in different years. The number who passed the SCG in this period was 413.

1190. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction who have opted for an adaptation period under the terms of Directive 2005/36/EC.; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33415/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): In accordance with the terms of Directive 2005/36/EC the Teaching Council is the designated authority in Ireland for assessing applications for registration from persons recognised as teachers in other EU/EEA countries.

Where shortfalls are identified in the courses of study undertaken leading to the academic and professional qualifications held by such applicants, the applicant must be given the choice of addressing these shortfalls by means of an aptitude test or by way of an adaptation period.

In relation to the primary sector, while shortfalls may arise in a variety of fields, such as curricular areas, the foundation disciplines, or age range, the most common shortfall to be addressed is in relation to the Irish Language Requirement.

I have made enquiries with the Teaching Council and from the 28th March 2006 to date, the number of primary teachers who trained in another jurisdiction who have indicated the Adaptation option as their preferred method of meeting the Irish Language requirement is 315.

Educational Disadvantage.

1191. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science his views, in view of the hardship caused to families by his decision to discontinue the free books scheme for necessitous pupils in primary schools, on the reintroduction of the scheme in 2010; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33416/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I have consistently said that the 2009 Budget required difficult choices to be made across all areas of public expenditure. These decisions were made to control public expenditure and to ensure sustainability in the long run. In this respect, education, while protected to a much greater extent than most other areas of public expenditure, could not be totally spared. The changes made in relation to book grants were one aspect of these measures.

The key change is that aid for school books is being restricted to schools that have been included within the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme. By limiting the funding to schools within the DEIS scheme, savings of €7.5m will be achieved.

As the Deputy will be aware, DEIS is the action plan for educational inclusion and focuses on addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Approximately €7 million was made available in 2008 to DEIS schools at primary and post-primary level for the school book grant scheme; the same level of provision has been made available for distribution to schools in the DEIS programme in 2009. At primary level, 673 schools will receive enhanced funding, while at second level, 203 schools will benefit.

The continuation of this provision to these schools is testament to the Government’s determination to prioritise social inclusion and protect the most vulnerable in our society. There is a need to focus targeted resources on the schools in most need. This is in line with the broad thrust of the recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General’s 2006 report on Primary Disadvantage.

My Department has encouraged schools to implement book rental schemes as a measure to minimise the cost of school books to all parents. As far back as 1993, a report commissioned by my Department dealt with the factors which contribute to the cost of school text books. The report included useful suggestions for schools, including a Code of Good Practice for successful operation of book rental schemes. I know that many schools have developed such rental schemes.

It is open to schools to utilise general capitation funding to fund book rental schemes.

My Department has issued a circular to schools and Vocational Education Committees, outlining that funding provided to meet day-to-day running costs can be used to provide school books where this is a priority for the school or the VEC. My Department has sought to ensure that schools are fully aware that using any funds provided by my Department for such purposes is not only legitimate but desirable.

Planned expenditure levels for my Department will be considered as part of the Estimates and budgetary process for 2010, and the decisions on all of the issues arising will be a matter for the Government.

It would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage pending the outcome of these deliberative processes.

School Discipline.

1192. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the Section 29

appeals undertaken in each of the past five years including the outcome of these appeals; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33417/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, provides parents with an appeal process where a Board of Management of a school, or a person acting on behalf of the Board, expels, suspends for a period greater than 20 days, or refuses to enrol a student. In these circumstances, the school is obliged to inform parents of their right under Section 29 of Education Act 1998 to appeal that decision. Where the school is established or maintained by a VEC an appeal shall lie in the first instance to the VEC and thereafter to the Secretary General of my Department. Only where an appeal under Section 29 is upheld can the Secretary General of my Department direct a school to enrol or re-instate a pupil.

The information requested by the Deputy is included in the attached table, which details the total number of appeals admitted by the Department for each of the last five full years, the total which proceeded to full Section 29 hearing, and the outcome of these appeals. Section 29 Appeals Statistics

Year	Total Appeals	Appeals to Full Hearing	Upheld	Not Upheld
2004	253	135	72	63
2005	300	173	73	100
2006	266	164	74	90
2007	383	218	88	130
2008	385	235	91	144

School Transport.

1193. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the school bus routes in an area (details supplied) will proceed to tender; if so, the timeframe involved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33423/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): I wish to advise the Deputy that the planning and organising of school bus routes is an operational matter for Bus Éireann.

My Department sought clarification from Bus Éireann on the tendering arrangements for the area referred to by the Deputy, in the details supplied. Bus Éireann has now advised that the tendering exercise for the 2009/10 school year has been completed.

Schools Building Projects.

1194. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding the planned development of a new school (details supplied) in County Cork; and when he expects construction to commence. [33430/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project to which the Deputy refers was one of 25 projects I announced in February 2009 to commence architectural planning. Designs have been prepared and planning permission lodged for the project. The progression of the project is contingent on the receipt of the necessary statutory approvals and the acquisition of two strips of land by the Patron.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

It is not possible at this juncture to give an indication as to when this project will commence construction pending the satisfactory resolution of these issues.

1195. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding a planned extension to a primary school (details supplied) in County Cork; and the time line for the completion of the project. [33431/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project for the school referred to by the Deputy has been approved to progress to tender and construction and is currently at an advanced stage of architectural planning.

The Design Team are currently working on a Stage 2(b) submission which, when completed, will then be submitted to my Department. Following receipt and approval of the Stage 2(b) submission my Department will revert to the school regarding next steps in the progression of the project towards tender and construction. However, at this stage of the process, it is not possible to be definitive regarding a time scale for the commencement or completion of construction work.

1196. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding a planned extension and refurbishment works at a second level school (details supplied) in County Cork. [33432/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project for the school referred to by the Deputy has been approved to progress to architectural planning and the project is currently awaiting the appointment of a Design Team.

1197. **Deputy Seán Barrett** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question Nos. 408 of 3 February 2009, and 440 of 31 March 2009, if approval has been given for the construction of a replacement second level school (details supplied) in County Dublin to proceed to tender and construction stages in 2009; if the project architect’s sketch design, regarding which he replied to Departmental queries in June 2009, has been approved by his Department; the reason for the delay in progressing the tender process and construction; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33440/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project for the school referred to by the Deputy has been approved to progress to tender and construction and is currently at an early stage of architectural planning.

In late April, the Department issued detailed comments on the stage 2a submission (developed sketch design) and requested additional information from the design team relating to the project. This was received in June and reviewed by the Department’s Technical staff and further detailed comments issued in September. The Design Team were requested to consider and respond to each of the comments listed.

Following receipt and approval of the Design Team’s response my Department will revert to the school regarding the next steps in the progression of the project towards tender and construction.

1198. **Deputy Mary O’Rourke** asked the Minister for Education and Science the status of the building project for a school (details supplied) in County Westmeath. [33454/09]

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 progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase 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 delivery of the project at this time.

Teachers’ Remuneration.

1199. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science the tasks, duties or activities the standard teaching contract for teachers stipulates; the breakdown as to the amount of hours expected to be spent on each of these tasks, duties or activities within the standard contract; the remuneration for each of these tasks, duties or activities; if he will provide a copy of the standard contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33479/09]

1200. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the standard teaching contract includes remuneration for non teaching tasks; the arrangements that exist between his Department and teachers for the payment of school planning, parent teacher meetings, inservice training, supervision of students and other miscellaneous management duties; the cost of these arrangements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33480/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1199 and 1200 together.

As the Deputy will be aware the employment relationship for teachers in Ireland is with individual school authorities rather than with my Department.

While that is the case the actual contract offered by schools and duties required of a teacher must take account of, inter alia, employment legislation, the rules applying in the sector and the outcome of determinations and agreements reached in an industrial relations context over time.

As a general statement it is fair to say that teaching/class contact time is the dominant feature in the contractual arrangements for teachers in Ireland in contrast to the arrangements in some other jurisdictions. This has meant that many of the duties referred to by the Deputy are not comprehended within the contractual arrangements except where changes have been secured through the modernisation element of recent national agreements. For example changes in relation to parent teacher meetings and staff meetings were secured under Sustaining Progress. Additional payments for substitution and supervision were agreed in 2002 to cover a range of duties in those categories.

It is also worth noting that many teachers engage voluntarily in school activities over and above what is required in contractual terms and in doing so add to the holistic development of their pupils.

My Department’s submission to the last benchmarking exercise identified in broad terms the differences in the contractual arrangements for teachers in Ireland compared to other jurisdictions and this material was also provided to the Special Group on Expenditure. I will arrange to have the Deputy provided with a copy of this material.

I can also arrange to have Department officials brief the Deputy on the detail of the different contractual arrangements or provide copies of particular relevant circulars if he so wishes.

1201. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science the way money is spent by his Department on the payment of every individual allowance paid to teachers which fall under management allowances; the number of teachers who avail of each of these allowances; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33481/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Teachers employed in primary, secondary and community/comprehensive schools and paid on the payrolls operated by my Department are paid on a fortnightly basis. The management allowances payable to these teachers are included as part of the salary paid each fortnight.

The details of the numbers of teachers currently in receipt of management allowances on these payrolls are outlined in the attached tables. The managerial authorities of the schools are continuing to submit details of appointments to management posts to my Department for the 2009/2010 school year and the details are being recorded on the databases.

Information on the numbers of teachers holding management allowances in Vocational schools is held by the individual Vocational Education Committees.

PRIMARY

Type of P.O.R.	Numbers Sept. '09
Principal	*3,380
Deputy-Principal	2,535
Vice-Principal	2
Assistant-Principal	1,421
Grade A Post	5
Special Duties Teacher	7,930
Grade B Post	16

*Inclusive of allowances held on a personal basis.

POST PRIMARY

Type of P.O.R.	Nos. Sept. '09 Voluntary Sec	Nos. Sept. '09 C&C
Principal	*399	*99
Deputy-Principal	*384	*108
Vice-Principal	Nil	Nil
Assistant-Principal	*2,251	*749
Grade A Post	1	2
Special Duties Teacher	3,842	1,199
Grade B Post	1	2
Director — Adult Education	10	41
Principal — Adult Education	11	41
Programme Co-Ordinator/AP Post	105	38
Programme Co-Ordinator/Special Duties Post	48	4
PO Sports Complex Manager	Nil	4

*Inclusive of allowances held on a personal basis.

Schools Building Projects.

1202. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science when a school

building project (details supplied) in County Mayo will commence; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that he turned the sod at this site in advance of the local elections in 2008; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33485/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project for the school referred to by the Deputy has been approved to progress to tender and construction and is currently at an advanced stage of architectural planning.

A stage 2B submission has been received by my Department and is currently being considered. A contract notice seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified contractors has been published on the State’s e-tenders website and short-listing of contractors has commenced.

I am pleased to inform the Deputy that this project is progressing towards tender and construction.

Vocational Education Committees.

1203. **Deputy Fergus O’Dowd** asked the Minister for Education and Science the returns in tabular form from each individual vocational educational committee regarding the number of applications received for the special incentive career break, indicating the number awarded or refused and the saving that could have been made on the salary for same; if he is monitoring the number of awards and refusals by each VEC; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33500/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The information requested by the Deputy is set out below. My Department is processing the details returned by the VECs on the applications they have received under the Special Incentive Career Break Scheme. My Department will continue to monitor the implementation of this and the other incentivised schemes by the VECs.

VEC	Number of Applications Received	Number awarded	Number Refused	2009 Estimated Savings for approved applications (part year)	2010 Estimated Savings for approved applications (full year)	2009 Estimated Savings not accruing for refused applications (part year)	2010 Estimated Savings not accruing for refused applications (full year)
				€	€	€	€
City of Cork	1	1	0	33,173.00	26,824.76		
City of Dublin	2	2	0	12,341.18	66,180.17		
City of Limerick	0						
City of Waterford	0						
Dun Laoghaire	0						
City of Galway	1	1	0	3,765.20	20,905.52		
Co Carlow	2	2	0	14,267.85	60,072.94		
Co Cavan	0						
Co Clare	0						
Co Cork	0						
Co Donegal	0						
Co Dublin	1	1	0	2,067.18	6,348.83		
Co Galway	2	2	0	10,724.00	60,322.55		
Co Kerry	2	2	0		33,016.69		
Co Kildare	0						
Co Kilkenny	0						
Co Laois	0						
Co Leitrim	1	1	0	11,185.00	43,426.00		
Co Limerick	0						
Co Longford	0						
Co Louth	1	0	1			15,769.00	47,754.00
Co Mayo	2	0	2			830.73	15,874.87
Co Meath	0						
Co Monaghan	0						
Co Offaly	0						
Co Roscommon	0						
Co Sligo	0						
Co Tipperary (NR)	0						
Co Tipperary (SR)	0						
Co Waterford	0						
Co Westmeath	0						
Co Wexford	0						
Co Wicklow	2	0	2			8,702.00	73,332.62
Totals	17	12	5	87,523.41	317,097.46	25,301.73	136,961.49

School Transport.

1204. **Deputy Brian O'Shea** asked the Minister for Education and Science his proposals to provide a 45-seater school bus from the Dunmore East area of County Waterford to enable 10 children to attend secondary schools (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33555/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): Under the terms of my Department's Post Primary School Transport Scheme, a pupil is eligible for transport if s/he resides 4.8 kilometres or more from her/his local post primary education centre.

A service may be established where a sufficient number of eligible pupils, within an area, apply for transport to the post-primary centre of the catchment area in which they live.

In a case where there are not enough eligible pupils residing in an area to warrant the establishment of a service, a transport grant may be paid by the Department to the parent/guardian of the eligible pupils concerned.

The scheme is not designed to facilitate parents who choose to send their children to a post-primary centre outside of the catchment area in which they reside. However, children who are fully eligible for transport to the post-primary centre in the catchment area in which they reside, may apply for transport on a concessionary basis to a post-primary centre outside of their own catchment area — otherwise known as catchment boundary transport. These children can only be facilitated if spare seats are available on the bus after all other eligible children travelling to their local post-primary centre have been catered for and no additional state cost is incurred. Such children have to make their own way to the nearest pick up point within that catchment area.

In general, catchment boundary tickets are issued on a first come, first served basis.

The Transport Liaison Officer for Waterford has advised that the pupils in question reside in the Tramore catchment area and therefore may only apply for catchment boundary school transport to Waterford City Post-Primary Centre subject to terms of the scheme. As the present services are operating to capacity, it would not be appropriate to provide additional seats to accommodate catchment boundary pupils.

School Placement.

1205. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when a second level place will be made available to a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33588/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, provides parents with an appeal process where a Board of Management of a school refuses enrolment to a student. A Section 29 appeal recently took place in respect of a refusal to enrol this child to a school in Leixlip. This appeal was not upheld. Only where an appeal under Section 29 is upheld can the Secretary General of my Department direct a school to enrol a pupil.

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is the statutory agency which can assist parents who are experiencing difficulty in securing a school place for their child. The NEWB will try to help parents to find an alternative school placement if their child has been unable to secure a placement to date. I understand that in this instance that the NEWB are actively assisting the family in pursuing applications to other schools.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Home Tuition support may also be provided, on application, as a temporary interim measure, for pupils who do not have a school placement or are unable to secure a school place.

School Transport.

1206. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the pick up point for children will be relocated by approximately 500 metres in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33589/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): Primary school transport routes are planned so that, as far as possible, no eligible child will have more than 2.4 kilometres to travel to a pick-up point. Pupils living off the main route of a service are expected to make their own way, or to be brought to convenient pick-up points along the main route. Home pick-ups were never envisaged as being part of the Primary School Transport Scheme.

Bus Éireann, which is responsible for the operation of the school transport scheme, on behalf of my Department, has advised that the pupils referred to by the Deputy, in the details supplied, reside 1.05 kilometres from the existing pick up point.

Bus Eireann has also advised that the pick up point is considered to be as safe as other pick-up points being used by pupils travelling under the School Transport Scheme throughout the country.

Planning Issues.

1207. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he has made available his area based analysis and forecasts for future school place demand as identified through his new geographic information system in order to allow the elected members of all local authorities to properly consider school planning needs as part of the planning system and particularly when a local authority is preparing a new development plan or a local area plan; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33597/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The Forward Planning Section of my Department has carried out a study of the country to identify the areas where, due to demographic changes, there may be a requirement for significant additional school provision at both primary and post-primary levels over the coming years. This study has been conducted using data from the Central Statistics Office, the General Register Office and the Department of Social & Family Affairs in addition to recent schools’ enrolment data.

The study indicates that the requirement for additional primary provision in years 2010, 2011 and 2012 is likely to be greatest in more than 40 selected locations across the country based on significant changes to the demographics of those areas. This information has been circulated to all existing school Patrons who have been invited to bring forward proposals for the expansion of existing schools or indeed to put themselves forward as Patron for any new primary school, should it be required. The requirement for the establishment of new schools will of course be lessened where it is possible to expand and extend existing schools in those areas.

The Forward Planning Section is in the process of carrying out an analysis of each of these locations in order to identify the school accommodation requirements up to and including the school year 2014/2015.

When the required reports have been completed for these initial areas selected the Forward Planning Section will continue to work on preparing reports on a priority basis for the remainder of the country.

As a matter of course, there is ongoing close liaison between my Department and local authorities to establish the location, scale and pace of any proposed major housing developments and their possible implications for school provision.

Schools Building Projects.

1208. **Deputy Eamon Gilmore** asked the Minister for Education and Science the reason the sketch design for a school (details supplied) in County Dublin has not been approved, in view of the fact that this was one of the schools listed in March 2009 to proceed to tender; when the sketch design will be approved; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33599/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project for the school referred to by the Deputy has been approved to progress to tender and construction and is currently at an early stage of architectural planning.

In late April, the Department issued detailed comments on the stage 2a submission (developed sketch design) and requested additional information from the design team relating to the project. This was received in June and reviewed by the Department’s Technical staff and further detailed comments issued in September. The Design Team have been requested to consider and respond to each of the comments listed.

Following receipt and approval of the Design Team’s response my Department will revert to the school regarding the next steps in the progression of the project towards stage 2(b) of architectural planning.

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

1209. **Deputy Mary Upton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will review the entitlements of a person (details supplied) in Dublin 12; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33608/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): The person referred to by the Deputy is participating in a Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) course. VTOS participants are entitled to a training allowance at a rate equivalent to the maximum rate of unemployment benefit, plus a payment for an adult or child dependant, if appropriate. VTOS students also retain their social welfare secondary benefits and are eligible for meal and travel allowances. In addition, a training bonus is paid to participants who have been in receipt of their social welfare payment for at least 12 months (312 days) directly before their course commencement date.

I understand from the relevant VEC that the person referred to by the Deputy did not have the required amount of days in receipt of their social welfare payment before their course commencement date to qualify for receipt of the training bonus.

School Staffing.

1210. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teachers, language assistants, special needs assistants and other school staff which have been let go, or who have not had their contracts renewed, for both the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 school years for each primary and post-primary school in Dublin 15; the staffing level under

[Deputy Joan Burton.]

each category for these school years for each school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33610/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The recruitment, selection and appointment of staff whether for teaching or other positions in a school rests with Boards of Management as employer.

The Statistics section of my Department’s website now contains data at individual primary school level, including the number of teachers in each school for the 2008\2009 school year. However it does not contain information on the number of Special Needs Assistants or other school staff in each school.

If the Deputy has an enquiry about a particular school my officials will be happy to provide the information directly to her.

The Primary Census for the 2009/2010 school year will be carried out in the Autumn and the final outcome will be made available when this process is completed.

The Deputy will be aware that my Department has published provisional information on the Department’s website about teacher allocations for 2009/10 school year. This was done as a first step at improving the level of information in the public domain about changes to the staffing allocations at both primary and post-primary level. The allocation process will not reach finality until later this year and I remain committed to publishing updated information.

School Management.

1211. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 32 of 2 July 2009, if concerns expressed in the whole school evaluation at a school (details supplied) in Dublin 7 have been addressed; the steps he has taken to address the problems in this school since July 2009; his views on whether the closure of this school is necessary; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33612/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I have already expressed my very great concern regarding the serious weaknesses that were identified in the WSE report in relation to the school in question.

Officials in my Department have held further meetings with the management of the school over the summer period. At the last meeting the chairperson of the school reported that the board had appointed a fully qualified teacher to serve as principal of the school. The local inspector has visited the school since the commencement of the new school year and has provided advice and support for the principal.

I can assure the Deputy that my officials will continue to engage closely with the patron and the Board and that the quality of the school’s work will be monitored through further inspection visits during the coming school year.

The Patron of this school has indicated to the Department that he wishes the school to continue while fully acknowledging that the difficulties at the school have to be resolved. My Department’s focus at this time is to support the school in bringing about the required improvements.

Site Acquisitions.

1212. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghail** asked the Minister for Education and Science if progress has been made towards the acquisition of a site for a post primary school at a location (details

supplied) in County Kildare; his views on the delays that have arisen in this case; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33672/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I wish to advise the Deputy that the acquisition of the site in question will be considered in the context of the Department’s Multi- Annual School Building and Modernisation Programme.

Schools Building Projects.

1213. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Education and Science when construction of a new school will commence at a location (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33673/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project to which the Deputy refers was recently tendered. The school’s Design Team is currently preparing the Tender Report. When this report is completed and submitted to my Department, the project will be considered for progression to the next stage i.e. the award stage.

1214. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Education and Science the status of plans to realign and rationalise primary school provision at a location (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33674/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I can confirm that it is my Department’s intention to facilitate the rationalisation of primary school provision in the area to which the Deputy refers.

Applications for building projects from the schools to enable this have been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects and assigned an appropriate band rating. Information in respect of the current school building programme along with all assessed applications for major capital works, including the projects in question, are now available on my Department’s website at *www.education.ie*.

The priority attaching to individual projects is determined by published prioritisation criteria, which were formulated following consultation with the Education Partners. There are four band ratings under these criteria, each of which describes the extent of accommodation required and the urgency attaching to it. Band 1 is the highest priority rating and Band 4 is the lowest. Documents explaining the band rating system are also available on my Department’s website.

The progression of all large scale building projects, including these projects, from initial design stage through to construction phase 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 Department’s capital budget, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the projects at this time.

1215. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Education and Science the status of plans to realign and rationalise primary school provision at a location (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33675/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I can confirm that it is my Department’s intention to facilitate the rationalisation of primary school provision in the area to which the Deputy refers. Two building projects are needed to facilitate this, one of which is currently in the early stages of architectural planning.

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Information in respect of the current school building programme along with all assessed applications for major capital works, including the projects in question, are now available on my Department’s website at *www.education.ie*.

The priority attaching to individual projects is determined by published prioritisation criteria, which were formulated following consultation with the Education Partners. There are four band ratings under these criteria, each of which describes the extent of accommodation required and the urgency attaching to it. Band 1 is the highest priority rating and Band 4 is the lowest. Documents explaining the band rating system are also available on my Department’s website.

The progression of all large scale building projects, including these projects, from initial design stage through to construction phase 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 Department’s capital budget, it is not possible to give an indicative timeframe for the progression of the projects at this time.

1216. **Deputy Seán Ó Feargháil** asked the Minister for Education and Science when an announcement will be made in respect of a bundle of schools proposed for delivery under the public private partnership process, tenders for which are currently under consideration by the National Development Finance Agency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33676/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Final tenders for the second bundle of Primary/Post Primary schools consisting of six schools were received by the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) on the 1st July 2009.

The tender evaluation process is nearing completion and it is expected that the preferred bidder will be announced shortly. Subject to the planning process it is envisaged that construction work on all six schools will commence in Spring 2010 and that the schools should be ready for occupation in September 2011.

1217. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Education and Science the status of a project (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33678/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The project to which the Deputy refers has been tendered and a preferred bidder identified. Officials in my Department recently authorised the Board of Management to commence the award process. The first stage of this process is to request the preferred bidder to submit various documents such as his insurances, bond, tax clearance etc. If/when the preferred bidder submits these documents and they are found to be in order, the project will be considered for the next stage which is the award of the contract.

School Accommodation.

1218. **Deputy Seán Power** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he is satisfied that the provision of innovative modular buildings is an efficient and effective way of providing classrooms; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33689/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): As you may be aware, a wide-ranging review of the provision of temporary school accommodation is underway in my Department. Part of that review is the development of standardised designs and specifications and associated documentation for the procurement of temporary accommodation. In progressing this element of the review, the firm of specialists engaged to assist with this review has engaged

with a number of firms who specialise in the provision of modular accommodation that is capable of being constructed off-site and delivered and erected on school sites within a short time-frame. Issues such as cost, quality, durability, maintenance and demountability will be examined and assessed and decisions will be made based on this assessment.

The firm of specialists are working in close co-operation with my Department on all elements of the review. My officials hold regular meetings with the firm to review and discuss developments. Recommendations arising from the work being undertaken will be implemented as soon as practicable with a view to achieving better value for money and improved quality of school accommodation.

Furthermore, in preparing the brief for new school building projects that are approved to proceed to architectural planning, consideration is now being given by my Department to the provision of additional accommodation through the use of modular designs where the schedule of accommodation, site constraints, extent of intervention in existing buildings, planning/statutory approval issues, timescale for delivery etc. are favourable to that approach.

Elements of modular design were incorporated in the rapid delivery programmes for developing areas that were delivered for the 08/09 and 09/10 school years.

I am satisfied that these programmes were successful and effective in terms of quality of accommodation provided and speed of delivery.

Special Educational Needs.

1219. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 113 of 17 September 2009, the areas of expertise in which third level primary degrees of all 84 special educational needs organisers are held; if it is a requirement that Special Educational Needs Organisers hold a professional qualification in psychology, speech therapy, occupational therapy education or a related expertise, if this is not the field of their primary degree; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33691/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I wish to advise the Deputy that Special Educational Needs Organisers are employed by the National Council for Special Education which prescribes the following qualifications and experience required for appointment to these positions: a third level qualification, preferably at degree level, or a professional qualification relevant to the provision of services to children with disabilities; and at least two years’ experience in the education of children or the delivery of other services to children with disabilities.

My Department does not hold information on the qualifications of individual SENOs.

1220. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science further to Parliamentary Question No. 112 of 17 September 2009, the kind of additional information required to be provided by parents, guardians or the school to secure a review by the National Council of Special Education of a decision by a special educational needs organiser; the other avenues available to parents who are unhappy with a SENO decision but do not have additional information to provide; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33692/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): As the Deputy will be aware, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), for allocating resource teachers and Special Needs Assistants to schools to support children with special needs. The NCSE operates within my Department’s criteria in allocating such support.

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While the NCSE recognises that the outcome of such applications may not always be to the satisfaction of the applicant, SENOs are available to discuss the basis for their decisions with schools, parents/guardians. 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 such as professional reports which may not have been to hand at the time of the decision. This process is outlined in the NCSE’s Circular 01/05.

Appointments to State Boards.

1221. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the Special Education Appeals Board as provided for in Section 26 of the Education for People with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 has been established and is operational; the persons who are on the board; the functions of the board; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33693/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The Special Education Appeals Board was established under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004 to hear and determine appeals under the Act.

The Appeals Board comprises a Chairperson, Ms Fionnuala Kilfeather, and two ordinary members, Mr Páid McGee and Mr Patrick O’Keeffe, all of whom have a special interest in, or knowledge of, education and in particular the education of persons with special educational needs. Appointments were made to this inaugural board in April 2007 for an initial three year term.

Board members are working to ensure that appropriate structures and processes will be in place once the relevant sections of the act, which would allow appeals to be undertaken, are commenced.

School Staffing.

1222. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each primary school in Dublin 6W at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33694/09]

1223. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each primary school in Dublin 8 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33695/09]

1224. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each primary school in Dublin 10 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33696/09]

1225. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each primary school in Dublin 12 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33697/09]

1226. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each primary school in Dublin 20 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33698/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1222 to 1226, inclusive, together.

The Statistics section of my Department’s website now contains data at individual primary school level, including the number of teachers in each school for the 2008/2009 school year. The Primary Census for the 2009/2010 school year will be carried out in the Autumn and the final outcome will be made available when this process is completed.

The Deputy will be aware that my Department has published provisional information on the Department’s website about teacher allocations for 2009/10 school year. This was done as a first step at improving the level of information in the public domain about changes to the staffing allocations at both primary and post-primary level.

The allocation process will not reach finality until later this year and I remain committed to publishing updated information.

1227. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each post-primary school in Dublin 6W at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33699/09]

1228. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each post-primary school in Dublin 8 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33700/09]

1229. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each post-primary school in Dublin 10 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33701/09]

1230. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each post-primary school in Dublin 12 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33702/09]

1231. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of teaching staff in each post-primary school in Dublin 20 at the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009; the corresponding figures for the 2009/2010 academic year; the reason for the change in staffing levels;; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33703/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1227 to 1231, inclusive, together.

Teacher allocations to second level schools are approved annually by my Department in accordance with established rules based on recognised pupil enrolment. At the level of individual schools, the budget changes in relation to the allocation of teaching posts will impact in different ways, depending on whether enrolment is rising or declining and the degree to which any one school has more teachers than it is entitled to under the allocation processes.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Provisional information on teacher allocations to second level schools, whether enrolment related or otherwise, was published on my Department’s website. The information represents the position at the time of publication and is not the final position. At this point the allocations process for special needs, language support etc. is still underway. The information on the Department’s website will be further updated later in the year when the allocation process is fully completed. At that stage a comparison can be made between the level of resources allocated to schools this year compared to last year.

School Curriculum.

1232. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science his plans for the future of the Social Personal and Health Education programme at post primary level; if he is committed to ensuring this subject is given due recognition in schools and is taught by fully trained staff;; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33704/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) forms a mandatory part of curriculum provision in primary schools and in junior cycle. The overall aim is to help develop students’ confidence and self esteem, and promote the skills for living, for responsible decision making, and for mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

The implementation of these programmes in schools is supported by support services at primary and second level which provide professional development for teachers and advice and support to schools. At second level, a full time support service is operated jointly with the Health Sector. A range of resources and manuals are available to support teachers in implementing the programme. While evaluations of the second level programme have indicated many positive features and have viewed the training provided by the support services as of high quality, the lack of a pre-service qualification for teachers in this area, allied with continued changes of staff deployed within schools to teach SPHE, may dilute the impact of inservice training. My Department is examining how this issue can best be addressed in the context of overall priorities and resources across the system.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio.

1233. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the breakdown of class sizes for each primary school in Dublin 6W for the current 2009/2010 academic year; the number of schools with classes of more than 30 pupils; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33705/09]

1234. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the breakdown of class sizes for each primary school in Dublin 8 for the current 2009/2010 academic year; the number of schools with classes of more than 30 pupils; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33706/09]

1235. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the breakdown of class sizes for each primary school in Dublin 10 for the 2009/2010 academic year; the number of schools with classes of more than 30 pupils; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33707/09]

1236. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the breakdown of class sizes for each primary school in Dublin 12 for the current 2009/2010 academic year;

the number of schools with classes of more than 30 pupils; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33708/09]

1237. **Deputy Catherine Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science the breakdown of class sizes for each primary school in Dublin 20 for the current 2009/2010 academic year; the number of schools with classes of more than 30 pupils; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33709/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1233 to 1237, inclusive, together.

Class size data for primary schools for 2009/2010 is not yet available. The source of this data is the Annual Census of Primary Schools which is carried out in the Autumn. Data will become available when returns for all schools have been processed.

Departmental Correspondence.

1238. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will respond to correspondence (details supplied) which was sent to him on 23 September 2009 concerning issues pertaining to the Muslim National School in Clonskeagh in Dublin 14; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33726/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The correspondence to which the Deputy refers was received in my Department last week. The issues raised in this correspondence will be referred to the patron of the school concerned.

Teachers’ Pensions.

1239. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a person (details supplied) in County Kilkenny is entitled to opt out of payment of widows and orphans contribution made through their salary to his Department; if they are entitled to reclaim the contributions made; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33739/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The Revised Spouses and Children’s Pension Scheme was introduced in 2005 following a Government decision. Teachers who were members of the main pension scheme at any time between 31 March 2004 and 31 August 2005 were given the option of joining the revised scheme or of retaining their present status, either as members of the Original Spouses’ and Children’s Scheme or remaining outside such schemes.

The person to whom the Deputy refers was provided with details of the revised scheme and a personalised option form. She returned the option form within the option period in which she opted for membership of the revised scheme. In signing the option form the person confirmed that she had read the circular and was opting for the revised scheme. Accordingly, she exercised a valid option to join the revised Spouses’ and Children’s Pension Scheme for Secondary Teachers and it is not possible to revoke it.

Schools Building Projects.

1240. **Deputy Olivia Mitchell** asked the Minister for Education and Science if progress has been made on the provision of funding for a school (details supplied) at a new site in Ballinteer, County Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33760/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I can confirm that the school to which the Deputy refers has made an application to my Department for large scale capital

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funding. The application has been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects and assigned an appropriate band rating. Information in respect of the current school building programme, along with all assessed applications for major capital works, including the project referred to by the Deputy, are now available on my Department’s website at www.education.ie.

The priority attaching to individual projects is determined by published prioritisation criteria, which were formulated following consultation with the Education Partners. There are four band ratings under these criteria, each of which describes the extent of accommodation required and the urgency attaching to it. Band 1 is the highest priority rating and Band 4 is the lowest. Documents explaining the band rating system are also available on my Department’s website.

In order to determine the long term accommodation needs of the school in question, my Department have been in contact with its Special Needs Organiser (SENO). My Department will be in contact with the school authorities when the SENO’s report has been received. Thereafter, the progression of any project for the school will be considered in the context of my Department’s 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 a project at this time.

Schools Refurbishment.

1241. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a school (details supplied) in Dublin 4 is placed on the list of schools awaiting approval for refurbishment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33847/09]

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, from initial design stage through to construction phase 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 delivery of the project at this time.

School Curriculum.

1242. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the recent statistics published by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, regarding the learning of foreign languages in secondary schools (details supplied); his views on the poor showing of Ireland, in which 18.8% of students here do not study any foreign language compared to an EU average of 6.4%, when only 8.2% of students here study two foreign languages compared to an EU average of 60.1%; his strategy to ensure Ireland reach the European average; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33851/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): 81.2% of second level pupils study three languages, Irish, English and a continental language, to completion of upper second level, and over 70% of schools offer two foreign languages or more. The languages available as part of the post primary curriculum in schools include French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese and Arabic. The post primary language initiative provides supports to encourage a diversification of language provision in schools and to encourage the take up of languages other than French.

It is important that students experience a broad and balanced education which prepares them for economic and social participation, for democratic citizenship and lifelong learning. Of necessity this requires that students have to juggle priorities in making decisions on subject choice. Curricular choice is important in ensuring that young people are offered a balanced range of subjects in keeping with their interests and abilities, and that they are motivated to achieve success in learning and remain in school to completion of upper second level education.

The study shows that English is the most widely studied language in upper second level education across the EU other than their mother tongue. The fact that all Irish people speak English, often referred to as the new lingua franca, can be a disincentive to the learning of other languages, just as in other European Member States it is often difficult to promote the learning of languages other than English.

Schools Building Projects.

1243. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when a technical team from the school planning section of his Department will visit a school (details supplied) in County Kerry in view of the fact that the school is waiting since January 2006; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33881/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I can confirm that the school to which the Deputy refers has made an application to my Department for large scale capital funding. The application has been assessed in accordance with the published prioritisation criteria for large scale building projects and assigned an appropriate band rating. Information in respect of the current school building programme, along with all assessed applications for major capital works, including the project referred to by the Deputy, are now available on my Department’s website at www.education.ie.

The priority attaching to individual projects is determined by published prioritisation criteria, which were formulated following consultation with the Education Partners. There are four band ratings under these criteria, each of which describes the extent of accommodation required and the urgency attaching to it. Band 1 is the highest priority rating and Band 4 is the lowest. Documents explaining the band rating system are also available on my Department’s website.

In order to determine how best to provide for the school’s accommodation needs, it will be necessary to have a technical assessment of the existing buildings carried out. This would normally be carried out when the project is being progressed.

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 further progression of the project at this time.

1244. **Deputy Jimmy Deenihan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding the provision of a new school at a location (details supplied) in County Kerry; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33882/09]

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 progression from initial design stage through to construction phase 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 delivery of the project at this time.

State Examinations.

1245. **Deputy Seán Sherlock** asked the Minister for Education and Science if the grant for schools starting the leaving certificate applied programme will be re-instated; if assurances will be given that the leaving certificate applied programme will not be subject to further reductions in funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33889/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): In 2008, my Department provided grants of €1.23 million to schools for the Leaving Certificate Applied programme. Schools also benefited from an equipment grant, amounting to €5,079 for each school offering the programme.

As a result of the need to make savings in Budget 2009, this grant was abolished with effect from 1 January 2009. The budget required difficult choices to be made across all areas of public expenditure. These decisions were made to control public expenditure and to ensure sustainability in the long run. In this respect, the education sector, while protected to a much greater extent than most other areas of public expenditure, could not be totally spared. Even with the budget measures in place there will still be a significantly increased borrowing requirement in 2009.

While certain grants were abolished, such as that available for the Leaving Certificate Applied, I would like to emphasise that the capitation grant for post-primary schools has been increased by 4.3%, representing an increase of €14 per pupil, to bring it to €345 per pupil from January 2009. Voluntary secondary schools also received an increase in the school services support grant by €8 per pupil from January 2009. This will mean, for example, that a secondary school with an enrolment of 500 pupils will receive an additional €11,000 in funding in 2009. A more favourable teacher allocation ratio applies to the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.

Planned expenditure levels for my Department will be considered as part of the Estimates and budgetary process for 2010, and the decisions on all of the issues arising will be a matter for the Government.

It would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage pending the outcome of these deliberative processes.

Third Level Fees.

1246. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a person (details supplied) in County Kildare is entitled to a refund or a continuation of fees; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33891/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The position is that under my Department free tuition fees schemes the exchequer meets the cost of tuition fees in respect of eligible students. Third level institutions are autonomous bodies and, as such, may determine the level of fees to be charged in any case where the free fees schemes do not apply. The issue of a refund of tuition fees is also a matter for each institution and I have no role in this matter.

Departmental Reports.

1247. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of experts’ and consultants’ reports his Department commissioned during 2008; the cost of each report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33898/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The information sought is currently being compiled and will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

Schools Building Projects.

1248. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will respond to the needs of a school (details supplied) in County Dublin that is seeking a permanent building since 2005. [33919/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): My Department previously met with County Dublin Vocational Committee to discuss the matter of a site for the school and County Dublin VEC have agreed to dispose of the site adjacent to the existing school site to the Department under the terms of a 99 year lease.

The Department has recently received the legal documents in question from the VEC and has instructed the CSSO to progress the matter. In light of current and 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.

1249. **Deputy Tom Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of applications for schools buildings projects from South Tipperary which are open with his Department; the value of each application; the number of years each application has been open; the priority level of each project; if he will provide this information in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33921/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Information on the current school building programme and on applications on hand for major capital works is available on my Department’s web-site at www.education.ie. The following tabular statement provides the additional information for schools in South Tipperary requested by the Deputy.

Every application for major capital works is initially given a provisional priority band rating. A definitive band rating is assigned to a project when it is being considered for commencement of architectural planning. The value of each application will only be known on receipt of tenders for the specific project.

Roll No.	School	Date of Application	Project	Provisional Band Rating
10120P & 18716T	Cahir BNS & Cahir GNS, Cahir	Feb-00	New School	1.4
08903M & 13014I	Fethard Convent NS & Naomh Pdraig NS, Fethard	Mar-08	New school	1.4
15299O	Gaile N S Holycross (Tipperary S.R.)	Nov-07	Special Needs	1.2
19230V	Cormaic Special School Cashel (Tipperary S.R.)	Nov-04	Extension/Refurb	1.2
19615S	Scoil Aonghusa Cashel (Tipperary S.R.)	Feb-00	Extension/Refurb	1.2
18486F	S N Cill Siolain Cill Siolain (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	2.1
18538V	Scoil Mhuire Caislean Nua (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	2.1
07048Q	Mohober N S Mohober (Tipperary S.R.)	Oct-07	New School	2.2
20007C	Gaelscoil Chluain Meala Baile Gaelach (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	New School	2.2
20085W	Gaelscoil Charraig Na Siuire (Tipperary S.R.)	Jan-03	New School	2.2
72480W	St. Ailbe’S School Rosanna Road (Tipperary S.R.)	Jun-01	Extension/Refurb	2.3
72400V	Comeragh College Greenside (Tipperary S.R.)	Mar-08	New School	2.4
19645E	St Oliver Plunketts Ns Heywood Rd (Tipperary S.R.)	Jan-00	Extension/Refurb	2.5

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Roll No.	School	Date of Application	Project	Provisional Band Rating
17332T	St Marys Parochial School Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	May-01	Extension/Refurb	2.6
15008A	Shronell N S Lattin (Tipperary S.R.)	Oct-06	Extension/Refurb	3.1
07245S	Cullen N S Cullen (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	3.2
13210I	St Josephs National School Ballingarry (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	3.2
02237R	Dualla N S Dualla (Tipperary S.R.)	Jan-00	Extension/Refurb	3.3
07358I	S N Sceichin A Rince An Chuir Doite (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	3.3
17783G	S N Chuir Doighte Cahir (Tipperary S.R.)	Dec-00	Extension/Refurb	3.3
19294B	Lisvernane N S Galbally (Tipperary S.R.)	Feb-00	Extension/Refurb	3.3
11470B	Slieveardagh N S The Commons (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	3.4
13678M	Killurney N S Ballypatrick (Tipperary S.R.)	Jun-01	Extension/Refurb	3.4
14181J	Poulicapple N S Callan (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	3.4
72390V	Vocational School Cappawhite (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-00	Extension/Refurb	3.4
04620D	Thomastown N S Thomastown (Tipperary S.R.)	Feb-01	Extension/Refurb	4.1
11453B	Lisnamrock N S Coalbrook (Tipperary S.R.)	Feb-00	Extension/Refurb	4.1
12180U	Presentation Primary School Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	Feb-00	Extension/Refurb	4.1
17486A	S N Cleireachain Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	Jun-00	Extension/Refurb	4.1
65490L	The Abbey School Station Road (Tipperary S.R.)	Aug-02	Extension/Refurb	4.1
72420E	Central Technical Institute Clonmel (Tipperary S.R.)	Nov-06	Extension/Refurb	4.1
17779p	Powerstown NS clonmel Co Tipperary	Aug-99	Extension/Refurb	2.4
72430H	Scoil Ruaine, Killenaule Co. Tipperary	Aug-97	Extension/Refurb	4.1

Special Educational Needs.

1250. **Deputy Arthur Morgan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to a situation (details supplied) whereby a pupil with Asperger’s syndrome is not being facilitated in the school with the prescribed hours as set down by his Department. [33924/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Department Circular 11/95 states that a full school day at primary level comprises a period of not less than five hours and forty minutes.

Circular 11/95 and the Rules for National Schools also provide that pupils in infant classes may have a school day that is one hour shorter than the length of the normal school day, (i.e. 5 hours and forty minutes). It is a matter for the Board of Management of a particular school to decide whether this concession should be applied in the case of its school. If pupils in infant classes are being given a shorter day, their parents should be notified accordingly and invited to collect them at time of dismissal.

It is acknowledged that particular circumstances may arise whereby the implementation of the shorter day for pupils in infant classes may cause issues for some parents. Where this arises, my Department would encourage school authorities to engage with parents locally with a view to arriving at a mutually acceptable resolution.

As the Deputy will be aware, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible, through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENO) for allocating resource teachers and special needs assistants to schools to support children with special needs. The NCSE operates within my Department's criteria in allocating such support.

All schools have the names and contact details of their local SENOs. Parents may also contact their local SENOs directly to discuss their child's special educational needs, using the contact details available on www.ncse.ie.

I have arranged for the details supplied by the Deputy to be forwarded to the NCSE for their attention and direct reply.

Higher Education Grants.

1251. **Deputy Richard Bruton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will review the rule that disbars Irish citizens from the higher education grant if they have been over one year out of the country, as it bears very heavily on young people's options when employment opportunities are scarce. [33926/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): The residency clause of the scheme requires, in the case of a candidate under 23, that the candidate's parents or guardians to have been resident in the administrative area of a Local Authority from 1st October of the previous year. In the case of an independent mature candidate the candidate himself/herself must have been resident in the administrative area of a Local Authority from 1st October of the previous year. The Local Authority has discretion to waive this requirement in exceptional circumstances. I would, however, point out that the type of situation where residency is waived is, for example, where an independent mature candidate him/herself has missed the residency requirement by a relatively short period of time. In cases where a candidate returns to the State following a period abroad and where the awarding body decides, at its discretion, to waive the residency requirement the candidate may be assessed for the grant without meeting the prescribed residency requirement from 1st October of the previous year.

One of the main considerations in this type of case is the period of time a candidate has resided outside of the State. The Department suggests that in such cases, the residency requirement may be waived at the discretion of the awarding body only where the period of time abroad does not exceed one year.

On this basis, and on condition that the student submits satisfactory evidence of independent residence prior to going abroad and for the period after their return, the Department has no objection to a candidate being assessed as an independent mature candidate for the purpose of the grant application.

In cases where a candidate has been out of the country for a period of time of more than one year before commencing his/her course, irrespective of whether or not he/she can produce evidence of independent living prior to going abroad, he/she would not be eligible to be considered under the residency clause of the scheme.

In publishing the student grant schemes for 2009/10 earlier this year, I gave notice that it is intended to introduce a revised residency requirement of three out of the last five years with effect from 2010/11, in line with the provisions in the Student Support Bill. This will allow for greater flexibility in meeting the residency requirement.

Departmental Staff.

1252. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Education and Science the cost to his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department for early retirements, termination of contracts and resignations for 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33949/09]

1253. **Deputy Damien English** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of persons in his Department and each agency under the aegis of his Department who took early retirement, had their contract terminated or resigned in 2006, 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009 in tabular readable form. [33964/09]

1268. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of times on which his Department has sanctioned or applied for the payment of a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department or any agency under their remit in each of the past three years; the amount paid in each case; the position vacated; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34339/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1252, 1253, 1268 together.

There are a number of circumstances in which it is possible for teachers and other education sector staff to retire on pension before preserved pension age. This is 60 years of age or, in the case of new entrants appointed on or after 1 April 2004 for the first time or following at least a 6 month break in service, 65 years of age.

Firstly, under the 55/35 year rule a teacher, other than a new entrant, who has reached the age of 55 years and has at least 35 years of actual pensionable service, may retire voluntarily. There is no actuarial reduction in benefits and credit for certain pre-service training is given in order to assist teachers to reach the 35-year threshold for retirement.

Secondly, under cost-neutral early retirement, a public servant aged 50 years or over (55 years in the case of new entrants) has the option of an immediate cost-neutral early retirement pension and lump sum on resignation. The cost-neutral early retirement benefits are actuarially reduced to take account of the early payment of the lump sum and the longer period over which pension would be paid.

Thirdly, a public servant with more than 5 years pensionable service may be awarded a disability pension which may include the award of added years. A person with less than 5 years service who has to retire on medical grounds has the option of taking a once-off lump sum payment.

Finally, under the pilot Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers, a pension could be granted 3 strands. Strand 1 related to teachers who were consistently experiencing professional difficulties in their teaching duties and an award of up to 5 added years was permitted. Strand 2 related to teachers whose retirement would provide their school with an opportunity to enhance the education service provided through facilitating change and up to 2 added years could be awarded. Strand 3 related to permanent teachers who were in posts which were surplus to requirements, from which they could not be redeployed readily and which would not be filled should they leave the posts. Up to 7 added years could be awarded. The Government decided to suspend the pilot early retirement scheme for teachers in all sectors until further notice as part of the Budget and Estimates decision for 2009.

Details of the numbers of teachers who retired under each of these headings in the years 2006 to 2008 and up to 31 August 2009 is set out in a table. The figures for post-primary teachers do not include VEC teachers where the retirements and pension benefit awards are made by the relevant VEC. Other than the award of added years for ill-health and the, now suspended, Early Retirement Scheme, there are no discretionary payments made to teachers.

A teacher who resigns or whose contract is terminated and who has at least two years pensionable service may apply for a pension and lump sum from age 60 (age 65 in the case of new entrants) based on actual service. Each year the Department pays a number of preserved pensions under this category.

Details of the number of Department staff who have taken early retirement and those whose contracts have terminated in the years 2006 to 2009 are included in a separate table. The Department has not sanctioned or applied a pension top-up or discretionary payment on retirement to a staff member of the Department in this period.

My Department does not record the full actuarial costs related to pensions granted by it.

My Department will seek to obtain information in relation to early retirement, resignation and termination of staff contracts, and discretionary payments for staff employed by agencies under its aegis.

Departmental Staff

Retirement Category	2006	2007	2008	2009 as at 31 August 2009
Voluntary Age 60 but under Age 65	5	8	10	4
Ill-health	4	2	8	4
Cost-Neutral Early Retirement	3	3	4	2
Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement	—	—	—	2
Resignations, End of Contracts, Dismissals	2006	2007	2008	2009 as at 31 August 2009
Resigned	9	13	9	7
End of Contract	2	—	—	—
Dismissal	2	2	—	—

National School Teachers Pension Scheme

Retirement Category	2006	2007	2008	2009 as at 31 August 2009
Voluntary Age 55 but under Age 60	202	196	230	447
Disability	59	43	35	19
Cost-Neutral Early Retirement	22	15	22	21
Early Retirement Strand 1	27	42	33	—
Early Retirement Strand 2	12	13	13	—
Early Retirement Strand 3	11	5	1	—

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Secondary School Teachers Pension Scheme

Retirement Category	2006	2007	2008	2009 as at 31 August 2009
Voluntary Age 55 but under Age 60	89	129	138	274
Disability	43	50	38	34
Cost-Neutral Early Retirement	14	18	12	25
Early Retirement Strand 1	45	48	54	—
Early Retirement Strand 2	37	37	30	—
Early Retirement Strand 3	52	83	31	—

School Transport.

1254. **Deputy John Perry** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will ensure that a person (details supplied) in County Leitrim is facilitated with transport to their school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [33991/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): Under the terms of my Department’s School Transport scheme, a pupil with special needs is eligible for school transport if s/he is attending the nearest recognised: mainstream school, special class / special school or a unit, that is or can be resourced, to meet the child’s special educational needs under Department of Education and Science criteria.

My Department has been advised that the pupil referred to by the Deputy, in the details supplied, is not attending the nearest such facility and is, therefore, not eligible for transport under the terms of the scheme.

This case was also the subject of an appeal to the School Transport Appeals Board which has made a determination in the matter. The parents have been notified of this decision.

School Accommodation.

1255. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Education and Science the progress made in providing a new general purpose room for a school (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34030/09]

1256. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he has been requested to provide funds to repair the sewerage and drainage system at a school (details supplied) in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34031/09]

1257. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he has been requested to provide funds to repair the leaking roofs in a school in Dublin 15; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34032/09]

1274. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the fact that a school (details supplied) in Dublin 15 is so dilapidated that parents are concerned that there are health and safety risks to their children; the status of the funding application in respect of refurbishment of the school; when a decision will be made in respect of this funding application; if he will commit to making the necessary investment in this school; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34474/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I propose to take Questions Nos. 1255 to 1257, inclusive, and 1274 together.

The project to which the Deputies refer is at an early stage of Architectural Planning. A stage 2A submission (Developed Sketch Scheme) has recently been received in my Department and is currently under consideration. The major project, which includes the provision of an enhanced community facility in conjunction with Fingal County Council, will address each of the issues raised by the Deputies.

The progression of all large scale building projects, including this project, from initial design stage through to construction phase 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.

Third Level Fees.

1258. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science the amount of capital he estimates would be required to set up the proposed Australian model of third level fees, in which students take out a loan from the State to pay the cost of their education and then pay it back when they begin working; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34036/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): As the Deputy is aware I presented the technical report in relation to the introduction of a form of student contribution to my Cabinet colleagues recently. The report is intended to allow for an informed examination of the issue and sets out broad policy options in an Irish context which draws on experience from other systems that operate internationally. The report also sets out a range of variables and approaches in respect of such policy options, which will also need to be taken into account in its consideration. As the Deputy will appreciate I am not in a position to comment on specific aspects of this report in advance of its full consideration by Government.

Home-School Liaison Schemes.

1259. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Science the rate per hour under the home tuition scheme paid to qualified primary teachers and qualified secondary teachers and to other tutors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34039/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): The current hourly rate of payment is €44.33 for a qualified primary teacher and €49.60 for a qualified post primary teacher.

Tutors who are not qualified teachers are paid at a rate of €30.49 per hour.

Higher Education Grants.

1260. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Education and Science the amount allocated to the George Mitchell Scholarship Fund in 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009. [34044/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O'Keeffe): The funding of the George Mitchell Scholarship Programme is a reflection of the Government's gratitude for the significant contribution made by Senator Mitchell to the promotion of peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland. The Government provided an endowment of IR£2million for the programme in 1999.

In 2007, a decision was taken to secure the long term viability of this programme by increasing Ireland's contribution to the Fund for the programme by €20 million to be paid over a number of years conditional on matching funding being raised by the US-Ireland Alliance.

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Following Government approval of the general scheme of the George Mitchell Scholarship Fund (Amendment) Bill 2009, I sent the Bill to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for formal drafting. The Bill is scheduled to be published in the current session.

While a financial provision was included in my Department’s Estimates for 2007 and 2008 in respect of the Fund for the George Mitchell Scholarship Programme, no payments have been made to date in that regard pending the finalisation of the necessary amending legislation to the George Mitchell Scholarship Fund Act, 1998.

1261. **Deputy John O’Mahony** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of students brought to Ireland to study under the George Mitchell Scholarship Fund in 2007, 2008 and to date in 2009; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34045/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The George Mitchell Scholarship Programme is run on an academic year basis.

Details of the numbers of students participating in this programme in the 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 academic years are set out in a table.

Institution	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Dublin City University (DCU)	1	2	0
National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)	1	1	1.5*
National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM)	1	1	1
Queen’s University Belfast (QUB)	2	2	2.5*
Trinity College, Dublin (TCD)	2	2	2
University College Cork (UCC)	2	1	2
University College Dublin (UCD)	3	2	2
University of Limerick (UL)	0	0	1
University of Ulster (UU)	0	1	0
Total	12	12	12

*One student is undertaking a course which is being jointly delivered by NUI Galway and Queen’s University Belfast.

School Accommodation.

1262. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when a school (details supplied) in Dublin 20 will receive funding for essential renovation works; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34055/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The school to which the Deputy refers was one of ten projects announced in January 2009 to be re-tendered. In order to prepare for tender and to comply with the new form of Government contract, the project was required to submit a new Stage 2b (detailed design).

Following the receipt and clearance of the Stage 2b (detailed design) submission, the project was authorised to go tender in June and a tender report was received by the Department in late August. The Department wrote to the school in early September with its comments on the Tender Report and requested that a revised Tender Report be submitted.

This revised Tender Report has been received, and is currently being assessed. When this assessment is complete, the project will be considered for progression to the next stage i.e. the award stage.

Site Acquisitions.

1263. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the discussions his Department has had with officials in South Dublin County Council regarding the need for a new site for a school in an area (details supplied) in County Dublin. [34056/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department has made a written offer to the school authorities for a site for the school in question. A response is awaited.

Higher Education Grants.

1264. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Science if a student who has previously dropped out of a third level college course can enter a new third level course and apply for grant aid from the State for fees and maintenance; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34086/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The decision on eligibility for student grants is a matter for the relevant assessing authority — i.e. the relevant local authority or Vocational Education Committee.

The student referred to by the Deputy should seek clarification directly from the relevant assessing authority as the individual circumstances will have a bearing on the eligibility of the candidate. These bodies do not refer individual applications to my Department except, in exceptional cases, where, for example, advice or instruction regarding a particular clause in the relevant scheme is required.

School Enrolments.

1265. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will provide the number of students in the second level education system in the 2009-10 school year; the number of students enrolled in the second level education (details supplied) system during the 2008/2009 school year. [34184/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The number for post-primary enrolments are based on the returns from schools of students enrolled as at 30th September each year.

The number of students enrolled in the mainstream Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes during 2008/2009 was 307,944. If PLC and Core VTOS students enrolled in post-primary schools are included this figure is 342,324.

The processing of 2009/2010 enrolments as at 30th September has just commenced therefore final figures are not available at this time.

1266. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Education and Science the projected enrolments for the second level education system in respect of the years (details supplied). [34185/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The following link to the Department of Education and Science’s website provides data on projections of full-time enrolment in all teaching institutions aided by this Department at First, Second and Third level (including information on various underlying assumptions with regard to demography and retention):

<http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/des—proj—fte—2008—2030.doc?language=EN>

[Deputy Batt O’Keeffe.]

Projections of enrolment for all schools at Second Level can be found in table 2. It should be noted that since these data were published by my Department last December the figure for total enrolment at Second Level, in September 2008, has been confirmed as 341,312. The projected figures for 2009 onwards will be updated soon.

Departmental Contracts.

1267. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will respond to a query (details supplied). [34313/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): My Department has a contract with Vodafone for the supply of mobile voice and data services. These services were procured by means of the national framework for the supply of mobile voice and data services, plus associated products and services, to public bodies. My official mobile phone services are provided as part of the contract with Vodafone.

Question No. 1268 answered with Question No. 1252.

Departmental Staff.

1269. **Deputy Leo Varadkar** asked the Minister for Education and Science the number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from his Department in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34354/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The number of staff who have been dismissed for misconduct, poor performance or failing to fulfil the terms of their contract from my Department in each of the past five years is as follows:

- 1 Officer of my Department was dismissed for underperformance in 2004
- 2 Officers of my Department were dismissed for misconduct in 2006
- 2 Officers of my Department were dismissed for underperformance in 2007.

Higher Education Grants.

1270. **Deputy Jan O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Education and Science if his attention has been drawn to the fact that Fáilte Ireland has advised that it will no longer grant aid students on the advanced certificate in tourism hospitality studies course at Limerick Institute of Technology; if he will, in the circumstances, allow students who are commencing this course in 2009 to be considered for higher education grants; if there has been consultation between his Department and Fáilte Ireland on this issue; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34374/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The courses referred to by the Deputy are not eligible courses under my Department’s student maintenance grant schemes, which provide for grants only on a means-tested basis.

I understand that discussions are currently ongoing between Fáilte Ireland, Institutes of Technology Ireland and the Higher Education Authority in relation to the future management and administration of these courses and the levels of award to be made to graduating students.

Bullying in Schools.

1271. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science the information available to him since the second report on homophobic bullying in schools was published on the number of whole school evaluations conducted in second level schools, Youthreach centres, Traveller training centres and in special schools in which inspectors have explicitly identified problems with homophobic bullying; the number of schools in which adequate and effective policies and practices are in place to deal with homophobic bullying; the number of schools in which inspectors recommended the school should make improvements or introduce effective policies to tackle homophobic bullying. [34428/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): As the Deputy is aware the board of management of each school is required to prepare a code of behaviour in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. My Department further requires each school to have in place a policy which includes specific measures to deal with bullying behaviour, within the framework of an overall school code of behaviour and discipline. Such a code, developed through consultation with the whole school community and properly implemented, can be the most influential measure in countering bullying behaviour in schools.

My Department has issued guidelines as an aid to schools in devising measures to prevent and deal with instances of bullying behaviour and to increase awareness among school management authorities of their responsibilities in this regard. These guidelines were drawn up following consultation with representatives of school management, teachers and parents, and are sufficiently flexible to allow each school authority to adapt them to suit the particular needs of their school. My Department has also been working with the Gay Lesbian and Equality Network (GLEN) on the development of guidance material for school leaders in supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual students in second-level school. “Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students in Post-Primary Schools: Guidance for Principals and School Leaders” produced in association with the education partners and published jointly by GLEN and my Department, will be launched next week [by Minister of State Sean Haughey TD] and circulated to schools.

As part of a whole-school evaluation each school’s code of behaviour is requested and reviewed by the inspection team, along with other key school policy documents. The extent to which the policy is in line with the Department’s published Guidelines on Countering Bullying is considered. If a school does not have a legally required policy, inspectors will recommend that the school’s management address this as a matter of priority. In addition, where policies are found not to be in line with Department guidelines a policy review is recommended. This advice is given orally to the staff of the school and the board of management, as appropriate, and included in the published report of the inspection.

The review of anti-bullying policy during a WSE does not focus explicitly on any single category of bullying or harassment such as homophobic bullying. The WSE reports published by my Department in 2008, and 2009 to date, have not explicitly identified problems with homophobic bullying, nor have school policies and practices to deal with such behaviour in individual schools been identified by inspectors as causes for concern. The reports for the period, therefore, do not make specific recommendations to schools regarding improving approaches to tackling homophobic bullying.

Departmental Programmes.

1272. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Education and Science if, in regard to the on-line claim system for teachers, there has been a breach, or any allegation of breach, of security on the system; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34471/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): There is no indication that there was any breach or attempted breach of the Esinet system.

School Transport.

1273. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Education and Science his views on a matter (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34472/09]

Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science (Deputy Seán Haughey): Under the terms of my Department’s Post Primary School Transport Scheme, a pupil is eligible for transport if s/he resides 4.8 kilometres or more from her/his local post primary education centre.

The scheme is not designed to facilitate parents who choose to send their children to a post-primary centre outside of the catchment area in which they reside. However, children who are fully eligible for transport to the post-primary centre in the catchment area in which they reside, may apply for transport on a concessionary basis to a post-primary centre outside of their own catchment area — otherwise known as catchment boundary transport. These children can only be facilitated if spare seats are available on the bus after all other eligible children travelling to their local post-primary centre have been catered for and no additional state cost is incurred. Such children have to make their own way to the nearest pick up point within that catchment area. In general, catchment boundary tickets are issued on a first come, first served basis.

The pupils referred to by the Deputy in the details supplied, are not attending the school in the catchment area in which they reside, may only avail of concessionary transport from the catchment boundary and under the terms of the school transport scheme they must make their own way to that boundary.

Question No. 1274 answered with Question No. 1255.

Higher Education Grants.

1275. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Education and Science when a higher education grant will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34488/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): The decision on eligibility for student maintenance grants is a matter for the relevant assessing authority, either the local authority or VEC, as appropriate. These bodies do not refer individual applications to my Department, except in exceptional circumstances.

If an individual applicant considers that she/he has been unjustly refused a maintenance grant, or that the rate of maintenance grant awarded is not the correct one, she/he may appeal, in the first instance, to the relevant local authority or VEC.

Where an individual applicant has had an appeal turned down, in writing, by the relevant local authority or VEC, and remains of the view that the body has not interpreted the schemes correctly in his/her case, an appeal form outlining the position may be submitted by the applicant to my Department.

School Services Staff.

1276. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Education and Science if funding was allocated for additional support staff for personal assistant services to Carlow Institute of Technology; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34498/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Personal Assistants are utilised within third level colleges for certain classes of students with disabilities, mainly those with physical or mobility difficulties. The main source of funding for personal assistants is the Fund for Students with Disabilities. Colleges of further and higher education can apply to the Fund on behalf of students who require a personal assistant in order to participate equitably in their education.

The manner in which the personal assistants are employed is a matter for each institution. The terms and conditions of employment for employees who provide support for students with disabilities in third level is a matter for the individual colleges concerned.

Some €174,000 was made available to Carlow Institute of Technology under the Fund for Students with Disabilities in the 2008/09 academic year.

Departmental Expenditure.

1277. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will ensure that primary education is put on a protected status during this economic climate. [34512/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): I have consistently said that the 2009 Budget required difficult choices to be made across all areas of public expenditure. These decisions were made to control public expenditure and to ensure sustainability in the long run. In this respect, education, while protected to a much greater extent than most other areas of public expenditure, could not be totally spared.

Planned expenditure levels for my Department will be considered as part of the Estimates and budgetary process for 2010. This will include consideration of the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, and the decisions on all of the issues arising will be a matter for the Government.

It would not be appropriate for me to comment further at this stage pending the outcome of these deliberative processes.

Site Acquisitions.

1278. **Deputy Brian Hayes** asked the Minister for Education and Science the position regarding a school (details supplied) in Dublin 7; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34513/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Officials from my Department have met officials from the City Council and representatives of Naomh Fionnbarra GAA club to discuss the possibility of entering into a lease arrangement with the City Council. Such an arrangement would, in time, require the GAA club to surrender its interest in some of the lands required for the building project. My Department has written to the GAA club summarising the views of the local authority on a proposed design solution while outlining the Departments position on same. A response is awaited from the GAA club.

School Services Staff.

1279. **Deputy Joe McHugh** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will establish an interim standard national rate of pay for school secretaries that would apply until such time as negotiations with the School Secretaries Forum conclude; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34541/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): In the context of the Towards 2016 Review and Transitional Agreement in 2008, it was agreed that the relevant parties would enter into discussions regarding the terms and conditions of both school secretaries and caretakers.

Following ratification of the Transitional Agreement by the Unions in November 2008, a forum was set up in December 2008 under whose auspices these discussions could be furthered. The forum is jointly chaired by my Department and the Department of Finance, and also comprises of the relevant School Management Bodies, and the relevant Unions (IMPACT and SIPTU).

As a first step, the forum decided to establish the factual position regarding the terms and conditions of employment of school secretaries and caretakers by conducting a comprehensive survey of schools. This survey was then developed by my Department, in consultation with the other members of the forum. As there are established terms and conditions for secretaries and caretakers employed in the Community & Comprehensive sector and the VEC sector, it was decided that the survey should only cover the primary and voluntary post-primary sectors.

This survey was then issued to all relevant schools on Monday, 20 April 2009. The results of the survey, once available, will inform the deliberations of the forum.

As the discussions of the forum are currently in progress it would not be appropriate for me to make any further comment at this time.

School Accommodation.

1280. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Education and Science if he will take steps to put in place appropriate safety measures at a school (details supplied) in County Westmeath; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34556/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): My Department has no record of an application being received for capital funding to provide car parking and safety facilities at this school.

Should an application be received for funding for such works, it will be assessed and the school authorities notified of the outcome without delay.

Question No. 1281 answered with Question No. 1136.

Departmental Expenditure.

1282. **Deputy Ruairí Quinn** asked the Minister for Education and Science the report or data he cited, other than the OECD report mentioned, in regard to his claims in a section of his submission to the special group on public service numbers and expenditure programmes (details supplied); if he will provide a copy of the relevant sources; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [34588/09]

Minister for Education and Science (Deputy Batt O’Keeffe): Data quoted in the relevant section of my submission to the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes as referred to by the Deputy are contained in a report titled “Review and Prioritisation of Capital Projects in the Higher Education Sector” published by the HEA in 2004. The report sets out a strategy to meet the future capital needs of the higher education sector. The information supplied was taken from Section 6 of the Report, which examines current building stock and was updated as appropriate to allow for the time lapse since its publication.

I will arrange for a copy of the report to be forwarded to the Deputy.