

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 8, inclusive, answered orally.

Cultural Policy

9. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht his plans to expand culture night to culture week in September; and if he will also consider a second culture week during the summer holiday period in support of the Gathering 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4508/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): As the Deputy is aware, the *Programme for Government* contains a commitment to expand the Culture Night concept and to consider making it a twice yearly event. Following on from discussions between my Department and all relevant stakeholders, it was agreed that this commitment would be best met by the designation and delivery of an *International Week of Irish Culture*, based around the St Patrick's Day Festival. This would allow for the cultivation and development of the solid foundations already in place to showcase to the world Ireland's rich and varied cultural heritage and to promote Ireland as a destination for cultural tourists.

2012 was essentially the first year of a 5-year development plan for this initiative, which will ultimately potentially link with 2016 commemorations. Last year, the emphasis was on the international launch of the "*International Celebration of Irish Culture*" brand abroad and a series of programme activities based in existing cultural venues around the Merrion Square/Kildare Street areas of Dublin, marketing the message of "*I Love my City*". The existing St. Patrick's Festival activity was used to promote Ireland and its culture, both domestically and internationally, and the initiative was well received and supported in both national and international spheres.

Plans for the 2013 event are almost finalised and both the duration and programme have been expanded for this year's event, having particular regard to the Gathering. In addition to profiling the range of rich cultural events taking place during St. Patrick's Festival, the 2013 programme also includes some 16 headline events in collaboration with various cultural institutions and partners over a 4 day period from the 14th to the 17th March inclusive. These events will be staged in the beautiful surroundings of some of our most prestigious cultural institutions and venues and admission will be free of charge. Ireland's current presidency of the EU will also be celebrated during the 2013 event, with the key focus of the international element of this year's programme centring on "*Culture Connects*", the international culture programme of Ireland's EU Presidency.

In further recognition of the Culture Night commitment in the *Programme for Government*, my Department continues to work with all relevant stakeholders to foster and develop the event. Culture Night has grown from a relatively small-scale cultural event staged only in Dublin in 2006 to the significant national cultural event it now is, with Culture Night 2012 featuring a record 34 participating locations, including 6 regions in Northern Ireland, and encompassing over 900 venues, making it the biggest and most extensive Culture Night to date. Discussions have already commenced with key stakeholders in relation to Culture Night 2013. As it enters its 8th year, the challenge is to keep Culture Night fresh and exciting, whilst building on the platforms and success of previous years to further develop and enhance the event. Whilst we want people to really enjoy Culture Night, we also want to use it as a stepping stone or bridge to encourage more people to visit cultural venues and experience culture in their locality. I anticipate that both the Culture Night and *International Celebration of Irish Culture* initiatives will make a significant contribution towards the success of The Gathering in 2013.

Question No. 10 answered with Question No. 7.

Arts Council Funding

11. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he will consider seeking the implementation of a multi-annual funding framework for those funded through the Arts Council to provide more certainty; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4259/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): Government policy on the arts, as set out in the *Programme for Government*, is to promote and strengthen the arts in all its forms, increase access to and participation in the arts, make the arts an integral and valued part of our national life, and maximise the potential for cultural tourism and job creation in this sector. In the context of the 2013 Estimates, I continued my endeavours to maximise ongoing Government support for the arts and culture sector. For 2013, the Exchequer allocation to the Arts Council, which is the principal agency through which State funding is channelled to the arts, will total some €60.7 million in current, capital and EU Presidency funding. I remain committed to securing the best possible level of funding for the arts sector.

Under the Arts Act 2003, the Arts Council is statutorily independent in its day-to-day operations and neither I nor my Department has a role to play in its funding decisions. I am advised, however, that the Arts Council operates funding cycles for its three main grant programmes - *Regularly Funded Organisations*; *Annual Funding*; and *Annual Programming Grants* – in such a way as to help arts organisations by giving them more funding certainty and improved ability for planning.

I believe that within the current economic constraints, our investment in the arts, culture and creative sectors is more important than ever due to the employment intensity of the sector. The arts are a significant economic contributor and employer in their own right and they are also important building blocks for those economic policies the Government has identified as crucial for our economic recovery. The arts continue to underpin policies in attracting foreign direct investment, the creation of an imaginative labour force, establishing an innovative environment in which the creative and cultural industries can thrive, and promoting cultural tourism.

National Monuments

12. **Deputy Brian Stanley** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when a

decision will be made in relation to the battlefield site on Moore Street, Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4498/13]

18. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he intends honouring his undertaking to preserve the 1916 National Monument in its entirety under preservation order No. 1 of 2007. [4261/13]

38. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he has received the environmental impact assessment of numbers 14 to 17 Moore Street, Dublin; the result of this assessment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4511/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 12, 18 and 38 together.

Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street are the subject of a Preservation Order under the National Monuments Acts. The effect of the Preservation Order is that any works affecting these properties require my consent, as Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, under section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended. The landowner's application to my Department envisages the retention of the monument buildings and the provision of a commemorative centre to the 1916 Rising and its leaders. That application for consent is being examined by my Department at present. As part of the consent process, the applicant was asked by my Department to submit an Environmental Impact Statement in relation to the proposed works. This was in accordance with new regulations, which I introduced last year, that have placed additional responsibilities on landowners in respect of monuments protected under the National Monuments Acts.

The Environmental Impact Statement was received in my Department on Friday last, 25 January 2013 and, as required by the regulations, copies have been sent to the National Museum of Ireland and Dublin City Council for observations. It is also available for public examination. Interested parties have 5 weeks from the submission date to provide their comments to me, as Minister, for consideration as part of my assessment of the Environmental Impact Statement. Having completed the prescribed consultation procedures, I will then undertake the formal environmental impact assessment as part of my decision on the consent application. My intention is complete these processes as speedily as possible.

The Gathering Initiatives

13. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he will provide an update on his Department's role in the Gathering; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4479/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): As the Deputy is aware, The Gathering is an initiative of my colleague, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, and it has my full support and that of the agencies under my Department's remit. A range of actions being taken by my Department and its agencies to support The Gathering were outlined in reply to Question No 16 of 28 November last. That reply acknowledged the importance of genealogy in the context of The Gathering, especially in terms of helping members of the Irish Diaspora to establish links with their family history and place. My Department, the National Library and the National Archives are concentrating on progressing improvements to our genealogical offering as part of our contribution to The Gathering.

Art in all its forms is an intrinsic part of Irish culture and will play an important part in The Gathering. As outlined on 28 November last, our national cultural institutions such as the

National Museum and the National Gallery are promoting a number of initiatives to contribute towards The Gathering. In addition, the National Concert Hall is focusing on two periods in relation to The Gathering: St Patrick's Weekend and *Summer at the NCH*, where a wide range of concerts featuring leading Irish artists in traditional, popular and classical music will be held throughout July and August. The National Library's award-winning multimedia exhibition on WB Yeats will run throughout the year. It is also mounting an exhibition to mark the 50th anniversary of the homecoming visit of President John F Kennedy to Ireland in 1963, in partnership with the National Archives, with the support of my own Department, the US Embassy and the JFK Library. It will also host the travelling exhibition "The Fifth Province: Irish County Societies in America", originally presented in Glucksman Ireland House, New York. The National Archives will also be playing its part.

As outlined previously, the Arts Council is playing an ongoing key role in funding and developing arts events around the country during 2013. This will seek to ensure that many of the visitors for The Gathering can experience excellent performances and exhibitions locally. In addition, both the Culture Night and International Celebration of Irish Culture initiatives will make a significant contribution to The Gathering.

In the heritage area, my Department is supporting an initiative planned for 2013 by Mayo County Council to create an architectural installation in a westerly location in Co Mayo which will be informed by past and present Diaspora celebrated by The Gathering. I am informed that the Heritage Council, which is funded by my Department, has made a submission to Fáilte Ireland regarding the international marketing of Heritage Week 2013 to link in with The Gathering. In addition, the Council grant-aided a genealogist post last year in the organisation *Ireland Reaching Out*, which is a Diaspora-focused organization contracted to support The Gathering.

In terms of the Gaeltacht, Údarás na Gaeltachta will be placing particular emphasis on events aimed at attracting visitors to Ireland as part of The Gathering in the context of its 2013 scheme for supporting traditional festivals in Gaeltacht areas. In summary, therefore, I consider that both my Department and the various bodies under its remit will be making a substantial contribution towards The Gathering initiative.

Arts Promotion

14. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the practical impact and cost of the Arts in Education Charter; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4481/13]

130. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which his Department avails of opportunities to promote the arts through the education system with particular reference to primary, second and third levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4815/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 14 and 130 together.

The *Arts in Education* Charter places new responsibilities on Government Departments, agencies, cultural institutions and arts organisations in terms of providing and promoting arts education to children and young people. The practical impact of this Charter will result in a more joined-up Government approach across Departments, education agencies and arts organisations. The Charter will require groups like the Arts Council, the National Cultural Institutions, the Colleges of Education and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to work

with both my own Department and the Department of Education and Skills in order to bring the arts into the classroom and school children into the arts and culture sector.

A High Level Implementation Group will oversee the implementation of the Charter and will report to the Minister of Education and Skills and myself at least twice a year. The Implementation Group may also advise on updating and improving the Charter and will provide a strategic, high-level and ongoing point of contact between the policy-makers, key providers and students in the fields of arts and education. It is not envisaged that either Department will seek additional resources specifically for the implementation of the *Arts in Education* Charter - rather we will work to leverage the maximum from existing resources. More details of this initiative can be obtained on my Department's website under the *Projects and Programmes* link listed under

<http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/Arts/ProjectsandProgrammes/ArtsInEducation/>

EU Presidency Agenda

15. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht his priorities during the Irish presidency of the EU; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4475/13]

34. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht arising from his contacts with the various stakeholders throughout the arts sector, the extent to which he envisages, in the course of Ireland's Presidency of the EU, the development of the arts sector as a major brand leader throughout the EU and globally and to utilise the medium of the arts in Ireland as a means of promoting the national image and thereby continuing its contribution to national economic recovery; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4494/13]

42. **Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht his plans to utilize the EU Presidency to promote Arts, Heritage and the Irish language; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4504/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 15, 34 and 42 together.

During Ireland's EU Presidency, we will focus in the cultural area on two legislative proposals - *Creative Europe 2014-2020* and *Europe for Citizens 2014-2020* - as well as the *European Capitals of Culture 2020-2033* proposal. The *Creative Europe* proposal is very important for artists and arts organisations across the entire European Union. It is vital that we get agreement on this so that those working in the culture and creative sectors can benefit from the new programme as soon as possible. It should be noted, however, that agreement on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework is essential to ensure that the *Creative Europe* programme is adopted in time for the sectors to start to benefit from it from the beginning of 2014. The Irish Presidency also considers that *Europe for Citizens* is an important proposal for progression. This proposal seeks to enhance civic participation at the Union level. A further key element of our Presidency is the timely adoption of the *European Capitals of Culture* proposal so that the chosen locations can be afforded the necessary lead-in times to bring forward preparations for their period of designation.

I would also like to refer to Ireland's Cultural Programme for the Presidency - *Culture Connects* - which I launched recently in Dublin with Minister of State Creighton. The Programme aims to showcase Irish culture across Europe, as well as European culture in Ireland, thereby illustrating the shared nature of much of our cultural experiences. The Programme incorporates

over 300 projects being undertaken under the management and oversight of my Department - at home and abroad. It will facilitate the engagement of audiences throughout Ireland with European artists, as well as exposing our indigenous artistic community to wider cultural experiences across Europe and further afield, by way of a range of festivals, traditional arts and other specific events. The *Culture Connects* programme is available on my Department's website and I have also made arrangements to lodge copies in the Oireachtas Library. The EU is culturally diverse, with a rich, shared, European heritage. I firmly believe that it benefits us all to bring our arts and culture to a wider EU audience, whilst also experiencing the cultural offerings of our partner countries.

From the heritage perspective, certain nature conservation issues which come into my area of responsibility will fall to be dealt with under the Environment Council formation. The first of these is an EU Commission proposal in respect of *Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization*. This is intended to meet the requirements of the Nagoya Protocol within the EU and sets out obligations for users of genetic resources in the Union. The Protocol is aimed at ensuring that there is a reward to countries that are the source of biological materials which may be collected for use in other countries in new and profitable products, such as foods, medicines, or biotech agents. It would protect developing countries from so-called "biopiracy" and is also a key step in meeting the 2020 Global Targets on Biodiversity. Ireland's Presidency aims to make significant progress within the Council with regard to the overall objective of EU ratification of the Nagoya Protocol in early 2014.

A new Directive on Invasive Alien Species is expected to be adopted by the Commission in the near future and the Irish Presidency will commence work on this item, if it is adopted. The Irish Presidency also co-ordinated EU positions for the first plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which took place last week in Bonn, Germany. This was an important meeting to establish this new international body, which will provide scientific advice on biodiversity issues.

Finally, in relation to heritage matters, the Irish Presidency is currently overseeing the formulation of common positions on the proposals to be discussed at the 16th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Illegal Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, next March.

With regard to the Irish language, my Department is a member of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD), which is a European-wide network working in the field of language policy and planning. During the Irish Presidency of the EU, my colleague, Minister of State McGinley, will launch the NPLD's *European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity* in Brussels. It is envisaged that this will raise awareness at a European level on the vital importance of linguistic diversity.

Abbey Theatre

16. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the amount of State funding paid to the Abbey Theatre over the past five years. [4510/13]

43. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he will explain the relationship between the Abbey Theatre and the State in terms of ownership structures and status and financial oversight. [4509/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 16 and 43 together.

The Abbey Theatre/Amharclann na Mainstreach is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital, which was established under the Companies Act 1963. It has a board of eleven members, including the Chair. The board and the management are responsible for the day to day running of the Theatre. The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht appoints the Chair and two of the other directors. Oversight is provided by the Arts Council, which provides the annual operating grant to the Theatre, while the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General audits the financial accounts.

The Abbey Theatre's mission is to create world-class theatre that actively engages with and reflects Irish society. It seeks to achieve its mission by:

- Sustaining and re-imagining the repertoire of Irish plays;
- Presenting classic and contemporary world theatre;
- Promoting and developing the long-term success of Irish theatre;
- Touring nationally and internationally; and
- Engaging its communities in outreach and education programmes.

The combined total amount of funding provided by the Arts Council and by my Department for the years 2008 to 2012 was some €41.96m. Details of the funding are set out in the table. Of that €41.96m my Department provided €1.66m in capital funding to the Abbey Theatre for capital upgrades, equipment replacement and health and safety investments.

Since 2006, the Arts Council, as the principal provider of current State funding to the Abbey Theatre, has provided its funding via a combination of annual and three year multiannual funding agreements. Such funding is provided as a contribution towards both artistic programming costs and operating costs, such as staff and ongoing administrative expenditure. I am advised that funding is offered in response to proposals submitted by the Abbey and, once agreement has been reached on the key deliverables, the purpose for which funding is used is then monitored on an ongoing basis via regular reporting arrangements. Funding for touring production within Ireland is provided by the Arts Council, while funding for international touring is provided under my Department's Culture Ireland Programme.

TABLE: Funding to the Abbey Theatre 2008-2012

Funding Type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Arts Council Revenue Grant	€10,000,000	€8,350,000	€7,250,000	€7,100,000	€7,100,000
Arts Council Touring Grant				€68,000	€58,000
Culture Ireland Touring Grant	€49,511	€26,400		€236,348	€60,204
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Capital Grant	€297,701	€196,272	€467,821	€249,662	€450,000

Funding Type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	€10,347,212	€8,572,672	€7,717,821	€7,654,010	€7,668,204

Question No. 17 answered with Question No. 7.

Question No. 18 answered with Question No. 12.

State Properties

19. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht his plans to take into State ownership the Bank of Ireland building at College Green, Dublin, based on its historical significance; if the issue has been discussed with the owners; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4262/13]

48. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the position in relation to his effort to secure Bank of Ireland on College Green, Dublin, for the purpose of the Arts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4503/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 19 and 48 together.

I refer the Deputy to my previous replies on this matter. As outlined in those replies, I met the Chair and Chief Executive of Bank of Ireland and had a constructive engagement on the issues.

Film Industry Development

20. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht his plans for the future of the audio visual industry here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4468/13]

33. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he will report on the decision to extend section 481 the film tax relief scheme until the end of 2020; if he has set any annual targets for the film sector in terms of the attraction of international productions, revenue generated for the local economy and use of local crews and actors for example; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4263/13]

47. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which he continues to have discussions with film-makers at home and abroad with a view to facilitating the development of this country as a major world-wide filming location and thereby promoting the national image and economic recovery; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4495/13]

128. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which the film industry has developed and grown indigenously in each of the past five years to date; his plans for future development and expansion in this regard; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4813/13]

129. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which it is intended to promote the use of this country as a film location with obvious and consequent economic benefits; if he has had any discussions with potential film makers

from overseas regarding same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4814/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 20, 33, 47, 128 and 129 together.

The whole area of the development of the Irish audiovisual industry was examined during the preparation of the Creative Capital Report – *Building Ireland's Audiovisual Creative Economy*. The Report was published in July 2011 and an implementation committee to pursue the execution of its recommendations has been established. One of the main recommendations in the Report is the extension of the Section 481 Scheme until the end of 2020; it is currently approved until the end of 2015.

A public consultation process to assist the Department of Finance in examining the operation of the Section 481 Scheme beyond 2015 was announced in May 2012. This consultation process invited interested parties to make submissions on the economic impact assessment of the operation, status and future development of the Section 481 Scheme. My Department was involved centrally in this consultation. In his budget speech last December, the Minister for Finance, Mr Michael Noonan, T.D., announced that the Section 481 Scheme will be extended to 2020. An important and significant change will mean that the scheme will operate as a tax credit model from 2016. This will allow an extended lead-in period to enable the sector to adapt to the change to a tax credit model. This very good news has been welcomed by the sector. The extension of this scheme gives a great deal of certainty to the Irish audiovisual sector to the end of this decade and will help to ensure that current jobs in the sector for indigenous crews and actors are maintained.

As the Deputies are aware, primary responsibility for the support and promotion of film-making in Ireland, in respect of both the indigenous sector and inward productions, is a matter for the Irish Film Board (IFB). This agency is funded through my Department and is independent in its day-to-day operations. As part of its remit, the IFB would have regular meetings with international film makers, as well as attending the major international film festivals to promote Ireland as a location for film making. I support that effort and, with An Taoiseach, recently met the renowned film director, Mr Stephen Spielberg.

The IFB targets for 2013 in terms of audiovisual production activity is for an increase in the value of such activity of over 20 per cent - from €180m in 2012 to €220m in 2013. In tandem with this, the IFB aims to increase employment in the sector from 6,600 full time equivalents (FTEs) to 7,800 (FTEs) – an increase of 19 per cent. These are ambitious targets for the audiovisual sector but, combined with the incentives from Section 481, I believe that they can be achieved.

Finally, with regard to the growth in the Irish audiovisual sector in the last five years, one simple indicator can be obtained by comparing the number and value of Section 481 (Film Tax Relief Scheme) projects approved between 2008 and 2012. In 2008, there were 38 projects approved with an Irish spend of €108m, while, in 2012, there were 52 projects approved with an Irish spend of €143m - an increase of 36.8% in the number of projects and an increase of 32.4% in the level of Irish spend.

Flood Prevention Measures

21. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the steps that he is taking to implement the recommendations by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Environment report on Shannon Flooding published last year; and if he will make a state-

ment on the matter. [4266/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): As the Deputy will be aware, the recommendations to which he refers cover a number of areas within my Department's remit:

- Waterways Ireland, which has responsibility for the Shannon Navigation; and
- my Department's National Parks and Wildlife Service, which has general responsibility for the implementation of national and EU law under the Wildlife Acts and the Birds and Habitats Directives for the protection of habitats and species.

I can advise the Deputy that the recommendations of the Report are being comprehensively examined and considered by my Department at present and I envisage that I will be in a position to respond to the Joint Committee shortly.

Question No. 22 answered with Question No. 7.

Commemorative Events

23. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht his plans to commemorate the 1913 Lockout; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4505/13]

39. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he has made a decision regarding a grant application to restore the former Richmond Barracks gymnasium as a local museum and centre for focus on commemorations in 1916; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4499/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 23 and 39 together.

In the development of the commemorative programme, I have been in dialogue with national organisations, military heritage and history societies, local authorities and community groups about their interests and possible contributions in the coming years. I was impressed by the proposals brought forward by the community group at St Michael's Estate in relation to the surviving buildings from Richmond Barracks. In the aftermath of the Easter Rising, these buildings were used for the detention of prisoners and the trials of the leaders. I invited the group to meet with the All-Party Group on Commemorations, which was satisfied to commend the project for any available support. The centenary commemorative programme does not contain any capital allocation to assist projects and consequently a decision on an application for a grant does not arise at this time. However, enquiries are being made with the local authority and other agencies to explore how the heritage at Richmond Barracks can be prepared to be presented in the commemorations of the Rising.

The 1913 Lockout will be the subject of a programme of major events, supported by the State and working with partners including Dublin City Council, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the national cultural institutions, universities and VECs and many others. Details of the programme events are yet to be finalised and will be the subject of announcements as they arise. The official events will include a formal acknowledgement of the anniversary of the Lockout in August, the issue of special commemorative issue stamps by An Post and special exhibitions by the national cultural institutions. I welcome the very significant programme of commemorative events being arranged by the trade union movement and I was pleased that it was possible to provide official support for the tapestry project launched by the President in

December last. I will continue to work closely with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on the Lockout programme.

Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme Issues

24. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of alternative bogs which have been sourced for turf cutters forced to relocate; the number of turf cutters that have been accommodated; the number that will be accommodated before the commencement of the 2013 turf cutting season; the number of persons who will not be accommodated by the commencement of the 2013 season; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4265/13]

35. **Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht his views on the progress made to date of the alternatives offered to turf cutters on special areas of conservation bogs, that is the uptake of compensation, free turf deliveries and any relocation schemes; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [54588/12]

114. **Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the position regarding turf cutting and the cessation of same, the number of persons under the previous compensation schemes that have yet to be paid at this stage; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4607/13]

115. **Deputy Luke 'Ming' Flanagan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to Parliamentary Question No. 163 of 23 January 2013, if he will provide the number of those who expressed an interest in relocation who qualified under the criteria of the scheme for relocation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4608/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 24, 35, 114 and 115 together.

As the Deputies are aware, the payment of €1,500 per annum, index linked, or the delivery of cut turf, is now available, under the cessation of turf cutting compensation scheme, to qualifying turf cutters while awaiting relocation to non-designated bogs. Of the 2,586 applications for compensation under the cessation of turf cutting compensation scheme received and acknowledged by my Department to date, 766 applicants have expressed an interest in relocation to non-designated bogs. A total of 2,142 payments and 194 deliveries of turf have been made to date in respect of the applications received.

Arrangements for the relocation of turf cutters to non-designated bogs have been made as regards a group from Clara Bog in County Offaly and a group from Carrownagappul Bog and Curraghlehanagh Bog SACs in County Galway. These arrangements involve the groups moving to nearby bogs, with the group from Clara Bog having commenced turf cutting at the relocation site in Killeranny, County Offaly, in June last, where 23 qualifying turf cutters have now been accommodated. Agreement has been reached between my Department and the group of turf cutters from Carrownagappul and Curraghlehanagh Bogs that necessary infrastructure development works will be carried out this year in the relocation site in preparation for turf cutting. The commencement of cutting depends on the ground settling following these works and I understand that cutting will commence here in 2014.

Progress has also been made with a view to the relocation in a similar manner of qualifying turf cutters from Ballynafagh Bog SAC in County Kildare. My Department envisages that qualifying turf cutters from Ballynafagh Bog will be able to commence turf cutting in a relocation site during the forthcoming turf cutting season. In total, 70 applicants from Carrowna-

gappul Bog, 19 applicants from Curraghlahanagh Bog and 28 applicants from Ballynafagh Bog have expressed an interest in relocation to non-designated bogs. I am advised that of the remaining 49 raised bog SACs, potential relocation sites have been identified for a further 31 bogs and work is ongoing on identifying and investigating these. Relocation is unlikely to be required, or is likely to be small-scale, for another 15 raised bog SACs due, for example, to the small number of turf cutters that have been active on these sites.

The Deputies will appreciate that relocation is a very complex process, in terms of investigating suitable sites for turf quality and quantity, the infrastructure/drainage works required, establishing the number who can be accommodated on the site, the cost and feasibility of land purchase or lease, and possible planning and Environmental Impact Assessment requirements. Accordingly, it will only be possible to bring this process to a conclusion over time in respect of all the relocation sites. It is not possible to indicate, therefore, when exactly additional turf cutters can be accommodated at any of these sites over and above the specific cases already mentioned.

With regard to the issue of applicants being qualified for relocation, the process of assessing applications is being carried forward by officials in my Department. Deputies will appreciate that assessment and verification of applications is a complex process. My officials are continuing to work closely with turf cutters, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (as successors of the Land Commission), Bord na Móna and other organisations to assist people to provide the necessary proof of legal interest with their applications.

With regard to persons awaiting payment under previous compensation schemes, I assume that the Question in this regard is referring to applicants from raised bog SACs. Such applicants had been informed that they could, if they wished, transfer from the former voluntary bog purchase scheme to the new compensation scheme established by my Department for those affected by the cessation of turf cutting on raised bog SACs. This would, of course allow applicants to retain ownership of their land holding or rights, while availing of compensation. Over 140 applicants have availed of this option to date and I am advised that of the order of 250 further applications remain under consideration in my Department at this time.

Overall, given the magnitude of the challenges involved, I am satisfied that the vast majority of active turf cutters are engaging positively with the schemes put in place by the Government to ensure that Ireland meets its obligations to protect these important areas, while ensuring that the needs of turf cutters are met appropriately.

Fostaíocht sa Ghaeltacht

25. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Michael P. Kitt** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil sé sásta leis na hiarrachtaí atá á ndéanamh chun níos mó fostaíochta a chur ar fáil sa Ghaeltacht, an mbeidh comhlacht nua ar nós LEADER á bhunú sa Ghaeltacht. [4456/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Deirtear i ráiteas deireadh bliana Údarás na Gaeltachta don bhliain 2012 gur cruthaíodh 700 post nua i gcliantchuideachtaí Údarás na Gaeltachta in 2012. Bhí 7,553 post i gcliantchuideachtaí an Údaráis ag deireadh na bliana, lena n-áirítear 6,933 post lánaimseartha agus 620 post páirtaimseartha. Nuair a thógtar líon na bpost lánaimseartha a cailleadh san áireamh, bhí glan-chailleanas de 37 post i gceist i gcliantchuideachtaí an Údaráis in 2012. Bhí an líon post a cailleadh in 2012 ar an ráta cailleanais phost is lú a bhí ag an Údarás le níos mó ná deich mbliana anuas. Tháinig ardú le linn 2012 ar an leibhéal fostaíochta i gcomhlachtaí a bhí ag feidhmiú sna hearnálacha cógaisíochta, feistí leighis, bia agus saindeantúsaíochta agus lean

an leibhéal díolacháin agus fostaíochta ag fás i gcomhlachtaí easpórtála de chuid an Údaráis.

Le linn 2012, cheadaigh an tÚdarás tograí ina mbeidh suas le 460 post nua measta á gcruthú iontu agus infheistíocht mheasta de €37 milliún san iomlán ag baint leo nuair a bheidh siad faoi lánseol. Beidh go leor de na poist seo ag teacht chun cinn ón mbliain seo ar aghaidh. Is údar dóchais ar leith é gur cheadaigh an tÚdarás Forbartha Tionscail tacaíocht in 2012 do 220 post nua do chliantchuideachta de chuid Údarás na Gaeltachta atá lonnaithe i nGaeltacht Chonamara.

Déanann Údarás na Gaeltachta scéimeanna áirithe, atá maoinithe ag an Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí, a bhainistiú sa Ghaeltacht:

- an Scéim Fostaíochta Pobail;
- an Scéim Shóisialta Tuaithe;
- Tús; agus
- Tús Nua.

In 2012, bhí os cionn 960 rannpháirtí agus 47 saoise fostaithe ar na scéimeanna seo. Is cinnte go bhfuil ról tábhachtach ag na scéimeanna seo maidir le gníomhaíochtaí forbartha pobail agus teanga a chur chun cinn sa Ghaeltacht.

Mar chuid dá bheartas straitéise sa todhchaí, tuigtear dom go bhfuil sé i gceist ag Údarás na Gaeltachta tacú le cruthú fostaíochta in eochair-earnálacha ar nós acmhainní nádúrtha agus mara, eolaíochtaí beatha, teicneolaíocht faisnéise agus cumarsáide, turasóireacht chultúrtha, déantúsaíocht nideoige, innealtóireacht, bia agus fiontair bhreisluacha eile. Maidir le comhlacht nua ar nós LEADER a bhunú sa Ghaeltacht, is ceist í seo do mo chomhghleacaí, an tAire Comhshaoil, Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil, a bhfuil cúram air i ndáil le fo-chlár LEADER den Chlár Forbartha Tuaithe 2007-2013 a bhainistiú.

State Art Collection

26. **Deputy John McGuinness** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the steps he has taken to quantify, register and secure the works of art that belong to the State; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4472/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): The national cultural institutions under the aegis of my Department own important collections of art and other artefacts on behalf of the State. Whilst my Department provides funding to those institutions, the board of each institution is responsible for all operational matters, including the quantification, registration and securing of artworks, and I do not have a statutory function in respect of such matters. Notwithstanding this, my Department maintains appropriate contact with the institutions on the subject of their security measures and the arrangements in place to ensure the protection of the collections in their care.

My Department also owns a number of pieces of art and other artefacts in its own right in a number of properties. In this regard, an investigation is underway by An Garda Síochána in relation to the loss of a number of items held in private storage on behalf of my Department. My Department is providing such assistance as it can in this matter. In the meantime, I have arranged that, where appropriate, art and other artefacts owned by my Department and held in storage be moved to secure State facilities. I have also ensured, in the light of this incident, that a review be carried out of procedures and protocols in relation to the storage of art and artefacts

by my Department. It should also be noted that the Office of Public Works separately is responsible for the care and management of art pieces in a wide range of State property.

Special Areas of Conservation Designation

27. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to his announcement last December of his intention to designate the area around Rockabill to Dalkey Island as a special area of conservation, if he has discussed the implications of this with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in view of their recent granting of foreshore and exploration licences to a company (details supplied) to drill an oil well just 6 km from Dublin coastline. [4407/13]

36. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to his announcement last December of his intention to designate the area around Rockabill to Dalkey Island as a special area of conservation, if he has discussed the implications of this with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in view of their recent granting of foreshore and exploration licences to a company (details supplied) to drill an oil well just 6 km from Dublin coastline. [4518/13]

41. **Deputy Joe Higgins** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to his announcement last December of his intention to designate the area around Rockabill to Dalkey Island as a special area of conservation, if he has discussed the implications of this with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in view of their recent granting of foreshore and exploration licences to a company (details supplied) to drill an oil well just 6 km from Dublin coastline. [4516/13]

53. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht further to his announcement last December of his intention to designate the area around Rockabill to Dalkey Island as a special area of conservation, if he has discussed the implications of this with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in view of their recent granting of foreshore and exploration licences to a company (details supplied) to drill an oil well just 6 km from the Dublin coastline. [4517/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 27, 36, 41 and 53 together.

The Rockabill to Dalkey Island candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is one of six additional marine sites proposed for designation to meet Ireland's obligations under the Habitats Directive. The harbour porpoise is the principal conservation interest of the site, though it also contains small areas of geogenic reef, which are also afforded protection. Like all species of cetacean, the harbour porpoise enjoys strict protection under Article 12 of the Habitats Directive wherever it occurs, whether within or outside a designated area.

My Department was consulted in advance of the issuing of the consents referred to in the questions. Advice was provided to both the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resource on the protection of marine mammals, including the harbour porpoise, and on appropriate mitigation measures that should be employed during the survey. Where a site is proposed for designa-

tion as an SAC, consent authorities are required to consider the implications of proposals on the site, in keeping with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, before consents are granted. However, I understand that the consents referred to were granted before I notified my intention to designate the Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC. Any future consent for exploration, extraction or any other activity within or in the vicinity of the SAC will need to be examined for potential impacts upon it. Consent authorities will need to satisfy themselves that proposed projects do not pose a risk to the integrity of this and other sites before issuing such consents.

In preparing proposals for designation, my Department would normally be in contact informally with relevant bodies as part of the process of preparing formal proposals and in preparing the scientific grounds for proposals. My Department had made known for some time it had planned to designate additional marine sites and this would have been known to the Departments referred to in the Questions. Those Departments are now being consulted on the proposed designation, on a formal basis, in accordance with the regulatory framework.

Inland Waterways Maintenance

28. **Deputy Heather Humphreys** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if he will provide an update on progress on the Ulster Canal project; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4271/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): In July 2007, the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) agreed to proceed with the restoration of the section of the Ulster Canal between Clones and Upper Lough Erne. The then Government agreed to cover the full capital costs of the project, which were estimated at that time to be of the order of €35m. It was always the intention that the Ulster Canal project would be funded from the Waterways Ireland annual allocations, as agreed through the annual estimates processes in this jurisdiction, as well as the deliberations of NSMC in relation to annual budgets. I am advised that it was a key consideration throughout the process that the Ulster Canal project would be supported by a significant level of projected income from the commercialisation of certain Waterways Ireland assets. As the Deputy will be aware, the economic downturn has had a negative impact on those plans.

Despite this, the Ulster Canal project is progressing incrementally. I continue to explore all possible options that may assist in the advancement of the project and have established an Inter-Agency group in that regard. I attended the first meeting of that group and look forward to the group continuing its work in the period ahead. In the meantime, applications for planning permissions for the project have been submitted to the relevant authorities in each jurisdiction and I trust that the Deputy will agree that this is a significant milestone.

Féilte Traidisiúnta

29. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Michael P. Kitt** denAire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil plean aige chun féilte a eagrú sna Gaeltachtaí mar gheall ar Thóstal Éireann, cé méid airgid atá i gceist. [4455/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Faoi mar is eol don Teachta, tá scéim ar leith ag Údarás na Gaeltachta chun tacú le féilte traidisiúnta sa Ghaeltacht. Maidir le Tóstal Éireann, comhairlítear dom go bhfuil sé i gceist ag an Údarás, agus measúnú á dhéanamh acu ar iarratais i leith féilte sa Ghaeltacht in 2013, béim ar leith a leagan ar imeachtaí a bhfuil sé mar aidhm acu cuairteoirí a mhealladh

go hÉirinn mar chuid den Tóstal.

The Gathering Expenditure

30. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if there are any special arrangements in terms of financial support to be made available for traditional Irish musicians, dancers and artists for the duration of The Gathering; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4500/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): While The Gathering event is primarily a matter for my colleague, Leo Varadkar, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I am conscious of the importance and potential of cultural tourism in attracting the diaspora to our shores. I welcome this initiative, which is expected to be one of the biggest tourism events ever to be undertaken in Ireland. It will be a year-long event when people at home and abroad can play a part in the country's recovery, potentially bringing 325,000 visitors to Ireland and providing a major economic stimulus.

The Gathering is a hugely important initiative for our tourism sector, one with which my Department, its agencies and the national cultural institutions which operate under its aegis are very pleased to support and participate in. In that context, officials from my Department have been working closely with colleagues in the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and agencies within its remit on cultural, genealogical and heritage tourism matters. I also see The Gathering as an excellent opportunity to promote our culture, heritage and the traditional arts. Government policy is to promote and strengthen the arts in all its forms, increase access to and participation in the arts, make the arts an integral and valued part of our national life, and maximise the potential for cultural tourism.

A condition in all relevant schemes of support from my Department in 2013 is that of mobilizing support for The Gathering. Primary responsibility for the promotion of the arts at all levels throughout the country is devolved to the Arts Council, which, under the Arts Acts, is independent in its funding decisions. While my Department does not have any special arrangements in terms of financial support to be made available for traditional musicians, dancers and artists for the duration of The Gathering, support for artforms is already provided through Exchequer funding to the Arts Council and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.

In 2013, the Arts Council will receive an allocation of some €60.7 million in current, capital and EU Presidency funding. The Council has many different funding schemes and programmes available to support a wide variety of artistic genre, including specific supports for traditional arts, music and dance. In addition, my Department will also be allocating funding of almost €1.6 million in 2013 to Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann to help support its important work in maintaining, developing and promoting traditional Irish music and culture. There are over 400 Comhaltas branches throughout Ireland, as well as in the UK, the USA, Australia and other countries.

Question No. 31 answered with Question No. 6.

Arts Promotion

32. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

the efforts he has made to promote other parts of the island during Derry's term as city of culture; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4506/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): At the outset I would like to take this opportunity to wish the City of Derry well for the year ahead. Indeed, I was honoured to be present in Derry, in the company of Carál Ní Chuilín, MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, at the *Sons and Daughters* concert on Sunday 20 January. Directly and through the arts and culture agencies under its aegis, my Department continues to support the designation. For instance, we are supporting the extension of the Other Voices event in Derry in 2013 and we also support Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann who will be holding Fleadh Ceol na hÉireann in Derry this year. Furthermore, I'm looking forward to Limerick's term as the City of Culture in 2014, and I know that the organising partnership there will learn much from the Derry experience.

Question No. 33 answered with Question No. 20.

Question No. 34 answered with Question No. 15.

Question No. 35 answered with Question No. 24.

Question No. 36 answered with Question No. 27.

Thatching Grants Expenditure

37. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the grants available to renovate thatched cottages; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4501/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): A number of State financial supports provide for the conservation and restoration of heritage structures in general, or are specifically aimed at thatched structures. In 2012, my Department provided €500,000 in grant-aid assistance through a *Structures at Risk Fund* administered by local authorities to assist with works to safeguard structures protected under the Planning and Development Acts. This funding assisted in the conservation of two thatched structures.

The Heritage Council, which is funded by my Department, grant-aided the restoration of twenty-three thatched structures under their Heritage Management Scheme in 2012. In addition, the Heritage Council, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, also administers a grants scheme to REPS 4 participants on the conservation and repair of traditional farm buildings, known as the Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme. Grants are available under this scheme to carry out approved conservation works to the exterior of farm outbuildings, including roofs.

I am advised that the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government also administers a grant scheme for the renewal or repair of thatched roofs of owner occupied houses. The level of funding available in 2013 and future years for these schemes will be subject to the normal Budgetary and Estimates processes but, as the Deputy can appreciate, the scope for funding for the conservation of the built heritage is constrained by the significant reduction in the public finances. As part of an Architectural Advice Series, my Department plans to publish an advice book on thatching in 2013, which will include further practical advice and guidance on aspects of conserving and restoring thatched structures. This will be available on my Department's website at www.ahg.gov.ie.

Question No. 38 answered with Question No. 12.

Question No. 39 answered with Question No. 23.

Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge

40. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy John Browne** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cén dul chun cinn atá déanta faoin Straitéis 20 Bliain. [4458/13]

119. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cé chomh minic atá an Fochoiste Idir-Rannach ar an Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge tar éis teacht le chéile; cathain a bhí an cruinniú deireanach aige; cén dul chun cinn atá déanta aige; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [4708/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Molaim ceisteanna Uimh. 40 agus 119 a fhreagairt le chéile.

Aithnítear sa *Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030* go bhfuil gá le cur chuige céimneach chun bearta éagsúla na Straitéise a chur i gcrích. I gcomhréir leis an gcur chuige seo, tá obair leanúnach ar siúl chun raon leathan gníomhaíochtaí faoin Straitéis a chur i bhfeidhm. Déanann mo Roinn é seo i gcomhar leis na páirtithe leasmhara éagsúla, ar a n-áirítear ach go háirithe an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna, Foras na Gaeilge agus Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Ós rud é go bhfuil an lárfhreagracht ar mo Roinn don Straitéis, tugadh faoi chéim an bhunaithe den Straitéis a chur i gcrích in 2011 nuair a díriodh ar dhaoine a chur ar an eolas faoin Straitéis agus ar bhunú na struchtúr eagraíochtúil agus oibríochtúil. Tugadh tús áite do ghnóthaí reachtaíochta in 2012 le hAcht na Gaeltachta a thugann bunús reachtúil do chóras pleanála teanga, taobh istigh agus taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht, agus a thugann ról lárnach sa phleanáil teanga d'Údarás na Gaeltachta agus d'Fhoras na Gaeilge. Ní miste a nótáil go bhfuil sé beartaithe tuarascáil a fhoilsiú i mbliana maidir leis an dul chun cinn faoin Straitéis go dáta.

Ar ndóigh, eagraítear cruinnithe de réir mar is gá

- den Choiste Rialtais faoin nGaeilge agus faoin nGaeltacht, atá faoi chathaoirleacht an Taoisigh;

- den Ghrúpa Idir-Rannach, atá faoi mo chathaoirleacht féin; agus

- de na grúpaí oibre atá bunaithe leis na páirtithe leasmhara éagsúla chun dlús a chur le feidhmiú réimsí gnímh na Straitéise.

Ó thaobh an Ghrúpa Idir-Rannach de, tionóladh trí chruinniú den ghrúpa áirithe sin ar 8 Feabhra, 27 Meitheamh agus 13 Nollaig 2012.

Question No. 41 answered with Question No. 27.

Question No. 42 answered with Question No. 15.

Question No. 43 answered with Question No. 16.

Questions Nos. 44 and 45 answered with Question No. 7.

Question No. 46 answered with Question No. 6.

Question No. 47 answered with Question No. 20.

Question No. 48 answered with Question No. 19.

National Archives

49. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the date on which the 1926 census will be published in view of the work that has been done to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4497/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): My Department is continuing to work with the National Archives of Ireland and the Central Statistics Office with a view to progressing the work preparatory to enabling the publication of the 1926 Census in line with prevailing legislation.

Acht na Gaeltachta

50. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy John Browne** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cén dul chun cinn atá déanta maidir leis na Pleananna Teanga a luaitear in Acht na Gaeltachta, cén méid airgid a leithroinnfidh a Roinn i gcomhair Pleanáil Teanga sa Ghaeltacht [4457/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Glacaim leis go bhfuil an Teachta ag tagairt do phleanáil teanga sna Limistéir Pleanála Teanga Ghaeltachta. Faoi Acht na Gaeltachta 2012, is faoi Údarás na Gaeltachta atá sé eagraíochtaí pobalbhunaithe a roghnú sna limistéir sin chun pleananna teanga a ullmhú agus a fheidhmiú. Ina theannta sin, is faoin Údarás atá sé faoin Acht cabhrú leis na heagraíochtaí sin i ndáil leis na pleananna teanga a ullmhú agus a fheidhmiú i gcomhar leis an bpobal sna limistéir sin. Tuigtear dom go bhfuil an tÚdarás ag plé le heagraíochtaí éagsúla sna limistéir sin chun tús áite a thabhairt do chur i bhfeidhm an phróiseis pleanála teanga ar an talamh.

Ar ndóigh, beidh orduithe agus rialacháin le síniú agamsa chun feidhm reachtúil a thabhairt do chuid 2 den Acht a bhaineann leis an bpróiseas pleanála teanga. Tá na céimeanna cuí maidir leis an reachtaíocht thánaisteach seo idir lámha ag mo Roinnse faoi láthair. Maidir le cúrsaí airgid, tá allúntas reatha de €3.4m ag Údarás na Gaeltachta do 2013 atá le caitheamh ar chur i bhfeidhm na Straitéise 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge sa Ghaeltacht agus, ach go háirithe, chun an próiseas pleanála teanga a fheidhmiú sa Ghaeltacht. Chomh maith leis sin, tá allúntas reatha de thart ar €6.7m ag mo Roinn féin do 2013 atá le caitheamh sa Ghaeltacht ar mhaithe leis na críocha céanna. Ní miste a nótáil go bhfuil na figiúirí seo faoi réir na Meastachán Athbhreithnithe a bheith foilsithe agus faofa i dtráth cuí. Tá sé i gceist go mbainfear leas as an soláthar seo chun tús áite a thabhairt don phróiseas pleanála teanga sa Ghaeltacht, i gcomhréir le hAcht na Gaeltachta agus an *Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030*.

Irish Language Issues

51. **Deputy Seán Crowe** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if there is a step-by-step plan in place to ensure that the current derogation on the Irish language as a working language of the European Union is abolished, particularly in view of Ireland holding the Presidency of the European Parliament at the beginning of 2013, in view of statements from Martin Schultz (details supplied), President of the European Parliament, that the decision to remove the aforementioned derogation is entirely at his discretion; and if he will make a state-

ment on the matter. [1662/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): As the Deputy will be aware, Irish became an official and working language of the European Union on 1 January 2007. This development has had the welcome effect of greatly increasing the availability and visibility of Irish in the EU institutions. Notwithstanding the status of the language in the EU, there is, however, a derogation in place for practical reasons which states that the EU institutions are not bound by the obligation to translate all legal texts. This stems from the difficulties in recruiting a sufficient number of qualified personnel to meet requirements in the EU institutions.

The original derogation with regard to the use of Irish in the EU institutions applied for 5 years from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2011. This was extended for another 5 years from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2016. Under the terms of the derogation, only EU laws made under the co-decision procedure must be translated into Irish. The Lisbon Treaty, which came into effect on 1 December 2009, resulted in the co-decision procedure becoming the norm, rather than the exception, for EU law-making. This has resulted in a significant increase in the proportion of EU laws that must be translated into Irish.

A decision on whether to extend the derogation for another 5 years must be made by December 2015 at the latest. This matter will be considered by the Government in due course, having regard to the various implications that arise from it. In that context, it is worth noting that the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030* states:

“The Government will work to create the circumstances in which a sufficient number of qualified graduates are in place to meet EU requirement needs so that this derogation can be ended during the lifetime of this Strategy.”

My Department is working with the EU institutions on a continuous basis to ensure that a sufficient number of qualified personnel are employed in the institutions to meet the requirements arising from the status of Irish in the EU. To this end, my Department provides funding under the Advanced Irish Language Skills Initiative for a range of specialised third-level Irish language courses in areas such as translation, interpretation and law. In addition, my Department also provides funding to Fiontar in Dublin City University to translate Irish language terms for the EU terminology database, IATE (InterActive Terminology for Europe).

Question No. 52 answered with Question No. 6.

Question No. 53 answered with Question No. 27.

Consular Services Availability

54. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the position regarding receiving a copy of a will (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4711/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): Investigating the existence or otherwise of a will is a private civil matter and is outside of my remit. However the following organisation (details supplied) may be of assistance to your constituent. (Massachusetts Probate Records: Link to website where enquiries can be made online:

Colombian Peace Process

55. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he will continue to support the peace process in Colombia and not allow some elements wreck the efforts being made; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4660/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): I strongly support the Colombian peace process and hope that the negotiations underway will bring an end to the long conflict that has caused much suffering. I recently led the Irish delegation at the EU-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean countries) Summit in Chile and I availed of the opportunity to meet with Colombia's President Santos and Foreign Minister Holguín. We had a very useful discussion on a range of issues including Colombia's peace process, trade, human rights and other matters.

I assured President Santos of the Government's support for Colombia's peace process, and commended efforts to provide the people of Colombia with the peace and stability that they deserve. President Santos expressed his appreciation for our support. He added that he is very aware of our own peace process, saying that the Colombian process has already incorporated some useful lessons from it. I said that we stand ready within available means to share our experiences, if invited to do so by the parties to the process. I told President Santos that Ireland understands very well the challenges as well as the opportunities represented by a peace process and I expressed the hope that a successful outcome can be reached in the talks underway.

Foreign Conflicts

56. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if the EU or the UN are considering additional sanctions against Syria; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4771/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): Since the crisis first erupted almost two years ago, the EU has been prompt in adopting a wide range of stringent measures against the Assad regime and its supporters so as to compel them to stop the violence and to engage in a genuine and inclusive process of national dialogue mapping a way out of the crisis. EU sanctions include a range of individual listings as well as restrictions on goods and services, including an oil and arms embargo. The EU General Affairs Council at the end of November renewed the sanctions package in place against Syria for a period of three months. A review of these sanctions is now taking place in Brussels at official level and the Foreign Affairs Council on 31 January will discuss the further extension of the EU sanctions package beyond the end of March.

Ireland's position remains one of support for the continuation of the EU's sanctions, including the arms embargo. The sanctions complement the efforts on the political track which are being led by UN/Arab League Joint Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, to bring about an end to the violence and to get some form of political process underway. Given the current divisions at UN level, there are no international harmonised sanctions in force and Ireland, together with its EU partners, will continue to urge the UN Security Council to adopt constraining measures against the Syrian authorities, including a global arms embargo.

Emigrant Support Services

57. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the total funding allocated in the Estimates for 2012 for the emigrant support programme; the amount spent under this programme for 2012; if he will list the recipient organisations in each country; the level of funding provided to each organisation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4799/13]

58. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the funding allocated in the Estimates for 2013 for the emigrant support programme; if he will list the organisations in each country that will receive funding under this programme; the amount per organisation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4800/13]

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Eamon Gilmore): I propose to take Questions Nos. 57 and 58 together.

The Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) provides funding to non-profit organisations and projects to support Irish emigrant communities overseas. The priority of the ESP, and of the organisations it supports, is in assisting the most vulnerable members of overseas Irish communities. These organisations have made a substantive difference to the lives of Irish people living abroad, reducing homelessness, tackling social isolation, and enabling Irish emigrants to access their local statutory entitlements.

The total funding allocated in the Estimates for 2012 for the Emigrant Support Programme was €11,595,000, with an outturn of €11,586,368. Details of all grant recipients since 2006 can be found on my Department's website, a full list of grant recipients and the amount that they received in 2012 is set out in the following table. I am pleased that despite the difficult financial situation we face, the Government has maintained funding under the ESP at a level of €11,595,000 for 2013. The 2013 grant round is now open and will close on 20 February. No decisions on the allocation for this year's grants will be made until after this date.

2012 Emigrant Services Expenditure Summary (euro)

Britain	7,596,425
USA	1,669,227
Ireland	1,290,463
Australia	385,581
Singapore	200,000
Canada	152,498
New Zealand	56,048
Argentina	31,312
Zimbabwe	27,371
France	17,500
Korea	10,666
South Africa	10,635
Spain	3,993
Norway	2,169
Russia	1,476
Global Irish Network and Presidential Distinguished Service Award	131,004

Britain	
Acton Homeless Concern (London)	58,677
Age UK Hillingdon (Middlesex)	12,756
Aisling Project (London)	122,707
Bell Farm Christian Centre (Middlesex)	12,054
Benefits Advice Shop (Ryhl, Denbighshire)	6,378
Birmingham St Patrick's Festival Ltd	12,756
Blackfriars Advice Centre (London)	25,149
Bolton Irish Community Association	7,016
Brent Adolescent Centre (London)	24,789
Brent Irish Advisory Service (London)	183,685
Brian Boru Club (Wigan)	7,449
Bristol Playbus	5,784
Causeway Irish Housing Association (London)	25,061
Celtic & Irish Cultural Society (Crawley)	24,236
Conradh na Gaeilge, Glaschú (Glasgow)	46,188
Corby's Young at Heart Luncheon Group	10,843
Coventry Irish Society	153,454
Cricklewood Homeless Concern	221,315
Edinburgh Cyrenians	6,287
Emerald Circle Club (Harrow)	3,718
Emerald Senior Citizens Group (Wolverhampton)	6,378
Federation of Irish Societies	597,296
Feith an Cheoil School of Irish Traditional Music (London)	6,817
Forest Bus (Southampton)	6,378
Friends, Families and Travellers (Brighton)	13,394
GEAR Projects (Gloucester)	12,756
Halifax and District Irish Society	14,032
Halifax Irish Centre	1,239
Haringey Irish Cultural and Community Centre	166,082
Haslingden & Davitt IDL Club	4,958
Huddersfield Irish Centre	3,720
Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy (London)	197,520
Innisfree Housing Association (London)	38,268
Irish Arts Foundation (Leeds)	95,032
Irish Chaplaincy in Britain (London)	282,940
Irish Charitable Trust (London)	183,590
Irish Community Care Manchester	202,545
Irish Community Care Merseyside	311,244
Irish Community Services in Greenwich, Bexley (formerly Irish in Greenwich)	255,939

Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith	203,710
Irish Diaspora Foundation (Manchester)	66,969
Irish Elderly Advice Network (London)	109,701
Irish Festivals Ltd. T/A Irish Arts Festival (London)	7,654
Irish Heritage (Surrey)	10,205
Irish Heritage Foundation (formerly Harps Community Project, Glasgow)	51,024
Irish in Birmingham (formerly Irish Welfare and Information Centre)	275,781
Irish Network (Stevenage)	2,551
Irish Repertory Theatre and Film Company (London)	7,437
Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (London)	137,836
Irish Tuesday Club (Liverpool)	9,567
Irish World Heritage Centre (Manchester)	559,663
Kilburn Irish Pensioners	3,759
Lancashire Federation of Irish Democratic League Clubs	1,488
Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange	59,187
Leeds Irish Health and Homes	186,705
Leeds St Patrick's Day Parade and Celebrations	14,032
Leicester and Leicestershire Irish Forum	47,962
Lewisham Irish Community Centre	64,452
Lewisham Irish Pensioners Group	8,291
Liverpool Irish Festival	9,567
London Gypsy and Traveller Unit	116,717
London Irish Amateur Rugby Football Club	10,205
London Irish Business Society	6,167
London Irish Centre	572,103
London Irish Graduate Network	1,233
London Irish Music School	5,030
London Irish Pensioners Choir	3,827
Luton Irish Forum	122,457
Manchester Irish Education Group	1,240
Manchester Irish Language Group	930
Mansfield and Dukeries Irish Association	6,378
Marian Senior Citizens Club (London)	2,806
Maya Centre (London)	25,149
Milton Keynes Irish Centre	14,924
Mind Yourself (formerly London Irish Women's Centre)	76,535
Momentum Care Irish Elders Centre (Glasgow)	101,873

Monica's Place (Birmingham)	65,692
New Horizon Youth Centre (London)	48,472
NOAH Enterprise ((Luton)	96,109
North London Action for the Homeless	6,569
North Wales Irish Society	8,164
Northampton Irish Support Group	71,889
Nottingham St Patrick's Day Parade	4,933
Over 60s Pensioners Club (London)	627
Oxford Irish Society	3,189
Safe Start Foundation (Middlesex)	139,677
Sandwell Irish Community Association	13,455
Sandwell Irish Society	46,559
SanKTus (formerly Our Lady Help of Christian's Welfare) (London)	52,937
SIFA Fireside (Birmingham)	28,063
Solace Women's Aid (London)	53,442
Southwark Irish Pensioners Project	183,264
Southwark Irish Youth	6,817
Southwark Travellers Action Group	87,382
St Michael's Irish Centre (Liverpool)	73,347
St Patrick's Senior Tuesday Lunch Club (Leamington Spa)	8,419
Streetwork UK (Edinburgh)	37,184
Tara Irish Pensioners (London)	893
The Connection at St Martins (London)	25,512
The Emerald Centre (Leicester)	58,039
The Felling Irish Association (Felling, Gateshead)	868
The Golden Shamrock Club (Nottingham)	12,072
The Hibernian Society (Reading)	29,747
The Huddersfield St Patrick's Day Parade Association	5,102
The Irish Club Warrington	7,933
The Passage (London)	46,526
The South London Irish Association (Wimbledon, London)	8,174
Tricycle Theatre (London)	4,958
Tuesday Club Leeds Irish Centre	8,676
Tyneside Irish Centre	40,181
Tyneside Irish Cultural Centre	25,512
Watford Irish Association	3,100
West Hampstead Women's Centre (London)	7,398
Britain	7,596,425
USA	
Aisling Irish Centre, New York	111,551

American Irish Historical Society, New York	65,455
Catholic Charities Community Services - Project Irish Outreach, New York	79,239
Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform	10,271
Chicago Irish Immigrant Support	147,887
Coalition of Irish Immigration Centres	42,238
Crossroads Irish-American Festival	8,043
Cumann na Gaeilge i mBoston	5,698
Emerald Isle Immigration Centre, New York	173,964
Glucksman Ireland House, New York University	17,711
Greater Danbury Irish Cultural Centre, Connecticut	3,848
Hudson Valley Irish Festival	7,137
Irish American Heritage Museum, Albany, New York	7,701
Irish Apostolate USA, Washington	16,547
Irish Cultural Centre of New England, Canton	87,225
Irish Heritage Society of Milford	6,931
Irish Immigration and Pastoral Centre, San Francisco	106,076
Irish Immigration and Pastoral Centre, Philadelphia	100,185
Irish International Immigration Centre, Boston	206,169
Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform	27,722
Irish Outreach, San Diego	17,671
Irish Pastoral Centre, Boston	105,463
Irish Technology Leadership Group	100,054
Mission of our Lady of the Holy Rosary Heritage Project at Watson House, New York	21,177
Museum of Newport Irish History	1,221
New York Irish Centre	114,636
Seattle Irish Immigration Support Group	8,894
The Gathering: Collected Oral Histories of the Irish in Montana	51,384
The Society of Commodore John Barry, Philadelphia	9,198
Worcester Hibernian Cultural Foundation	7,930
USA	1,669,227
Ireland	
Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann	177,411
Crosscare Migrant Project	172,000

Football Association of Ireland	35,000
Glór na nGael	40,000
Ireland Reaching Out	78,000
Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas	95,779
Irish International Diaspora Centre	40,000
Safe Home Programme Ltd	248,273
Ireland Canada University Foundation	34,000
GAA	370,000
Ireland	1,290,463
Australia	
Australia Irish Welfare Bureau, Melbourne	106,045
The Claddagh Association, Perth	10,181
Friends of St Brigid's Association, Koroit, Victoria	14,530
Ireland Western Australia Forum, Perth	2,004
Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce Inc., Melbourne	26,214
Irish Australian Support Association of Queensland, Brisbane	65,737
Irish Australian Welfare Bureau & Resource Centre NSW, Sydney	134,415
Irish Brekkie Club, Sydney	4,810
Irish Language School/ Scoil na Gaeilge, Sydney	1,603
John Hume Institute of Global Irish Studies, UNSW	20,042
Australia	385,581
Singapore	
Farmleigh Fellowship	200,000
Singapore	200,000
Canada	
Emerald Isle Seniors Society, Toronto	19,374
Irish Canadian Club of Hamilton	4,494
Irish Canadian Immigration Centre	61,996
Irish Women's Network of British Columbia	1,854
Lar na nGael - Irish Centre of Brampton	20,653
St Patrick's Society, Montreal	3,487
The Irish Benevolent Society of British Columbia	5,767
The Irish Cultural Society, Calgary	34,873
Canada	152,498
New Zealand	
Irish Community of New Zealand Trust	32,947
Auckland Irish Society	23,101
New Zealand	56,048

Argentina	
Asociación Argentino Irlandesa de Bahia Blanca	954
Hurling Club, Buenos Aires	27,441
Sociedad Irlandesa de Arrecifes	1,591
Hogar San Patricio (St Patrick's Home)	477
Asociación Argentino Irlandesa Guillermo Brown (Asociación Irlandesa de Capital Federal)	849
Argentina	31,312
Zimbabwe	
Irish Association of Mashonaland	20,572
Matabeleland Irish Association Bulawayo	6,799
Zimbabwe	27,371
France	
Network Irlande	17,500
France	17,500
Korea	
Irish Society of Korea	10,666
Korea	10,666
South Africa	
Irish South African Association	10,635
South Africa	10,635
Spain	
Spanish Irish Business Network	3,993
Spain	3,993
Norway	
Norwegian Irish Society	2,169
Norway	2,169
Russia	
Irish Business Club Moscow	1,476
Russia	1,476

National Debt

59. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the Exchequer borrowing level per year for the next three years and the promissory note-banking component of this borrowing. [4564/13]

62. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the amount of interest that will be paid this year to service debt and the component of this interest that is bank related debt. [4580/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 59 and 62 together.

State support for the banking sector to end-2012 has amounted to approximately €64 billion gross, which includes Exchequer payments, Promissory Note payments in respect of IBRC and

EBS, as well as additional funding from the NPRF. The Deputy should be aware that the Exchequer is funded by tax and non-tax revenue and borrowings. No specific tranches of borrowing were undertaken solely for the purpose of recapitalising the banking sector. Therefore, it is not possible to accurately quantify that part of the debt servicing bill that relates to the borrowing undertaken to recapitalise the banks. *Budget 2013*, published last December, estimated that National debt cash interest expenditure would amount to approximately €7.2 billion in 2013.

With regard to the amount of Exchequer borrowing over the period 2013-2015, *Budget 2013* provides the most recent estimates for the Exchequer Borrowing Requirement. It forecasts that the Exchequer Borrowing Requirement in 2013, 2014 and 2015 would be approximately €15.4 billion, €11.5 billion and €7.6 billion respectively. Separately, Promissory Note payments from the Exchequer of €3.1 billion which is comprised of capital and interest payments are profiled for years 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Bank Guarantee Scheme Bond Repayments

60. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the value of the remaining guaranteed bonds that remain to be paid. [4565/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I assume that in using the term ‘guaranteed bonds’, the Deputy is referring to bonds covered by the Eligible Liabilities Guarantee Scheme and which are due to mature at a future date. The total value of such bonds as of 25 January, 2013, is approximately €17.3 billion.

Tax Code

61. **Deputy Patrick Nulty** asked the Minister for Finance the amount that would be raised for the Exchequer in a calendar year if pension tax relief was included in the minimum effective tax rate; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4572/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The existing restriction of reliefs or horizontal measure is activated where individuals have an adjusted income of €125,000 and claim specified reliefs of €80,000 or more. Those subject to the full restriction, at adjusted incomes of €400,000 or greater will pay an effective income tax rate of 30% in addition to PRSI and levies. Broadly, the reliefs restricted are the various property based tax incentives and certain other reliefs such as the Employment and Investment Incentive, film relief and the artists’ exemption. The normal deductible items available to the broad range of taxpayers such as medical expenses, personal tax credits and exemptions such as that for child benefit are not restricted. Similarly, normal business expenses and deductions for capital allowances on plant and machinery, as well as genuine business related trading losses are not restricted.

A reliable estimate of the yield to the Exchequer if tax relief on pension contributions was brought within the ambit of the restriction could only be provided by a significant development of the costing model, which would be prohibitive in terms of the resources required. An indicative and very tentative estimate of the full year yield that might arise if contributions to Retirement Annuity Contracts (RACs) and Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs) were subjected to the restriction could be of the order of €30 million to €40 million. With regard to occupational pensions (schemes set up by employers), the figures in respect of employee contributions are available only in aggregate form and do not provide a basis for compiling a corresponding estimate.

Question No. 62 answered with Question No. 59.

Fuel Rebate Scheme

63. **Deputy Paul J. Connaughton** asked the Minister for Finance if he will consider extending the excise rebate on diesel which was announced for haulage companies in Budget 2013 to passenger transport companies who are under financial pressure at the moment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4615/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The proposal to introduce an auto-diesel excise duty relief for licensed road hauliers that I announced in the Budget is confined to licensed and tax compliant hauliers. However, I have received a number of submissions from, and on behalf of, private coach operators seeking to have this relief extended to them. I will consider these proposals and the level of the rebate in the context of the Finance Bill. It is worth noting that one of key arguments for introducing a rebate for the haulage industry is the fact that a large quantity of fuel purchased by this industry is purchased abroad thus generating no tax revenue for the State. A rebate should encourage hauliers to start purchasing their fuel in Ireland thus offsetting some of the costs involved. Such an argument does not exist for the most part for the coach industry. The fuel rebate scheme proposed is governed by the terms of Council Directive 2003/96/EC of 27 October 2003 which limits its application to auto diesel used in defined categories of road vehicles.

National Treasury Management Agency Remuneration

64. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if staff at the National Treasury Management Agency received bonuses in 2012; if so, the total of the bonuses paid; and if he will provide in tabular form the individual bonuses paid per type of employee. [4652/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) that the Agency's remuneration review in respect of 2012 is currently being finalised.

Departmental Staff Data

65. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of staff in the shareholder management unit in the Department of Finance; the full year cost of the SMU in 2012; and the budgeted full year cost in 2013. [4653/13]

66. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of staff in the Shareholder Management Unit who are seconded to the SMU from the National Treasury Management Agency and if he will set out in bands of three months the number of secondees and their duration of secondment from the National Treasury Management Agency to the SMU. [4654/13]

68. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the number of persons working in the shareholder management unit in the Department of Finance who are not employees of the Department of Finance or secondments from the National Treasury Management Agency. [4656/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 65, 66

and 68 together.

The number of staff in the SMU is 25. Of this number, 10 are on secondment from the NTMA and 10 are Department of Finance employees. The secondment of NTMA employees is not time limited as the NTMA Banking Unit was seconded to my Department for so long as is required by the Department to fulfil its functions in respect of the banking sector. The remaining staff in the SMU are on secondment from AIB. The term of their engagement finishes, on average, in May 2013. Nine NTMA employees were initially seconded to the SMU in August 2011. Additional secondments since then have been, at my request, to increase the number of staff in the SMU and/or replace staff who resigned from the NTMA. The costs of the SMU, borne by the Department of Finance in 2012 were €3.6m and the budgeted cost for 2013 is €4.2m.

Departmental Staff Numbers

67. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide in tabular form the number of individual secondments from the National Treasury Management Agency in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. [4655/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The number of staff seconded from the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) into my Department was as follows -

2009	2010	2011	2012
0	0	9	12

Note: these are year-end numbers. There were three additional secondments during 2012 to replace staff on secondment to my Department who resigned from the NTMA in the course of the year.

Question No. 68 answered with Question No. 65.

National Treasury Management Agency Staff

69. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Finance the measures in place at the NewERA organisation within the National Treasury Management Agency to prevent conflicts of interest if employees or staff in NewERA are appointed to companies being created under the auspices of NewERA or in which the State is disposing of stakes. [4657/13]

76. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he intends to review the need for a cooling off period to be introduced in respect of National Treasury Management Agency executives leaving the organisation and immediately taking up senior positions in the covered institutions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4723/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 69 and 76 together.

I am informed by the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) that NTMA employees have notice periods of one or three months and six months in the case of the Chief Executive. I understand the Chief Executive of the Agency is reviewing NTMA policy in this area. All NTMA employees are subject to section 14 of the National Treasury Management Agency Act, 1990 which prohibits an employee from disclosing any information obtained while carrying out their duties as employees of the NTMA. NTMA employees are also subject to the Official Secrets Act. I am also informed by the Agency that contravention of the NTMA Act and

the Official Secrets Act is a criminal offence and that the prohibition on disclosing confidential information applies indefinitely and extends to former employees.

Tax Collection

70. **Deputy Dan Neville** asked the Minister for Finance the position regarding deductions from payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4665/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by the Revenue Commissioners that the taxpayer in question has been issued with a Tax Credit Certificate for 2013 on a separate assessment basis showing tax credits of €3,300 per annum. However he should correctly be on a Joint assessment basis with a married tax credit. An amended tax credit certificate is being issued to give effect to this. His tax credits will then increase to €4,950 per annum or €95.19 per week. If the taxpayer feels that he has overpaid tax for 2012 he should submit his Form P60 to Limerick Tax District to claim any refund due. It should also be noted that employment on a community employment scheme is exempt from Universal Social Charge (except for the manager and administrator of the scheme).

Property Taxation Application

71. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Finance under the Finance (Local Property) Tax Bill 2012, if he will indicate where the payments for 2013 are being transferred to in view of the fact that the legislation states that in each financial year commencing in the year 2014, he shall pay into the Local Government Fund an amount equivalent to the local property tax including any interest paid thereon paid into the Central Fund during that year; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4716/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The position for 2014 is as outlined by the Deputy in his question. Section 960A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 [as amended by the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012] provides that Local Property Tax is a tax due and payable to the Revenue Commissioners and therefore by virtue of Section 960D of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, a debt due to the Minister for Finance for the benefit of the Central Fund. Therefore I can confirm that the receipts will be paid into the Central Fund.

NAMA Portfolio Value

72. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Finance if he will have cause to have laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas a schedule of all artworks to have come into the possession of the National Asset Management Agency since the establishment of the agency; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4718/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): I am advised by NAMA that the information sought by the Deputy is of a commercial nature and that its disclosure would potentially place NAMA at a commercial disadvantage. I am advised accordingly by NAMA that it is precluded from providing the information.

European Financial Stability Facility

73. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide details of his assertion that the extension of loan maturities in respect of Ireland's borrowings drawn down from the EFSF and EFSM could save the country billions of euro; if he will specify the assumptions underpinning this calculation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4720/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): At the meetings of Eurogroup and ECOFIN Finance Ministers on 21 and 22 January 2013, respectively, it was agreed that the requests by Portugal and Ireland for an extension of maturities would be considered by senior officials and would then come back to Finance Ministers for further consideration. In my comments to the media following these meetings I made the point that it would be premature to quote any precise figures for possible savings as the details remain to be worked out, but I noted that this proposal could yield significant savings over time which could be in billions rather than in hundreds of millions of euro.

As the issue is still under discussion, the details of any extension agreed are not yet known. The views of all Euro Area and EU Member States, along with those of the EFSF and EFSM, will need to be taken into account. The savings arising will depend on a number of factors – the amount of loans for which a maturity extension is agreed, the length of any maturity extension, and the assumption made about the extent to which the EFSF and EFSM borrowings are cheaper than borrowings by Ireland. As I have already outlined, the level of loans and the length of the maturity remain to be agreed, while the assumption of the interest rate differential is ultimately a matter of judgement. There is a broad range of possible scenarios in that regard. It is worth noting that at present the differential between 10 year Irish and EFSF and EFSM borrowing costs would be about 2.5%. I would stress, however, that any scenarios are highly tentative and sensitive to the assumptions concerning the amount of loans covered, the maturity extension granted and the interest differential applied.

Promissory Note Negotiations

74. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide details on the current status of the negotiations with the European Central Bank regarding the promissory notes; the person who is negotiating on Ireland's behalf; the objective of the negotiations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4721/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As the deputies are aware, the Irish Government has been working extremely hard to secure a deal on the Irish bank debt with our European partners and detailed work will continue to ensure that positive moves in Europe are harnessed to maximise the benefit to the Irish taxpayer. This work is one of the Government's key priorities and will remain a key focus during the EU presidency.

Officials within my department, the NTMA and the Central Bank of Ireland have been involved in these negotiations on Ireland's behalf. As previously advised to the house, the terms sought by the Government are those which achieve the best possible outcome for the Irish taxpayer and the objective of the negotiations is to achieve consensus based on these terms. It is not possible to give guidance on the timing or potential outcome of the discussions as to do so could impede our ability to achieve the best possible results, but every effort is being made to expedite the on-going process. I have previously stated that I am working to try and achieve a solution before the next scheduled instalment on the Promissory Note scheduled for March. It would be very difficult for Ireland to make a payment on the Promissory Notes and so we continue to work on a deal with our European partners to resolve this issue.

European Stability Mechanism

75. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide details of the precautionary line of credit from the ESM and IMF currently under consideration with the Troika as part of our exit strategy from the EU/ECB/IMF programme of assistance; if it is his objective to secure such backstop funding; the conditionality that may be attached; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4722/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): As I outlined in my reply to similar question from the Deputy yesterday, Ireland is entering the final year of our EU/IMF programme of financial assistance and we are preparing to exit that programme. By way of information, both the IMF and the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) can provide precautionary financial assistance.

The ESM Treaty provides, in Article 14, that the Board of Governors may decide to grant precautionary financial assistance in the form of a precautionary conditioned credit line (PCCL) or in the form of an enhanced conditions credit line (ECCL). The Treaty also provides for the conditionality, terms and conditions to be attached to such assistance. Further information in relation to these instruments is available on the ESM website at <http://www.esm.europa.eu/>.

The IMF has a number of precautionary or stand-by type facilities including Flexible Credit Line (FCL), the Precautionary and Liquidity Line (PLL), the Extended Funding Facility (EFF) and the Stand By Arrangement (SBA). These different instruments are designed to address different sets of circumstances, and the terms and conditions attaching to them are structured accordingly. Further information on these instruments is available on the IMF website at <http://www.imf.org/>.

At the end of the eighth EU/IMF review mission, in October, I indicated that we would be discussing the measures necessary for a successful exit with the Troika. Discussions with Troika officials on exit options will be part of the ninth review mission, which started yesterday. All relevant options will be considered in the light of what is appropriate for Ireland, including the terms and conditions attaching to them. Evidently this will require further consideration and no decisions have been taken to date.

Question No. 76 answered with Question No. 69.

Bank Debt Restructuring

77. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance if he will provide details separately in respect of each covered institution of the sale of any part of their mortgage book for each of the years 2010, 2011 and 2012; the implications of these sales; if there are any consequence for the individual bank customers concerned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4724/13]

Minister for Finance (Deputy Michael Noonan): The sale of loan portfolios is a commercial matter for the management and the Board of the Institutions. I have a limited role in this function.

Allied Irish Banks (AIB) informs me that it has sold mortgage portfolios as part of its continuing strategy to meet non-core deleveraging targets set out by the Central Bank of Ireland as part of PLAR 2011 and to assist with viability enhancing measures. Similarly, Bank of Ireland (BOI) has sold loan books in the United Kingdom as part of its non-core deleveraging plan.

Neither Permanent TSB (PTSB) nor IBRC have sold mortgage loan books in 2010, 2011 or 2012, however, PTSB have recently sold the rights to a small number of mortgage loan agreements as part of a larger transaction.

Any relevant disclosures in respect of these portfolio sales are made in the Annual Financial Reports or via stock exchange announcements. In the case of any transactions where the sale of mortgages occurs, affected borrowers will continue to remain liable for the full amount of their debt. The loan terms and conditions of borrowers whose loans form part of any sale remain unchanged and are not impacted by the transfer of their loans.

Deleveraging of the Banking system has progressed well. Deleveraging of €54.9bn has been achieved by AIB, BOI and PTSB from 31 December 2010 to 30 November 2012. The sales prices on portfolio sales may not in all cases have been disclosed by the banks due to commercial sensitivities and confidentiality of information. AIB and BOI where disposals have been concentrated have disclosed that overall cumulative discounts incurred have been within PCAR assumed discounts. From a capital perspective, the loss incurred on the divestment of these assets is broadly offset by a reduction in the level of risk weighted assets.

The on-going progress in deleveraging and deposit gathering activities has seen BOI make further progress towards improving its Loan to Deposit (LDR) ratio, reducing from 136% at June 2012 to less than 130% in November 2012. Similarly, AIB's LDR reduced to less than 120% at the end of October (including loans held for sale) from 125% at end of June.

Parliamentary Questions Numbers

78. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Minister for Finance when a reply will issue to Parliamentary Question No. 96 of 17 October 2012. [4779/13]

Minister for Finance(Deputy Michael Noonan): The reply to this parliamentary question issued from my office today. As I indicated to the Deputy in my response to parliamentary question number 2018/13, several factors contributed to the delay in replying to this parliamentary question. The scope of the question, both in terms of the number of calendar years included in the request, the inclusion of bodies and state agencies under the remit of my Department, and the level of data requested for each item, meant that the compilation of the data in order to provide a full response to the questions was time-consuming and voluminous. Furthermore, the questions were received at a time when staff responsible for compiling the data for their respective Offices were also heavily involved in the Estimates process and subsequently the year end process. These questions were not therefore simply confined to information in relation to my Department. Had this been the case a reply would have been available immediately.

Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge

79. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna cad é éifeacht an cinneadh a rinne sé COGG a thabhairt faoi bhráid CNCM; cad iad na himpleachtaí a bheidh ag an gcinneadh sin i dtaca leis an Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [4707/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): Cabinet discussions are confidential and I am not in a position to give details of discussions between Ministers. I can address the second part of the question. In reaching this decision, I paid particular attention to the context of our support not only for the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 but

also to the Education Act, 1998, to the implementation of the Gaeltacht Act 2012, the recommendations in the Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life - The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 - 2020 and to the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle which I published last October.

I believe that the amalgamation of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) with the NCCA will enhance the capacity of COGG to meet its statutory functions. The NCCA has a significant amount of work currently under way or about to be started on the Irish language in our schools. The new arrangement will maximise the possibilities for collaboration and cooperation between both bodies. As the NCCA will prepare curricula for Irish for my consideration, COGG will develop resources that will compliment the curricula and thereby enhance the quality of the teaching and learning of Irish for our students. COGG will therefore continue to plan and co-ordinate for the provision of resources for the teaching and learning of Irish and to advise on and support teaching through Irish.

Irish Language Issues

80. **Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the impact of the amalgamation of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta with the NCCA on the 20 year strategy for the Irish language; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4591/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): In reaching this decision, I paid particular attention to the context of our support not only for the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 - 2030 but also to the Education Act, 1998, to the implementation of the Gaeltacht Act 2012, the recommendations in the Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life - The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 - 2020 and to the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle which I published last October.

I believe that the amalgamation of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) with the NCCA will enhance the capacity of COGG to meet its statutory functions. The NCCA has a significant amount of work currently underway or about to be started on the Irish language in our schools. The new arrangement will maximise the possibilities for collaboration and cooperation between both bodies. As the NCCA will prepare curricula for Irish for my consideration, COGG will develop resources that will compliment the curricula and thereby enhance the quality of the teaching and learning of Irish for our students. COGG will therefore continue to plan and co-ordinate for the provision of resources for the teaching and learning of Irish and to advise on and support teaching through Irish.

Student Grant Scheme Eligibility

81. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason a person (details supplied) in County Mayo has been refused the higher education postgraduate flat rate fee grant on the grounds of attending a part-time course when they have clearly proved that their course is full-time in nature; if he will have this file re-examined; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4611/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): Officials in my Department have confirmed with Student Universal Support Ireland that the application from the student in question is being reviewed and it will notify the student directly of the outcome as soon as

possible.

Home Schooling Issues

82. **Deputy Thomas Pringle** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to introduce a system of flexi-schooling for children that are home schooled that would allow them to attend school on a part-time basis that would facilitate a parent who may work part-time but wishes to home school their child; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4621/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The school system currently operates under standardised arrangements for all recognised schools aimed at enabling them to deliver education in the most efficient manner possible to over half a million pupils at primary level and over 350,000 at post-primary. It would neither be feasible nor practical to put in place the type of arrangement suggested by the Deputy.

Student Grant Scheme Eligibility

83. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of Student Universal Support Ireland applicants that were informed they were awarded maintenance grants or fees only to find out later that they were awarded in error resulting in the withdrawal of their offer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4642/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The position as provided to my Department by Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) is that as at 29th January 2013, 33 applicants were awarded a student grant, issued a grant award letter and subsequently refused a grant. The Deputy will appreciate that in the context of SUSI having received in excess of 67,000 applications that some errors may inevitably arise when handling a high volume of applications within a relatively short timeframe.

SUSI have quality assurance measures in place which monitors on an on-going basis whether applications are being assessed correctly and in accordance with the terms of the Student Grant Scheme 2012 and the Student Support Regulations 2012. A quality assurance team performs regular reviews on application outcomes. This may result in a change of decision and these instances are regrettable. The quality assurance measures are in place in order to identify, reduce and eliminate errors in the administration by SUSI of the Student Grant Scheme.

Special Educational Needs Staffing

84. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will clarify the situation regarding the contracts of employment for special needs assistants; the person whose responsibility it is to decide if SNAs are entitled to job sharing opportunities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4663/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The contract of employment for Special Needs Assistants was agreed following discussions between the representatives of the managerial authorities, the Unions (IMPACT and SIPTU) and my Department. The terms of the contract are outlined in the contract of employment form contained in Circular SNA 15/05 for primary schools or Circular SNA 12/05 for second level schools. Furthermore, Special Needs Assistants are subject to a set of standardised terms and conditions of employment as detailed in the relevant circulars issued and amended by my Department from time to time. There

is no agreed Departmental circular or scheme which allows job-sharing for Special Needs Assistants. However, discussions have commenced between officials from my Department, the school managerial authorities and both IMPACT and SIPTU to examine the possibility of creating an agreed job-sharing scheme for Special Needs Assistants.

Schools Building Projects Administration

85. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he is considering the use of social clauses in the contracts for the school building programme; and in particular, if he will consider including a quota to employ jobseekers who are long-term unemployed. [4696/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): My Department supports any measures which will have a beneficial effect on employment generally and in particular employment in a local area. As with all Government Departments and state agencies, my Department and bodies under its aegis use the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Public Works Contracts and associated guidance. It is therefore considered that the implementation of any local labour clause should be considered by the Government Construction Contracts Committee (GCCC) and if appropriate suitable guidance (validated by expert legal opinion) should be developed and issued to all public bodies. Officials from my Department will be raising this issue with the GCCC shortly.

School Playgrounds Issues

86. **Deputy Regina Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the recommendations for playground space per square metre per child in national schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4703/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): I wish to advise the Deputy that the provision of playspace, where site conditions and circumstances allow, is one of the issues considered in the architectural design of new schools and major extensions. The level of facilities, including playspace, that can be provided in schools will therefore vary depending on the extent of classroom accommodation needed for the school. A suite of technical guidance documents is available on my Department's website (www.education.ie) to assist design teams in best practice in the design and development of projects and to encourage them to take a complete design team approach from project conception. These documents cover all aspects of the development of a building project for both internal and external works.

In the case of existing schools, ensuring the availability of sufficient playground space can be much more difficult particularly in town and city locations. However, such limitations can often be addressed through the use of a school's general purpose room together with the arranging of access to local community facilities and amenities.

Early Start Programme

87. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will not cut the early start programme (details supplied) in Dublin 17. [4729/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The Deputy will be pleased to hear that, currently, there are no cuts planned for the Early Start Programme he is referring to in Dublin 17.

Special Educational Needs Expenditure

88. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the percentage of the education and skills budget which is allocated to special needs education per annum each year respectively since 2010; if the total allocation was spent each year; if he will provide a breakdown of expenditure on home tuition, special needs assistants, special schools; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4766/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The Programme for Government sets out that education will be a priority for this Government and that we will endeavour to protect and enhance the educational experience of children, young people and students. Approximately 15% of the entire budget of my Department – some €1.3 billion – was provided to support children with Special Educational Needs in 2012. My Departments spend in 2011, was an equivalent percentage of the overall spend, and was also €1.3bn on special needs provision. The equivalent spend in 2010 was €1.2bn. It is expected that expenditure in 2013 will be in line with that provided in 2012 and shows that despite the current economic difficulties, the overall level of funding for special education has been retained.

The approximate breakdown of the spend between the special needs assistant scheme and the home tuition scheme during 2012 was in the region of €9.5m for Home Tuition support and €355m on special needs assistants respectively. Given the different supports provided in special schools depending on the disability categorisations of the pupils attending those schools it is difficult to estimate a definitive average cost per pupil of pupils attending special schools. The approximate cost per pupil attending Special Schools in respect of teaching, Special Needs Assistant and capitation costs is €22,185 per pupil per annum. Based on a pupil population of approximately 7,000, this gives an estimated annual cost of €155m, of which approximately €60m relates to SNA support.

Additional costs relating to school buildings, transport, the July Programme, the National Educational Psychological Society (Neps) the Special Education Support Service (SESS) and assistive technology support also arise and are not included in this figure. The bulk of spending on special educational needs provides for: 10,575 whole time equivalent (wte) Special Needs Assistant (SNA) posts are being provided for primary, post-primary and special schools for the current school year in order to support the care needs of pupils with disabilities. Approximately 9,950 learning support/resource teacher posts, including those provided under the General Allocation Model, are also being provided in primary & post primary schools in order to provide additional teaching support to pupils with special educational needs.

Over 1,100 teachers are also being provided for in special schools providing teaching to pupils with various disabilities at much reduced pupil: teacher ratios, for example the autism PTR is 6:1 and the moderate general learning disability PTR is 8:1. Enhanced levels of school capitation are payable to most special schools and special classes and special School Transport arrangements for pupils with disabilities are provided at a cost of over €60m per year. Approximately €1.3m is also provided annually to schools for assistive technology support. Early educational intervention is provided for children with autism from 2½ years of age. There are now 76 early intervention classes for children with autism attached to mainstream schools that are funded by the Department. Funding is also provided through the home tuition programme for children with autism who are unable to access placement in an early intervention class. An extended school year is also currently available for pupils who have either a severe/profound general learning disability or who have autism.

The continued commitment of this Government to special education provision, at a time when savings are being required across a range of expenditure areas has ensured that children

with special educational needs can continue to have access to educational facilities in line with their requirements. The level of investment being provided will ensure that provision can continue to be made to provide for the educational requirements of children with special educational needs in mainstream and special schools this year.

Special Educational Needs Expenditure

89. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if an independent audit has been carried out of expenditure on special needs education; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4767/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): I wish to advise the Deputy that all of the annual expenditure on special educational needs is subject to monitoring and review by my Department and/or agencies under its aegis. All expenditure is also subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor Generals Office, while Departmental spending is examined independently each year by the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee.

Special Educational Needs Data

90. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of children with special educational needs in primary and secondary schools; the percentage of school children with special educational needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4768/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): I wish to advise the Deputy that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through its network of local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOS), is responsible for processing applications from schools for special educational needs supports. In relation to the number of pupils with intellectual disability who are enrolled in primary and post primary schools, I wish to advise the Deputy that all mainstream primary schools have been allocated additional teaching resources under the General Allocation Model (GAM) to cater for children with high incidence special educational needs, including mild and borderline mild general learning difficulties. It is a matter for school authorities to determine how these hours are utilised to support eligible pupils. My Department therefore does not hold details of the number of pupils being supported through this mechanism. It is therefore not possible to identify the total numbers of pupils enrolled in mainstream schools who have some form of intellectual disability.

I can advise the Deputy that the NCSE developed estimates on the prevalence of special educational needs as part of its process to advise the Minister on the implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN), Act 2004. The Council estimated at that time that up to 18% of the school going population may have a special educational need, as defined under the EPSEN Act, while a more recent NCSE Report: A Study of the Prevalence of Special Educational Needs (2011) estimates that this figure may be even higher than 18% of the pupil population.

Special Educational Needs Services Provision

91. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on whether all children with special educational needs are being adequately accommodated by the current

educational options of home tuition, special schools and special needs supports in mainstream schools; if his attention has been drawn to any children who have withdrawn from the education system as a result of their special educational needs not being met; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4769/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department provides for a continuum of special educational provision to be made available for children with special educational needs, so that regardless of the level of need of the child, educational provision can be made for them. My Department provides for a range of placement options and supports for schools which have enrolled pupils with special educational needs in order to ensure that, wherever a child is enrolled, s/he will have access to an appropriate education. Some children may be fully integrated into mainstream schools without additional teaching or care supports. Others are able to attend mainstream schools but need additional teaching and/or care assistance. In respect of children who cannot be accommodated in mainstream education, they may be enrolled in special classes or special schools where more intensive and supportive interventions are provided. Provision is therefore made for children across the continuum of need. Where children are unable to attend school for a period of time due to medical reasons, or where no school placement is available for a child, home tuition may be provided for them in order to provide for compensatory education on an interim basis.

The National Council for Special Education can also assist parents to identify school placements which can then be resourced to support children with special educational needs. Given the range of provision which is available, I am satisfied that all children who wish to avail of state provided education can be accommodated within the current educational system.

In the event of a child being refused enrolment to a school, or having been suspended or expelled from a school, parents may appeal this decision to my Department under Section 29 of the Education Act.

Special Educational Needs Services Provision

92. **Deputy David Stanton** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he has received proposals from parents of children with special needs or disability organisations or groups regarding possible alternative models of education for children with special needs; if he is considering any alterations to the current special education options as a result which could improve cost effectiveness and meet individual children's needs; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4770/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The Deputy will be aware that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has a formal role under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004 to advise me as Minister in relation to any matter relating to the education of children and others with disabilities. The NCSE have been asked to provide comprehensive policy advice on how the education system can best support children with special educational needs. This advice will guide the preparation of a plan on how aspects of EPSEN can be implemented, including the prioritising of access to children with special needs to an individual education plan.

I can advise that this advice will consider:

- the identification and assessment of children with special needs
- the nature of supports provided for children

- the way in which supports are allocated to schools and
- how these supports are configured.

The NCSE has advised my Department that representative groups including parent representatives have been consulted as part of the development of this policy advice. These representative groups also participate on the NCSE Consultative Forum, which meets regularly to consider policy matters relating to the provision of services for children with special educational needs. The advice from the NCSE is expected in the coming months. It is my intention that the significant resources to support children with Special Educational Needs are deployed to ensure the best possible outcomes for students. The advice will be a key input into achieving this goal.

Summer Works Scheme Administration

93. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to restore the summer works scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4776/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): In view of the over-riding objective of ensuring that every child has access to a physical school place, the delivery of major school projects to meet significant demographic demands nationally will be the main focus for capital investment in schools in the coming years. The Five Year school building programme is focused on meeting those demographic needs. In order therefore to prioritise available funding for the provision of essential school accommodation, it is not possible for me to advance with a summer works programme for the foreseeable future.

Special Educational Needs Services Provision

94. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if he will review a decision to withdraw funding from a school (details supplied) in County Meath in respect of the July Programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4787/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): The Deputy will be aware that participation in my Department's July Provision Scheme is an option for all special schools and mainstream primary schools with special classes catering for children with autism or severe to profound general learning disability that choose to extend their education services through the month of July. The position in relation to the provision of this scheme in all qualifying schools, including the school referred to by the Deputy, is currently being considered and this school will be informed of arrangements pertaining to the scheme for 2013 once they are finalised.

Student Grant Scheme Applications

95. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the position regarding a Student Universal Support Ireland grant application in respect of a person (details supplied); the length of time this application has taken to process; if it is the case that the applicant's birth certificate was in fact lost by SUSI during the processing; the extent to which the loss of this documentation contributed to the delay in the processing of the application; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4789/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): Officials in my Department

have been informed by Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) that the documentation initially supplied by the student in question in support of her grant application was incomplete and a request for the further documentation issued in November 2012. SUSI has no record of receiving the birth certificate before January 2013. SUSI wrote again to the student on 15th January 2013 in relation to this matter. Documentation was recently received and the application has been examined. SUSI is in direct contact with this student to resolve any outstanding issues in relation to the application.

Schools Building Projects Status

96. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to upgrade or replace a school (details supplied) in County Laois; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4802/13]

Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn): As the Deputy may be aware, a project for the school to which he refers is included in the 5 Year construction programme that I announced in March 2012. It is my Department's intention that this project will proceed to construction in 2015/16. My Department are liaising with the school in this regard. The current status of all projects on the school building programme, including the school in question, may be viewed on my Department's website at www.education.ie.

Public Procurement Tenders

97. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if he is considering the use of social clauses in all public procurement contracts in his Department; and if he will consider including a quota to employ jobseekers who are long-term unemployed. [4698/13]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): The scope for including social considerations in public contracts is something that I have been examining closely recently. In this regard, I would refer the Deputy to my recent reply on this issue (PQ 3066/13 - answered 23/01/13).

The range of social considerations that could be relevant for procurement includes promoting employment opportunities for young unemployed or long-term unemployed and promoting compliance with core labour standards. In this regard the standard template contracts issued by the National Procurement Service (NPS) in 2012 include provisions requiring compliance by the contractor with employment legislation. The standard public works contracts include provisions to ensure that the rates of pay and the conditions of employment, comply with all applicable law and that those rates and conditions are at least as favourable as those for the relevant category of worker in any registered employment agreements.

The inclusion of a social clause in all public procurement contracts requiring that a quota of long-term unemployed be employed in the delivery of the contract poses a number of risks. In the current economic climate, it would be quite likely that where a business is awarded a public contract, in particular a small-scale contract, the work would be carried out by the existing employees of that business. In such circumstances a social clause requiring that a number of long-term unemployed be employed in delivering a public contract could either impose an additional cost on SMEs that they may not be able to afford, or result in the displacement of existing employees. Challenges also arise from the need to ensure that the benefits are capable of being measured and monitored during the performance of the contract and that additional

costs are not placed on local suppliers relative to other potential suppliers.

The Government has a wide range of measures that it is deploying to facilitate job creation and support labour activation, with particular emphasis on assisting the long term unemployed people. Obviously, the main purpose of the public procurement process is to ensure that goods, services and works are purchased by the State in a manner that is legal, transparent and of high probity, and our key requirement is the achievement of value for money. Within this context my Department and the National Procurement Service are in the process of examining the use of social clauses as an additional means of supporting activation. In light of the risks noted above, we are seeking to identify the scope for the use of social clauses in parts of the capital area in particular, where employers are likely to be hiring additional workers to perform the contracts.

Coastal Protection

98. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the funding Fingal County Council have sought under the coastal protection scheme; and the likely timeline for consideration of these applications. [4669/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brian Hayes): I refer the Deputy to the reply to Question No. 217 of 11 December 2012. The position remains the same.

Public Procurement Tenders

99. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the action he will take to address the anomaly in central public sector procurement whereby local suppliers may supply goods and services at a cost less than that charged by a supplier awarded centrally through the National Procurement Service. [4719/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brian Hayes): In July 2012, following a government decision to make eight of the National Procurement Service (NPS) contracts mandatory, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform issued 'Circular 06/12: Public Procurement (Framework Agreements)'. The purpose of this Circular is to inform public bodies of the mandatory requirement to utilise central contracts, put in place by the NPS, when procuring a range of commonly acquired goods and services. Such central arrangements are targeted at securing best value for money and facilitating contracting authorities to deliver services within their budgetary constraints.

The NPS is focused on developing centralised arrangements for the procurement of goods and services used commonly across the public service nationwide. The benefits arising from these central arrangements include: cash savings; administrative savings from reduced duplication of tendering; greater purchasing expertise; improved consistency and compliance with EU procurement regulations; and enhanced service levels. Prior to issuing tenders the NPS engages with its clients to ensure their requirements are met and that the most commonly bought items are included in the tender. Under the provision of Circular 06/12 it is however permissible for buyers to purchase goods and services from non-NPS suppliers if these goods and services are demonstrably cheaper.

However, where a public service body purchases such goods or services it will need to explain the rationale for not using the NPS arrangements and provide a value for money justification that takes account of the full costs incurred in managing its own procurement process.

Systems of internal control within public service bodies are to support compliance with the requirements of the circular. Public service bodies shall make available for review if requested by internal auditors, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Local Government Audit Service or other duly appointed auditors, details of internal controls in place to ensure compliance, and details of goods and services, subject to the mandate, acquired other than under mandated NPS central frameworks and the associated value for money justification.

Public Sector Reform Implementation

100. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform his views on correspondence (details supplied) regarding public servants. [4797/13]

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Brendan Howlin): The Public Service Reform Plan was published in November 2011 and sets out the basis for the comprehensive and strategic reform of the Irish Public Service. Significant progress has been made on its implementation to date across a range of areas such as shared services, public procurement, external service delivery and eGovernment. Details of the progress being made in line with the Reform Plan can be found in the Progress Report published last September, which is available on my Department's website.

The Reform Plan is not just about securing the substantial savings we need to make in order to restore the public finances to a sustainable footing; it is also about maximising new and innovative service delivery channels; leading organising and working in new ways; and placing customer service at the heart of everything we do. If we do not radically reform the way the Public Service is managed and organised, it is the most vulnerable in our society who will suffer the most.

In order to support our determination to restore order to the public finances and to meet our fiscal targets, the Government have indicated that an additional saving of €1 billion in the pay and pensions bill will be necessary in the period to end 2015. Any measures aimed at achieving overall savings of €1 billion will involve reductions in payroll costs for serving staff as well as significant productivity and workforce reform measures to support the reform programme, in addition to those already achieved under the current Croke Park Agreement. The Government is committed to seeking agreement with staff representatives on the measures to be introduced to achieve the necessary savings in the Public Service pay and pensions bill. Intensive engagement, facilitated by the Labour Relations Commission, has now commenced between the parties to the discussions and will continue over the coming weeks.

Employment Rights Issues

101. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if there is a quota in place in relation to the employment of persons over the age of 45 years in the workforce here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4630/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): There is no prescribed quota in place in relation to the employment of persons over the age of 45 years in the Irish workforce. Certain employers, however, may have a preference for employing mature or more experienced workers. On the other hand, if an employer imposes a restriction on the employment of persons of a certain age, this may be a matter within the remit of employment equality law.

While employment equality legislation prohibits discrimination in employment on various grounds, including age, there are a number of exceptions to the general principle of non-discrimination. However, the legislation also provides for positive action on a number of grounds, including age. The Equality Authority has a general remit to promote equality under employment equality law. In some instances it provides assistance to people who believe they have been discriminated against. The Equality Tribunal investigates and/or mediates disputes in relation to the implementation of the legislation.

Job Creation Issues

102. **Deputy Michael Colreavy** asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if a memorandum of understanding signed with the lighting manufacturing company G-LED will be fulfilled; if the 100 jobs promised in County Sligo will be forthcoming; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4691/13]

Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Richard Bruton): I understand that the company signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010 with Ballymote Community Enterprise Ltd. to establish a facility in the Ballymote Business Park. The proposal was to supply the Irish market with lighting products. There was no State agency involvement with the Memorandum of Understanding. However, IDA Ireland met with the company on a number of occasions in relation to G-LED's proposal and provided advice, but as the company proposed supplying the Irish market solely, it was not eligible for grant aid under the Industrial Development Acts. If the company were to develop into exporting markets at a later stage, the matter could be revisited. At present, therefore, the position is that this is a private sector proposal and the future development of the initiative remains a matter solely for the company.

Labour Market Issues

103. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason those on one parent family payments have been excluded from accessing the Momentum initiative announced by her Department last month; if she has plans to extend the scope of this scheme to those in receipt of one parent family payments who are not working and would like to enter the workforce in the near future; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4732/13]

110. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Social Protection if those in receipt of one parent family payment are included in the live register figures if they are not working; her views on whether those in receipt of one parent family payments should be excluded from accessing the momentum training initiative if they are not employed and hope to enter the workforce; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4730/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I propose to take Questions Nos. 110 and 103 together.

The Government's policy statement on Labour Market Activation is outlined in 'Pathways to Work'. The implementation of this policy aims to ensure that people who are unemployed will be given the opportunity to acquire suitable skills and/or qualifications to progress them on a pathway to work. 'Pathways to Work' commits to greater targeting of activation places and opportunities and given limited public resources, it is essential that certain activation measures are targeted at the long-term unemployed.

Momentum is a targeted initiative which provides free education and training places for up

to 6,500 long-term unemployed jobseekers. The programmes will include on-the job training in the form of work experience modules as well as the development of the workplace skills required to obtain and retain employment. The Momentum initiative only represents a small percentage, however, of the over 450,000 state-funded places provided in further education, higher education and training, namely:

- 75,000 FÁS training places in 2012
- 180,000 Further Education places 162,000 full-time Higher Education places, through Universities and Institutes of Technology across the country
- Over 40,000 training places, including 8,000 for the unemployed, in partnership with private employers
- Over 6,000 Springboard, free part-time higher education, places in 2012, with additional places to be announced for this year

One parent family recipients are currently not recorded on the Live Register and there are no plans to extend the eligibility of this targeted initiative beyond those on the Live Register.

Carer's Allowance Appeals

104. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Social Protection when an assessment will be carried out on an application for carer's allowance appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Galway; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4581/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that an appeal, by the person concerned, was registered in that office on 16th January 2013. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by or on behalf of the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. When received, the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing. The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Jobseeker's Allowance Applications

105. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the reason a person (details supplied) in County Kildare was requested again to provide proof financial support over the last number of years when all this documentation was previously provided in the last number of weeks to their community welfare officer; when a decision is likely to be made in respect of their jobseeker's allowance application; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4612/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): All relevant documentation submitted by the person concerned to the community welfare service has been passed to the local social welfare office for association with his jobseeker's allowance application. It is expected that a decision on his jobseeker's allowance application will be made within the next week or so.

Carer's Allowance Appeals

106. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Social Protection when an application for carer's allowance will be approved in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Laois; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4613/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that an appeal by the person concerned was registered in that office on 13th September 2012. It is a statutory requirement of the appeals process that the relevant Departmental papers and comments by or on behalf of the Deciding Officer on the grounds of appeal be sought. These papers were received in the Social Welfare Appeals Office on 22nd January 2013 and the case will be referred to an Appeals Officer who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing. The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Illness Benefit Eligibility

107. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection if she will indicate eligibility for illness benefit in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare who was self-employed up until 2009 and previously on jobseeker's allowance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4614/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The person concerned was previously self-employed and paying PRSI contributions at class S. Class S contributions are not reckonable for illness benefit purposes. Only PRSI contributions paid at classes A, E, H and P count towards payment of Illness Benefit.

Social Welfare Appeals Delays

108. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding a State pension transition appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork. [4618/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that in the case of appeals for state pension (transition), where it appears that the reason for the Deciding Officers decision may not have been fully understood, the letter of appeal is referred to state pensions requesting that the decision be clarified to the appellant. The person is advised that if s/he is still not satisfied following receipt of this clarification that the appeal will be formally registered and processed. In the case of the person concerned, her letter of appeal was forwarded to state pension (transition) section, on 13th December 2012, who will shortly issue a letter of clarification. The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Jobseeker's Allowance Applications

109. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Protection the progress

made to date in the determination of an application for jobseeker's allowance in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare who was unemployed for four weeks over the Christmas period, who will recommence casual employment shortly for four weeks; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4645/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The jobseekers allowance application from the person concerned was awarded on the 24th January 2013. The first payment will be for collection at his nominated Post Office on 29th January 2013.

Question No. 110 answered with Question No. 103.

Illness Benefit Appeals

111. **Deputy John O'Mahony** asked the Minister for Social Protection when a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon will receive a decision on their application for illness benefit following the holding of an oral appeal; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4778/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I am advised by the Social Welfare Appeals Office that an Appeals Officer having fully considered all the available evidence, including that adduced at oral hearing, disallowed the appeal of the person concerned. The person concerned has been notified of the Appeals Officer decision. The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Community Employment Schemes Places

112. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Social Protection the numbers of persons in receipt of one parent family payment on a county basis who are currently on community employment and the numbers at the 31 December 2011; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4781/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): Community Employment (CE) is the largest employment programme administered by the Department of Social Protection and forms an important pillar in the strategy of returning long-term unemployed people back to the open labour market. There are currently 23,300 places (including supervisory positions) available currently on CE which is increasing to 25,300 by year-end 2013 and the revised budget for 2013 is circa €352m. Lone parents are one of the categories of disadvantaged client catered for on CE.

One Parent Family Payment Recipients on CE, By County/Area

County/Area	OFPs 31/12/2011	OFPs 28/01/13
Dublin 1	155	103
Dublin 2	108	66
Dublin 3	51	18
Dublin 4	16	3
Dublin 5	83	43
Dublin 6	9	16
Dublin 7	77	45

Questions - Written Answers

County/Area	OFPs 31/12/2011	OFPs 28/01/13
Dublin 8	224	113
Dublin 9	31	48
Dublin 10	70	52
Dublin 11	205	87
Dublin 12	76	55
Dublin 13	31	7
Dublin 14	5	0
Dublin 15	125	61
Dublin 16	16	11
Dublin 17	170	102
Dublin 18	23	1
Dublin 20	38	9
Dublin 22	99	61
Dublin 24	180	97
Dublin West	15	0
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown	85	72
Dublin North County/Fingal	70	46
Kildare	101	63
Meath	85	54
Wicklow	135	88
Cavan	36	17
Louth	189	91
Monaghan	51	24
Carlow	55	28
Kilkenny	65	30
Tipperary (South Riding)	86	49
Waterford City	77	39
Waterford County	22	15
Wexford	147	102
Laois	48	30
Longford	48	29
Offaly	48	20
Roscommon	44	22
Westmeath	82	38
Cork City	235	110
Cork County	109	77
Kerry	147	67
Clare	88	43
Limerick City	152	52
Limerick County	53	22
Tipperary (North Riding)	48	25
Galway City	73	40
Galway County	108	73
Mayo	94	62

County/Area	OFPs 31/12/2011	OFPs 28/01/13
Donegal	176	101
Leitrim	11	5
Sligo	75	38
Total	4,650	2,570

Social Welfare Appeals Status

113. **Deputy Jack Wall** asked the Minister for Social Protection the position regarding an invalidity appeal in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4796/13]

Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): The Social Welfare Appeals Office has advised me that an appeal by the person concerned was referred to an Appeals Officer on 17 January 2013, who will make a summary decision on the appeal based on the documentary evidence presented or, if required, hold an oral hearing. The Social Welfare Appeals Office functions independently of the Minister for Social Protection and of the Department and is responsible for determining appeals against decisions on social welfare entitlements.

Questions Nos. 114 and 115 answered with Question No. 24.

Flood Risk Assessments

116. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the studies or assessments that have been carried out regarding the concerns of flooding as a result of the regeneration process in a raised bog special area of conservation (details supplied) in County Kildare; if there are plans to carry out further studies; if he will consider the provision of some funding to communities in the affected areas to carry out their own investigations; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4620/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I assume that the Deputy is referring to Mouds Bog Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in Co Kildare. The approach which my Department is taking to the restoration of Raised Bogs in SACs is set out in the document *National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan – Proposed Approach*, which is available on my Department's website at www.NPWS.ie. As has been identified in that document, the impacts of potential changes to existing drainage are of specific concern.

Following a request for tender, my Department is currently assessing proposals by specialists to undertake the necessary survey work for each of the 53 sites, including Mouds Bog SAC. This will include topographical and hydrological survey and modelling, which will be required for restoration plans to be put in place. I understand the particular concerns of landowners in Mouds Bog SAC. I can advise that restoration measures will be undertaken in a fully considered and structured way and following full consultation with affected parties.

Conservation and restoration work will require funding, as will the ongoing management of our protected raised bog resources. This is an issue which is under consideration by my Department and the Peatlands Council, including how best to include local communities in this work. My officials will be happy to discuss with local communities the results of the topographical and hydrological survey work which my Department is now commissioning and to consider at that stage if additional specific advice needs to be sought.

Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla

117. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas faoin Athbhreithniú ar Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, 2003 atá ar siúl faoi láthair; an ndéanfaidh sé amscála a chur ar fáil don athbhreithniú sin; agus cathain a bheidh sé i gceist aige na haighneachtaí a fhoilsiú. [4705/13]

118. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cathain a bheidh sé ar intinn aige Bille nua um Theangacha Oifigiúla a fhoilsiú; agus an ndéanfaidh sé ráiteas ina thaobh. [4706/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Tógfaidh mé Ceisteanna Uimh. 117 agus 118 le chéile. Mar atá ráite i gClár Reachtaíochta an Rialtais a foilsíodh ar an 15 Eanáir, táthar ag súil bille a fhoilsiú i mbliana ina ndéanfar foráil do leasuithe ar Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003, mar thoradh ar an athbhreithniú ar an Acht. Mar a thuigfidh an Teachta, braitheann an t-amscála ar go leor tosca, lena n-áirítear an plé cuí leis na páirtithe leasmhara éagsúla agus an sceideal reachtaíochta i dTithe an Oireachtais.

Tá na céimeanna cuí idir lámha ag mo Roinnse faoi láthair chun moltaí a chur faoi bhráid an Rialtais i dtaca le leasú an Achta. Mar is eol don Teachta, fuarthas 1,400 freagra ar an suirbhé agus 262 aighneacht le linn an phróisis chomhairliúcháin phoiblí a réachtáladh mar chuid den athbhreithniú ar an Acht anuraidh. Tá anailís déanta ar na moltaí a fuarthas faoin bpróiseas sin agus déanfar iad a fhoilsiú ar shuíomh gréasáin na Roinne in am trátha.

Question No. 119 answered with Question No. 40.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

120. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cad atá eagraithe aige le haghaidh Sheachtain na Gaeilge 2013. [4709/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Is féile idirnáisiúnta í Seachtain na Gaeilge a réachtáiltear i mí an Mhárta gach bliain agus a chuireann úsáid na Gaeilge agus an cultúr Gaelach chun cinn, anseo in Éirinn agus thar lear. Is é Conradh an Gaeilge a eagraíonn an fhéile a bheidh ar siúl i mbliana ón 4 go 17 Márta 2013. Tuigtear dom go mbeidh na céadta imeachtaí á n-eagrú, ní hamháin in Éirinn ach ar fud an domhain mhóir. Tréaslaím le gach duine a bheidh páirteach in eagrú na n-imeachtaí éagsúla as a dtionscnaíocht agus as a ndúthracht.

Ní miste a rá nach í Seachtain na Gaeilge amháin atá á ceiliúradh ag Conradh na Gaeilge i mbliana. Tá Bliain na Gaeilge eagraithe ag an gConradh fosta mar chomóradh ar bhunú na heagraíochta 120 bliain ó shin. Tuigtear dom go mbeidh imeachtaí Sheachtain na Gaeilge mar chroílár an cheiliúrtha ar Bhliain na Gaeilge. Tá eolas maidir leis na tionscnaimh seo le fáil ar na suíomhanna gréasáin www.snag.ie agus www.gaeilge2013.ie.

Arts Promotion

121. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

the extent to which it is intended to promote the various forms of the arts throughout the current year with particular reference to the utilisation of the Gathering as a means to promote the national image to generate employment and economic revival; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4806/13]

125. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which he and his Department can identify, promote and support cultural events throughout the current year which might be of substantial economic benefit; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4810/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 121 and 125 together.

The Government's policy on the arts is to promote and strengthen the arts in all its forms, to increase access to and participation in the arts and to make the arts an integral and valued part of our national life. I am continuing to work towards this goal with my Department and the agencies in its remit. The Programme for Government 2011-2016, along with my Department's Statement of Strategy, has the overall goal of promoting and developing Ireland's world-class artistic and creative strengths at home and abroad and of maximising their societal, economic and reputational value for the country.

As the Deputy will know, responsibility for the promotion of the arts at all levels throughout the country is primarily devolved to the Arts Council. Under the Arts Act 2003, the Arts Council is statutorily independent in its day-to-day operations and my Department has no role to play in its executive or funding decisions. The Arts Council is playing an ongoing key role in funding and developing arts events around the country during 2013. This will ensure that the visitors for The Gathering can experience excellent performances and exhibitions locally.

I would also refer the Deputy to my answer in the house earlier today in relation to my Department's role in The Gathering (ref Ref No: 4479/13). The Gathering affords an excellent opportunity to showcase our arts and all of our cultural institutions. My Department and the agencies under the aegis have been working on extensive programmes to support The Gathering for some time. That collaborative and supportive effort is continuing.

Arts Funding

122. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which he expects the arts to attract private sector or voluntary funding in the course of the current year; the way this might be used to incentivise development of the sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4807/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): Last May I announced the introduction of a new philanthropic initiative on a pilot basis for arts and culture organisations. The initiative - the *Philanthropic Leverage Initiative* - was designed to encourage philanthropic sponsorship and endowment of the arts from private sources. The initiative, established with funding of €230,000 for 2012, has provided an incentive to arts organisations to proactively seek new funding relationships with sponsors which deliver private sector financial support, thereby increasing overall funding available to the arts. The initiative was available across projects of varying scale, geography and art forms to not-for-profit organisations for arts programming projects. The organisations approved for funding under the initiative were required to procure matching philanthropic funds and complete their drawdown from my Department in 2012. Matched funding could not come from public funds or from any public sector

organisation. It was anticipated that a multiple of 3.5 on the pilot initiative funds of €230,000 will result in philanthropic funding of some €800,000 being raised for the arts. The initiative proved very successful with a multiplier of 4.26 in philanthropic donations being leveraged for the arts. I am considering a similar scheme in 2013.

The Leverage Initiative was run in parallel with a second initiative - the Arts Council's *RAISE: Building Fundraising Capacity* pilot initiative. This initiative provides one-to-one professional support to eight selected organisations for two years through planning and implementing a tailored fundraising programme. This initiative will help those art organisations build and resource their capacity to attract philanthropic giving. In developing this complementary programme, the Arts Council has identified that it is vital for art groups to develop, agree and implement an effective fundraising strategy and to properly resource that fundraising function.

My Department has also provided support to Business to Arts (a not-for-profit organisation working to support resilience and transformation in the cultural sector through research, innovation and partnership) for a number of years and, in each of the last three years, this has been allocated to delivery of the New Stream Programme, which builds fundraising skills in the cultural sector in Ireland (The Bank of America Merrill Lynch investment in this project is €400k over three years).

In 2010 my Department also awarded a €20,000 grant under the Cultural Technology Grants Scheme to *Business to Arts* for the '*Fund it*' initiative. Business to Arts initially matched this figure with private funding and since then has attracted additional foundation funds to this project. *Fund it* is a new all-island "crowdfunding" website for Ireland's creative projects, giving everyone the power to help good ideas happen. '*Fund it*' is designed to support greater individual giving to the creative sector; the approach serves to strengthen the bond between a creator and their audience which offers the potential for wider-ranging, long-term relationships. In late 2012 I also hosted a conference on philanthropy and the arts and a number of follow-on actions arose from that event.

Heritage Projects

123. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which he has received any communication indicating heritage sites or buildings deemed to be at risk for whatever reason; the number of sites or locations made known to him; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4808/13]

124. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which he has received applications for funding for the improvement, renovation, restoration or conservation of buildings, sites or national monuments; the extent to which any such locations are likely to receive attention in the current and future years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4809/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I propose to take Questions Nos. 123 and 124 together.

I refer to the replies to Question No. 486 on 6 June 2012, Nos. 201, 202 and 203 on 18 July, 2012 and Nos. 150, 151, 155 and 159 on 28 November 2012 and to the supplementary material sent to the Deputy in recent days in support of the reply to Question No. 151 of 28th November 2012. All communications received by my Department in relation to the care, conservation, preservation and protection of heritage sites or buildings are examined and dealt with as speedily as resources allow. The number of projects supported in future years will be dependent on

the resources available to my Department.

Question No. 125 answered with Question No. 121.

Arts Promotion

126. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which he and his Department might consider the promotion of jointly sponsored cultural events with the US in the course of the current year in a mutually beneficial fashion; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4811/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I have just appointed an Expert Advisory Committee for my Department's Culture Ireland Programme with representation from the arts and culture community, as well as representation from a range of bodies with a shared interest in Ireland's international reach, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Tourism Ireland, the IDA and the Ireland Funds. This expanded new committee will ensure that there will be a heightened focus in the promotion of Irish arts abroad, leading not alone to further career opportunities for Irish artists but also to wider benefits of tourism and an enhanced global reputation for Ireland as a centre of creativity and innovation. There are many shared interests around the table who will now be working together to achieve a shared goal.

In 2011, Culture Ireland undertook *Imagine Ireland* as a special year-long initiative showcasing Irish arts and culture in the US. Throughout the year, more than 1,000 Irish artists were showcased in more than 500 events in more than 40 US States, working in partnership with key US festivals, venues and cultural institutions. The total budget for *Imagine Ireland* was €5m, of which €1m was from normal Culture Ireland funding and €4m was special once-off funding.

Following on from the success of *Imagine Ireland*, my Department's Culture Ireland Division has to date funded 51 projects from all art forms to perform in various venues across the United States totalling €424,000. My Department also led our fifth showcase of performing arts in New York as part of the annual conference of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters [APAP]. This included introducing a whole new selection of work by a wide variety of artists, some who are new to New York and some returning with fresh and interesting work. At the moment, confirmation of future bookings for 2013-2014 is awaited as a result of the attendance by Irish artists.

Arts Promotion

127. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the degree to which he expects to be in a position to enhance the national image throughout the EU through the medium of the arts; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4812/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): From the Government's point of view, the EU Presidency is seen as an important opportunity to make a very direct and positive contribution to developments within the EU and to demonstrate our capabilities on the European stage. The Presidency provides the opportunity to fully engage with the EU agenda and to rebuild Ireland's reputation, both in Europe and internationally. Given our current economic situation, it is also critical that the Presidency is both cost-effective and well-run. It is widely recognised that an efficient Presidency will generate positive short-term benefits, but will also influence longer-term perceptions about the State and promote goodwill

towards Ireland.

In addition to the wide-ranging policy agenda that will be addressed during the Presidency, it is the practice for the country holding the Presidency to mount a programme of cultural events. The presentation of a Cultural Programme offers a unique opportunity to project a strong image of Ireland to audiences within the EU and beyond. It also offers a platform to engage with people at home concerning Ireland's place in the EU and to review, after 40 years of membership, how we see that relationship further developing.

Clearly, given the wealth of our historic cultural engagement with Europe and our contemporary artistic strengths, there are a host of different approaches that could be taken to developing the Programme. In line with the overall approach to Presidency planning, it is critical, however, that the Programme is run as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible, making best uses of the resources available to us, whilst also showcasing the best of Ireland.

Key objectives of Ireland's Culture Programme include the following:

- To showcase the strength and diversity of Irish culture and enhance further Ireland's reputation for cultural excellence.
- To present a range of Irish events of high quality across a diverse range of art forms to the widest possible audience across the European Union.
- To complement the overall programme for Ireland's EU Presidency.
- To programme events across three key locations (Brussels/Belgium, Paris, Berlin) and each EU Member State.
- To engage with European institutions and culture networks to allow for professional development of Irish artists and cultural institutions.
- To use the EU Presidency Culture Programme as an opportunity to engage with "third" countries or key territories outside the European Union.
- To achieve maximum visibility and impact for the Irish cultural sector and Ireland, in general, through a communications and promotion strategy.

Ireland's *Culture Connects* Programme is a wide and varied programme which involves the engagement of Irish artists in Europe and beyond, as well as European artists in Ireland. It is a key element in Ireland's plans to celebrate our Presidency of the EU in the first six months of 2013. For many centuries Ireland has had strong historic cultural connections to Europe and our Presidency offers an opportunity to celebrate and build on those connections. There is a great diversity in the culture of the Member States of the EU but there is also a common thread which runs through our culture and which allows us to understand each other and to work closely together to achieve our wider aims.

Through the many events planned across all Member States, Irish artists will present and highlight the unique quality of Irish culture. It is a culture of which we are proud and which has gained us an international reputation for excellence. This programme includes many high profile artists from Beckett, Bacon and Eileen Gray to Anne Enright, Seán Scully and Altan. Irish artists will present work in all Member States, with a special focus on Brussels, Paris and Berlin. A copy of the programme is available in the Oireachtas Library.

Questions Nos. 128 and 129 answered with Question No. 20.

Question No. 130 answered with Question No. 14.

EU Funding

131. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which he has identified the availability of funding from EU sources for the promotion and development of festivals throughout the country; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4816/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): The EU Culture Programme 2007–2013 is the EU funding programme administered by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) for the European Commission. It was established to enhance the cultural area shared by Europeans, which is based on a common cultural heritage through the development of cooperation activities among cultural operators from 37 eligible countries. Applications can be made to the various strands of this programme for support for pan-European non-national cultural activities.

The EU Culture Programme introduced a dedicated festivals fund called Strand 1.3.6, *Support for European Cultural Festivals* in 2010. This strand offered funding towards the non-national European programme costs of the successful festivals. West Cork Chamber Music Festival received funding totalling €300,000 for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 editions of the festival. Cork Midsummer Festival received funding totalling €200,000 for the 2011 and 2012 editions of their festival.

Festivals are also eligible to apply for project funding under Strand 1, co-operation projects. This strand requires a European partnership (with a minimum of between 3 -6 partners) and applicants must demonstrate that their projects achieve common goals beyond national borders. Costs related to marketing and promotion can be included as a line in the project budget. Irish festivals which have received support under this strand include: Babaro International Children's Festival (2008); St Patrick's Festival (2010); Dublin Dance Festival (2010); and Ulster Bank Theatre Festival (2011). It should be noted that current indications are that the dedicated festival strand will not be continued under the upcoming Creative Europe Programme 2014-2020 (the successor to the Culture Programme).

Arts Funding

132. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which group, bodies or agencies promoting the arts or involved in productions, on a county basis, applied for and or received financial assistance by way of grant or other award in each of the past three years to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4817/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): The Government's policy on the arts is to promote and strengthen the arts in all its forms, to increase access to and participation in the arts, and to make the arts an integral and valued part of our national life. As the Deputy will be aware, responsibility for the promotion of the arts at all levels throughout the country is primarily devolved to the Arts Council. Under the Arts Act 2003, the Arts Council is statutorily independent in its day-to-day operations and my Department has no role to play in its executive or funding decisions. Full information on the Council's funding decisions is made available on their funding decisions database on their website www.artscouncil.ie.

Full details of all awards and grant-payments made by my own Department to arts groups in 2010 and 2011 are made available on my Department's website at www.ahg.gov.ie. At the beginning of every year, details are published of the payments made in the previous year, in-

cluding the address of the recipients. Details for 2012 have not yet been updated on the website but will these be forwarded to the Deputy when completed. I would also refer the Deputy to my previous replies in relation to these matters.

Grant Aid

133. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of applications for grant aid or other forms of financial support received by his Department or bodies under his aegis funded by his Department from applicants in County Kildare; the extent to which it has been found possible to respond positively; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4818/13]

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): The tables below set out the number of applications for grant aid or other forms of financial support submitted from applicants in County Kildare to my Department and to the bodies funded from my Department's Vote Group during 2012; and also the extent to which it has been found possible to respond positively to those applications. For the sake of completeness, I must advise the Deputy that my Department also operates the *Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme*. Under this scheme, qualifying applicants from various counties, including Kildare, are receiving compensation payments of €1,500 (index linked) per annum or deliveries of turf. Details of these personal applications and payments are not reflected in the table below.

Scheme/Grant Programme operated by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.	Number of applications for grant aid or other financial support received from applicants in Co. Kildare.	Number of applications for grant aid or other financial support from applicants in Co. Kildare that were approved.
Structures at Risk Scheme 2012 (applications submitted through the local authority)	2	2
Regional Culture Night 2012	1	1
Arts Division – Capital Projects	1	0
Rannóg Polasaí na Gaeilge	2	2
Bodies and Cross Border Implementation Bodies under the aegis of the Department that received applications for funding from Co. Kildare.	Number of applications for grant aid or other financial support received from applicants in Co. Kildare.	Number of applications for grant aid or other financial support from applicants in Co. Kildare that were approved.
Arts Council	69	24
Irish Film Board	15	4
Heritage Council	27	18
Waterways Ireland	10	10
An Foras Teanga, which comprises:		
Foras na Gaeilge	13	12
Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch	0	0

Septic Tank Registration Scheme

134. **Deputy Paudie Coffey** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government with reference to the new Water Services Act, if he will outline the regulations, licensing, and protocols that will apply to contractors who are commissioned to de-sludge residential waste water treatment systems; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4588/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): On 26 June 2012, I signed the Water Services Acts 2007 and 2012 (Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems) Regulations 2012 which set out performance standards for on-site treatment systems, including requirements regarding the maintenance and de-sludging of such systems. With limited exceptions, they must be de-sludged by a permitted contractor. The regulations currently in force which are relevant to contractors commissioned to de-sludge residential waste water treatment systems are as follows:

- The Waste Management (Collection Permit) Regulations 2007 as amended by the Waste Management (Collection Permit) (Amendment) Regulations 2008;
- The Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) Regulations 2007 as amended by the Waste Management (Facility Permit) (Amendment) Regulations 2008; and
- The Waste Management (Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) Regulations 1998, as amended by the Waste Management (Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) (Amendment) Regulations 2001.

Up to January 2012, the individual local authorities were responsible for the issue of Waste Collection Permits. On 1 February 2012, Offaly County Council was designated as the Nominated Authority for the processing of all new Waste Collection Permit applications received on or after that date. This single Nominated Authority is known as the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO). The setting of protocols and conditions for the carrying out of waste collection activities are a matter for the local authorities or the NWCPO as appropriate.

Unfinished Housing Developments

135. **Deputy Niall Collins** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the reason a housing estate (details supplied) in County Limerick has been deactivated from its status of unfinished housing estate; if he will reactivate this status; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4616/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): The development in question was categorised by Limerick County Council as a Category 3 development in 2011 and its status remains unchanged. As part of the process of preparing the National Housing Development Survey 2011, published by my Department in October 2011, local authorities provided details of all unfinished housing developments in their areas. Unfinished housing developments were divided into four categories as follows:

- Category one, where the development is still being actively completed by the developer, or where no serious public safety issues exist;
- Category two, where a receiver has been appointed;
- Category three, where a receiver has not been appointed and the developer is still in place

but effectively inactive; and

- Category four, where the development has been effectively abandoned and is posing serious problems for residents.

A revised list of estates will be prescribed for 2013.

Local Government Audit Service Issues

136. **Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide details of the person who audits the accounts of local authorities; the reason that the Comptroller and Auditor General does not audit the accounts of local authorities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4647/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): The Local Government Audit Service provides a professional audit service to local authorities which are funded from a number of sources including central Government grants and the provision of goods and services. Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2001 provides that local government auditors shall be independent in the exercise of their professional functions. While, in accordance with the Public Service Reform Plan, a critical review on merging the Local Government Audit Service into the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General was initiated, the Government decided, in the context of the Action Programme for Effective Local Government, *Putting People First* that the Local Government Audit Service and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General should not be merged. Instead, the Programme puts in place new governance and accountability arrangements for local government, including the establishment of a new National Oversight and Audit Commission.

Arising from work on these matters, additional cooperation and other measures to underpin enhanced audit arrangements in local government are being pursued by the Local Government Audit Service and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General taking account of their separate independent statutory responsibilities and the Government's approach in *Putting People First*.

Nuclear Safety

137. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the contacts he has had with the British Government in relation to Sellafield; if he is satisfied with recent stress tests or safety tests that have been carried out on the site; if he is satisfied that Sellafield has been subject to EU-wide stress tests organised at a European level and not subject solely to a domestic stress test organised at a British domestic level; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4651/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): In November 2012, I published a summary of a report prepared by an independent team of international experts, commissioned by Ireland, which assessed the probable risks to Ireland from incidents at the Sellafield nuclear site. The experts quantified the likelihood of incidents occurring at Sellafield, and as stated in the public summary, an incident at the Sellafield site resulting in the release of radioactive material would give rise to "no observable health effects in Ireland". The report is a valuable input to developing Government policies including National Emergency Planning. This public summary document is available on my Department's website at www.environ.ie.

In May 2011, shortly after the tsunami that led to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan, the European Council called for comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessments - “stress tests” - of all EU nuclear power plants. The Sellafield site is a waste repository and reprocessing facility and not a nuclear power plant, and thus did not fall within the strict parameters of the EU “stress test” programme. The criteria developed for the EU stress tests were specifically aimed at, and designed for, power reactors and not for non-power sites such as Sellafield, and therefore only results from these stress tests were subject to the EU peer review process. However, the UK required the operators of all of their nuclear sites, including non-power sites such as Sellafield, to apply the EU “stress test” assessment criteria to their sites. The results of the assessments were reported to the UK Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), whose mission is to secure the protection of people and society from the hazards of the nuclear industry.

Ireland has on-going engagements with the United Kingdom in relation to radiological matters. For example, my Department and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland meet regularly with their counterparts from the UK Department of Environment and Climate Change to discuss radiological matters of mutual interest. I intend to continue to ensure that the UK authorities are kept aware of any concerns held by Ireland, and to take all possible steps to ensure that the highest levels of safety apply at Sellafield, and at other existing and any “new-build” nuclear facilities in the UK.

Local Authority Finances

138. **Deputy Michael Creed** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the amount of money held on deposit by each town council; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4664/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): Deposits held by town councils comprise cash balances and short term bank investments. The amount held on deposit by each town council at 31 December 2010, the latest year for which audited information is available, is set out below.

Town Councils	Total
Arklow	€8,767,025
Athlone	€4,064,175
Athy	€2,411,038
Ballina	€3,847,743
Ballinasloe	€22,551,837
Birr	€2,324,741
Bray	€16,404,077
Buncrana	€1,360,006
Bundoran	€5,379,291
Carlow	€11,509,364
Carrick on Suir	€3,534,193
Carrickmacross	€4,150,766
Cashel	€4,047,755
Castlebar	€9,105,236
Castleblayney	€496,246
Cavan	€5,259,178

Town Councils	Total
Clonakilty	€6,258,953
Clones	€316,336
Cobh	€75,301
Dundalk	€14,593,993
Dungarvan	€127
Ennis	€1,984,600
Enniscorthy	€5,166,820
Fermoy	€1,171,459
Kells	€900,159
Killarney	€10,396,484
Kilrush	€2,540,618
Kinsale	€628,969
Letterkenny	€7,777
Listowel	€2,947,719
Longford	€3,742,468
Macroom	€4,014,469
Mallow	€8,175,738
Midleton	€10,145,659
Monaghan	€1,523,410
Naas	€7,744,465
Navan	€5,883,322
Nenagh	€2,284,575
New Ross	€3,108,861
Skibbereen	€3,989,565
Templemore	€1,987,406
Thurles	€11,709,154
Tipperary	€3,106,899
Tralee	€16,205,772
Trim	€154,268
Tullamore	€3,796,932
Westport	€4,173,391
Wicklow	€1,600,351
Youghal	€3,041,307

Departmental Funding

139. **Deputy Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the reason the funds given by his Department to the Irish Environmental Network, which can be anything from €700,000 to €1,000,000 per year, are not accountable or made public by the Irish Environmental Network; the action he will take to bring clarity to the use to which the funds are put; if he will consider making the network available for scrutiny under freedom of information legislation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4717/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Ho-

gan): The Irish Environmental Network (IEN) is an umbrella organisation for 32 environmental NGOs in Ireland. It was established as the Environmental (Ecological) NGOs Core Funding Limited in 2001 and trades as the Irish Environmental Network. My Department provides funding to the IEN to help build and maintain the capacity of its member organisations to assist them to contribute effectively to the development and implementation of environmental policy, in line with the public participation requirements of the Aarhus Convention and various EU directives. Funding is also provided, through the IEN, to facilitate the Environmental Pillar's involvement in Social Partnership to ensure that environmental considerations are fully reflected in discussions and policy development at a local, regional and national level. Commencing in late 2012, funding is also being provided through the IEN to facilitate participation in the Environmental Law Implementation Group, which aims to improve the transposition, implementation and enforcement of environmental law through improved communication between policy makers and the Environmental Pillar.

My Department's grant to the IEN is provided from the Environment Fund. The grant amounts for each year are set out in the Fund's Annual Accounts, which are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General; copies of these accounts are available on my Department's website, www.environ.ie. The IEN is required to file accounts with the Companies Registration Office (CRO), and these are available on www.cro.ie. (Company no. 350 182). The IEN also submits its accounts to my Department each year as a condition of the grant payment. As well as the funding provided by my Department directly to the IEN, individual member organisations receive funding for specific initiatives from my Department and other public bodies; for example, my Department provided funding of €180,000 in 2012 to An Taisce to support the Green Schools programme.

The Programme for Government commits to restoring Freedom of Information (FOI) and to extending its remit to all public bodies as well as to significantly-funded non-public bodies. My colleague, Minister Howlin, is currently progressing FOI proposals and expects to publish the bill in the current session. Following enactment of the bill, in due course, decisions on the significantly-funded non-public bodies to be included will be made in consultation with the relevant Departments and will have regard to the necessity for appropriate public oversight and accountability .

Details of the funding allocation to the IEN for 2012 is set out in the table.

	€
Irish Environmental Funding Allocation s 2012	
Core Funding to support member organisations – this funding is divided between the 32 member NGOs. Funding is allocated by a panel that assesses submissions from each of the NGOs. A Department representative attends the panel meeting.	395,000
Administration costs of the IEN Secretariat	90,000
Research into environmental implications of National Government and local authority policies/plans and preparation of submissions	10,000
Contribution towards costs of participation of ENGO reps on bodies organised/ sponsored by Government bodies/agencies	10,000

	€
Participation in international NGO meetings/conferences	10,000
Participation in inter-governmental conferences	10,000
Preparation for Rio +20	10,000
Grant for the purchase of video-conferencing equipment to reduce both costs and CO2 emissions from travel	10,000
Provision for training	5,000
Participation in the planning process	5,000
Biodiversity policy project	40,000
Development of green economy policy document	4,000
Environmental Law Implementation Group	5,280
Environmental Pillar – attendance at meetings and co-ordinator's salary	180,000
Total Funding Allocations to IEN for 2012	784,280

Unfinished Housing Developments

140. **Deputy Martin Heydon** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if his attention has been drawn to the serious concerns of residents in private housing estates which are not yet taken in charge but where the developer is inactive and public lighting within the estate is not being maintained causing health and safety concerns as estates are in darkness; the provisions made in these cases; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4731/13]

Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Jan O'Sullivan): I am chairing the National Co-ordination Committee on Unfinished Housing Developments to oversee implementation of the Report of the Advisory Group on Unfinished Housing Developments, together with the Government's response to the recommendations. The Committee includes representatives from the Irish Banking Federation, local authorities, the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency, NAMA and the construction sector. Real progress is being made with regard to the public safety works required to improve the living conditions of existing residents on some unfinished estates and the Committee is meeting on a regular basis to oversee this effort.

My Department launched the Public Safety Initiative in March 2011, which provided funding to address immediate public safety issues. The types of works that have been approved to date under the PSI include the fencing off of unsecured and hazardous areas, capping of pipes, installation of street lighting and other works to secure sites. Under the PSI, my Department has made allocations totalling some €3.879 million to 21 local authorities from the funding made available and to date a total of €2.515 million has been drawn down by local authorities. The Public Safety Initiative provides funding only in instances where a developer has abandoned the development. However, in circumstances where the developer is merely inactive, the responsibility for the maintenance and resolution of issues surrounding the development are matters which need to be addressed between the developer and the relevant stakeholders, and my Department has no remit in this regard.

Security of the Elderly

141. **Deputy Terence Flanagan** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if security lighting is provided to elderly persons under the senior alert scheme (details supplied) [4788/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): The Seniors Alert Scheme (SAS) provides grant assistance towards the purchase and installation of safety and security equipment to enable older persons, without sufficient means, to continue to live securely in their homes with confidence, independence and peace of mind. Applications are made through the applicant's local community or voluntary group. Since March 2012 funding has been provided exclusively for the purchase and installation of socially monitored alarms and from that time security lighting has not been provided under the scheme.

Water and Sewerage Schemes Funding

142. **Deputy Kevin Humphreys** asked the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he has received the submission from Dublin City Council on the Rathmines and Pembroke sewerage scheme in late November-early December under the Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2013; the funding available for a consultant to prepare a preliminary report for the scheme; if the brief for hiring a consultant is separate to the original submission for funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4791/13]

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Phil Hogan): The Rathmines & Pembroke Sewerage Scheme is included in my Department's Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2013, as a scheme to advance through the planning stage. My Department has received a Brief for a Consultant to prepare a Preliminary Report for the scheme from Dublin City Council and this is currently being examined. The submission also includes a Planning Stage budget for the contract. A decision on the matter will issue to the Council as soon as possible.

Citizenship Applications

143. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when a decision on an application for residency will issue in respect of a person (details supplied). [4561/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I am advised by the Citizenship Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that the application for a certificate of naturalisation received from the person referred to by the Deputy is currently being processed with a view to establishing whether the applicant meets the statutory conditions for the granting of naturalisation, such as good character and lawful residence, and will be submitted to me for decision as expeditiously as possible.

As well as being a significant event in the life of its recipient, the granting of Irish citizenship through naturalisation as provided for in law is also a major step for the State which confers certain rights and entitlements not only within the State but also at European Union level and it is important that appropriate procedures are in place to preserve the integrity of the process.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. This service enables up to date information on such cases to be obtained with-

out the need to seek information by way of the Parliamentary Questions process. The Deputy may consider using the e-mail service except in cases where the response from INIS is, in the Deputy's view, inadequate or too long awaited.

Residency Permits

144. **Deputy Pat Deering** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the criteria used when selecting residency applications for processing as there appears to be inconsistency in the length of time applicants are waiting to be processed. [4562/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): For the purposes of the reply I assume the Deputy is referring to immigrants who want to come here or remain in the State on a long-term basis, i.e. those who are neither tourists or are here for short-term business or other reasons. There are a number of channels by which any such applications are considered. For example, non-EEA nationals wishing to work in the State must apply for a work permit from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, whereas my Department is responsible for processing applications for Long Term Residency, citizenship, family reunification, EU Treaty Rights and permission to remain in the State of all categories of persons where this is required by law.

As the Deputy will appreciate the nature of these categories is such that different processes and criteria are in place which reflect the statutory and other requirements as they arise in the particular circumstances. Inevitably some of the processes will take considerably than others to complete; that of course is the practice in immigration systems the world over. If the Deputy has a particular area in mind it is open to him to submit a further Parliamentary Question on the matter or alternatively he may wish to contact my office and I will arrange for my officials to provide a written response to his query.

Crime Levels

145. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of crimes recorded at Garda stations (details supplied) in the years 2011 and 2012, and the nature of those crimes. [4568/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): 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, and the CSO has established a dedicated unit for this purpose. I have requested the CSO to provide statistics directly to the Deputy.

Joint Policing Committees Establishment

146. **Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if his attention has been drawn to the fact that although there are four councils in County Louth, there are only three JPCs; the reasons for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4576/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): The Garda Síochána Act 2005 provides that JPCs operate under guidelines issued by the Minister for Justice and Equality after consultation with the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. The current guidelines were issued in September, 2008. These guidelines provide considerable flex-

ibility in the operation of committees, including with regard to the use of subcommittees and cooperation between JPCs, including town and county committees. In this regard I am aware of the operating arrangements adopted by the JPCs in County Louth which coincide with the three Garda Districts in the Louth Division.

The Programme for Government makes a commitment to build on existing community policing partnerships and forums to enhance trust between local communities and their Gardaí. In the spirit of that commitment I initiated a review of the operation of JPCs and I have published a discussion document to open the matter for wider consultation. I have made a specific request that each JPC would consider the document at one of its meetings and notify my Department of the outcome of its discussions. I look forward to the outcome of this consultation process and in that context I certainly welcome the Deputy's views on the role and functioning of the JPCs. The Deputy will also appreciate that the review process will need to take into account the broader developments with respect to local government reform which are underway and the implications of this reform for the operation of JPCs.

Property Services Regulation

147. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of letting agents that are likely to be affected by new regulations introduced in relation to the licensing of Letting Agents by Statutory Instrument 181 of 2012; the reason for the new licensing regime; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4578/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): The Property Services Regulatory Authority was established on 3 April 2012 under the Property Services (Regulation) Act 2011 to regulate, control and supervise property service providers (auctioneers/estate agents, letting agents and property management agents) and to establish and enforce standards within the property services industry. A new comprehensive licensing system for property service providers, including letting agents, was established by the Authority with effect from 6 July 2012. The establishment of a Regulatory Authority with responsibility for the regulation of property service providers was originally recommended in the Report of the Auctioneering/Estate Agent Review Group.

The 2011 Act provides for the licensing of all persons engaged in the provision of property services, including persons engaged in the letting of land. The Property Services (Regulation) Act 2011 (Qualifications) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 181 of 2012), which were made by the Property Services Regulatory Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Act, provide for the qualifications which such persons must hold to qualify for a licence to provide property services. I am advised by the Property Services Regulatory Authority that to date some 4,387 persons have applied for a licence in respect of the letting of land, either as a single property service or as part of a wider range of property services (some property service providers will have applied to be licensed to carry out more than one specific property service).

Garda Transport Provision

148. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the current breakdown of Garda cars by station and district in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4583/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): Decisions in relation to the provision and deployment of Garda transport are matters for the Garda Commissioner. Re-

sponsibility for the efficient deployment of all official Garda vehicles in each Division is assigned to the Divisional Officer, who may allocate vehicles between Stations as required by operational circumstances. The Deputy will appreciate that a degree of flexibility in allocating and re-allocating vehicles among stations, so as to best match the allocation of resources with policing priorities, is essential to the efficient management of the Garda fleet. As a consequence it is not practicable to provide a breakdown of Garda vehicles by individual station. However, I am informed by the Garda authorities that there are currently 55 patrol cars/vans allocated to the Donegal Division and a breakdown by District is provided in the following table:

Garda District	No. of Patrol Cars/vans
Ballyshannon	13
Buncrana	11
Glenties	7
Letterkenny	17
Milford	7

Citizenship Applications

149. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of cases currently awaiting decision in his Department based on the Zambrano judgment; the criteria being used to decide on cases under the Zambrano judgment; and if he will detail the level of discretion used as part of this process. [4628/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): As of 23rd January, 2013, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service had 784 cases on hands where the applicants were seeking a right of residency in the State, accompanied by a right to work, based on the principles of the European Court of Justice Judgment in the Zambrano case. Of these, 416 cases cannot be progressed further until the documentation requested from the relevant applicants has been received while the remaining 368 cases are made up of cases which are at various stages of processing and those cases which have just recently been received and, as such, no detailed examination of the documentation submitted has yet taken place.

Given the facts of the Zambrano case, the criteria to be met in each individual case are that each applicant parent must be a third country national who is residing in the State with their Irish born minor citizen child or children, they must be playing a significant role in the upbringing of their Irish born minor citizen child or children and the applicant parent's immigration circumstances must be such that if a decision was taken to refuse him or her a right of residency, the Irish born minor citizen child or children would be at risk of being expelled from the State and, by extension, the EU and, as such, they would not be able to enjoy the substance of their rights as an Irish and EU citizen.

Decisions in Zambrano type cases are based on the provisions of national legislation and outside of the criteria referred to above, discretion is applied as necessary on a case by case basis including cases where serious or persistent criminality is involved. Following the Zambrano Judgment, I used my discretion to direct my Officials to urgently examine all cases before the courts involving third country national parents of Irish born minor citizen children to see where such cases could be settled based on the principles of the Zambrano Judgment, and without waiting for the High Court to make rulings in each individual case. This approach alone has led to 134 cases being taken off the High Court's Asylum List which provided a substantial dividend for the Court in terms of reducing its workload and also brought legal certainty to the Irish born minor citizen children and the family units involved.

Citizenship Applications

150. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the position regarding naturalisation in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Longford who has lived here for the past 12 years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4629/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) that an application for a certificate of naturalisation was received from the person referred to by the Deputy in October, 2010. The application is at an advanced stage of processing and the applicant will be informed of my decision in due course.

As well as being a significant event in the life of its recipient, the granting of Irish citizenship through naturalisation as provided for in law is also a major step for the State which confers certain rights and entitlements not only within the State but also at European Union level and it is important that appropriate procedures are in place to preserve the integrity of the process.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. This service enables up to date information on such cases to be obtained without the need to seek information by way of the Parliamentary Questions process. The Deputy may consider using the e-mail service except in cases where the response from INIS is, in the Deputy's view, inadequate or too long awaited.

Work Permit Applications

151. **Deputy John Paul Phelan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his plans to alter the existing time limits on the designation of de facto relationships for the purposes of granting working visas for non-EEA citizens, whereby the current two year threshold applies a high burden on those couples wishing to reside and work here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4641/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): Before being granted immigration permission to enter the workforce, persons in a "de facto" relationship must be able to satisfy the immigration authorities that the partnership is genuine and durable and that the partners are residing, or intending to reside, as a family unit in the State. In the case of a "de facto" relationship between a non EEA national and an Irish/EEA national, this is demonstrated by producing, for example, evidence of the finances of both parties, tenancy agreements, utility bills and so on covering a two year period. This is a reasonable request of anyone intending to enter/remain and work in the State based on these circumstances and as such I have no plan to make any changes to the current system.

Proposed Legislation

152. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he has made provision to recognise the role of the legal executive within the parameters of the Legal Services Bill; if he engaged with representatives of legal executives as part of the preparation of the Bill; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4659/13]

154. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will provide an update on the position and rights of legal executives, particularly in respect of the Legal

Services Bill; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4670/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I propose to take Questions Nos. 152 and 154 together.

The Legal Services Regulation Bill 2011 has completed Second Stage in the Dáil and is awaiting Committee Stage. The Bill does not make any provision in relation to the role or status of “legal executives” nor is any such provision envisaged. It is clear from the correspondence I have received from the Irish Institute of Legal Executives Ltd that the scope of their proposals to confer legal status and a whole range of functions on such a category of persons is extensive and goes beyond those measures to be introduced under the Legal Services Regulation Bill.

It is evident that the proposals being made by the Irish Institute of Legal Executives Ltd, on behalf of its members, are far-reaching from the fact that they relate *inter alia* to “a right of audience in the District and Circuit Courts, before tribunals and, subject to review, subsequently in all courts”, and to the eligibility of members for quasi-judicial and judicial appointments (e.g as District Court judges or members of Tribunals). These proposals also draw heavily from the regulatory and practise models of England and Wales which do not always correspond to those of our jurisdiction nor to those set out under current Government policy in the Legal Services Regulation Bill 2011.

While recognising that there may be additional benefits and efficiencies to be found for consumers and for the legal services sector in a more developed role for “legal executives”, the far-reaching proposals being made on their behalf at this time lie beyond the scope of the Legal Services Regulation Bill impinging, as they do, on aspects of the courts and the judiciary. Such matters will, therefore, need to be considered separately on their own merits, while others may come to be considered in due course by the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority.

Visa Applications

153. **Deputy Tom Fleming** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will examine a spousal visa application in respect of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4667/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): I wish to inform the Deputy that a decision has issued in respect of the visa application referred to and the applicant has been advised of same. Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be directed to INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. This service enables up to date information on such cases to be obtained without the need to seek information by way of the Parliamentary Questions process. The Deputy may consider using the e-mail service except in cases where the response from INIS is, in the Deputy’s view, inadequate or too long awaited.

Question No. 154 answered with Question No. 152.

Immigration Policy

155. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if he will consider altering the criteria for non-EEA citizens to join the workforce here with regard to considering work permits in the de facto visa status. [4694/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): Before being granted immigration permission to enter the workforce, persons in a “de facto” relationship must be able to satisfy the immigration authorities that the partnership is genuine and durable and that the partners are residing, or intending to reside, as a family unit in the State. The required duration of the relationship is two years in the case of a person who is the partner of an Irish/EEA national and four years where the partners are both non EEA nationals. A de-facto partner of an Irish citizen or of an EU national who is exercising rights of free movement and who meets the eligibility criteria as to duration of relationship receives an immigration permission that allows them to work without requiring an employment permit.

Where both parties are non-EEA nationals the immigration permission granted to the partner of the person already lawfully in the State, is that of dependent with an immigration stamp 3. This status does not exempt them from the requirement to hold an employment permit but they would be able to obtain one if they meet the conditions set out by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. There is a balance to be struck between facilitating the de facto family to live together while also ensuring that immigration of this nature is not used as a means of circumventing immigration law requirements, or labour market law and public policy in this area.

Asylum Applications

156. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the number of persons refused entry at Dublin Airport and Dublin Port for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4772/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): In each of the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, the number of non-nationals refused permission to enter the State at Dublin Airport was 2,017, 1,981 and 1,690, respectively. Of those refused permission to enter in the years in question, 259, 206 and 135 were subsequently permitted to enter the State having made an application pursuant to the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended). At Dublin Port, a total of 135, 32 and 44 non-nationals were refused permission to enter the State in the years 2010, 2011 and 2012. Of these, 4, 1 and 3 respectively were subsequently allowed to enter the State having made an asylum application.

I might add that in all cases, removals from the State, whether in respect of those who are removed on arrival at ports of entry or those already in the State, are conducted in accordance with the law with removals at the Port of Entry being, essentially, an operational matter for the Garda National Immigration Bureau. The removal of illegal immigrants from the State is a necessary feature of the enforcement of immigration legislation with the purpose of upholding the integrity of the immigration system. In enforcing the law in this respect, Ireland is no different from other countries who also remove individuals who have no lawful right to remain within their territory.

Proposed Legislation

157. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his plans to progress the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill; if this will substantially simplify and streamline the existing arrangements; if the reorganisation of the protection application processing framework will remove the current multi-layered processes and provide applicants with a final decision on their application in a more straightforward and timely fashion; the date on

which this system will be implemented; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4819/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): Work on the details of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2010 is ongoing at my Department pursuant to current Government policy which is committed, under the Programme for National Recovery, to “introduce comprehensive reforms of the immigration, residency and asylum systems, which will include a statutory appeals system and set out rights and obligations in a transparent way”. The Bill provides, *inter alia*, for the introduction of a single application procedure for the investigation of all grounds for protection and any other grounds presented by applicants seeking to remain in the State. This change of the processing framework will remove the current multi-layered and sequential processes associated with the existing system.

As I have outlined previously to the Joint Committee on Justice, Equality and Defence, several hundred amendments to the Bill are anticipated, the majority of a technical nature. On that occasion, I also expressed the considered view that instead of engaging in an extremely cumbersome process of tabling hundreds of amendments to the 2010 Bill it would be much more efficient to publish a new and enhanced text. Such an approach can incorporate the many anticipated amendments while addressing key outstanding issues, several of which have been of concern to Members, including that of a streamlined, single application procedure. This proposition was broadly welcomed by the Joint Committee. Work on the Bill continues, therefore, on that basis, including in cooperation with the Offices of Parliamentary Counsel and of the Attorney General while also taking account of any relevant rulings by the Courts. It remains my objective under this new approach, and mindful of our having to deal with the competing legislative demands of our EU/IMF/ECB Programme commitments, to be in a position to bring a revised Bill to Government for approval and publication later this year.

Asylum Applications

158. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his views on whether the time taken to process an application in respect of a person (details supplied) is acceptable; if his attention has been drawn to the academic achievements of this applicant and the support to them to undertake a PhD programme should their application be approved; if he will reconsider the application; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4820/13]

Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Alan Shatter): The person concerned lodged an application for asylum at the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner on 19th December, 2007. Following investigation by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, it was established that the person concerned had previously lodged an application for asylum in Italy, on 26th March, 2003. Arising from his previous asylum history in Italy, and in accordance with the provisions of the Dublin II Regulations, a determination was made that the person concerned should be transferred to Italy for the purposes of having his asylum application examined there. Consequently, a Transfer Order was made in respect of the person concerned. This Order was formally served on the person concerned, by letter dated 10th March, 2008, which placed a legal obligation on him to ‘present’ himself at the Offices of the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), on Thursday 13th March, 2008, to make arrangements for his formal transfer to Italy. The person concerned failed to ‘present’ on this occasion and was therefore classified as having ‘evaded’ his transfer. This position continued to obtain with the consequence that the Transfer Order eventually expired and Ireland then became responsible for examining the asylum claim.

The asylum claim of the person concerned was examined by the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and, on appeal, by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, both of whom con-

cluded that the person concerned did not meet the criteria for recognition as a refugee. Arising from the formal refusal of his asylum claim, and in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999 (as amended), the person concerned was notified, by letter dated 14th September, 2010, that the then 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. He was also notified of his entitlement to apply for Subsidiary Protection in accordance with the provisions of the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006.

The person concerned submitted an application for Subsidiary Protection. 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. At that point, all representations submitted by and on behalf of the person concerned, including the information included with the Deputy's Question, will be considered before a final decision is made. 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 will appreciate that issues relating to educational supports are the responsibility of the Minister for Education and Skills and the agencies operating under the aegis of his Department. I, as Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, have no function in such matters.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to the INIS by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. This service enables up to date information on such cases to be obtained without the need to seek information by way of the Parliamentary Questions process. The Deputy may consider using the e-mail service except in cases where the response from the INIS is, in the Deputy's view, inadequate or too long awaited.

Army Barracks Closures

159. **Deputy Nicky McFadden** asked the Minister for Defence if plans are being made for an alternative use of Columb Barracks Mullingar, County Westmeath; if he is in a position to outline those plans; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4617/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): As with previous rounds of consolidation under the Defence Forces modernisation programme, barracks once vacated are being disposed of with the proceeds being used to fund the upgrading of Defence Forces equipment and infrastructure. Since the announcement of the Government decision on barrack closures my Department has written to each Government Department and various agencies and local authorities seeking expressions of interest in acquiring any of the properties including Columb Barracks to benefit the local community as a whole but with particular emphasis on job creation measures. Whilst some discussion has taken place in relation to Mullingar Barracks no substantial progress has been made towards achieving a sale to date. I would of course be happy to discuss with any interested group proposals they may have for the purchase and development of the site for the benefit of the local community.

160. **Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy** asked the Minister for Defence the objectives of the Army Equitation School; the annual cost of the Army Equitation School to the taxpayer; the benefits that accrue to the taxpayer; the earnings and prize moneys they receive and where this money goes; if the Army purchased a new horse lorry recently and the cost of same; the projected costs of the Army Equitation School for 2013; the sustainability of the school in the current economic environment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4783/13]

Minister for Defence (Deputy Alan Shatter): The mission of the Army Equitation School is to promote the Irish horse abroad through participation in international competitions. The Equitation School has discharged this task with considerable distinction down through the years and, through its participation and numerous successes in equitation events at home and abroad, it has successfully promoted the qualities of the Irish horse. Army riders competing on Irish bred horses provide an instantly recognisable symbol of Ireland at prestigious international events.

In addition to its competition activity, the Equitation School continues to support the Irish horse industry and it encourages breeders and producers, who may have horses suitable for top-level competition, to have them assessed by the School with a view to their purchase or lease. The annual running cost of the Army Equitation School in 2012 (excluding salaries) was €908,478. Salaries accounted for a further €1.35 million approximately. The allocation to run the Equitation School (excluding salaries) has been reduced to €860,000 in 2013. A new horse transport vehicle was recently purchased for the Equitation School at a once-off cost of €213,359 (inclusive of VAT).

The total prize money won by the Equitation School at national and international events in 2012 amounted to €73,835. Under agreed arrangements, fifty percent of the prize money won is awarded to participating Army Riders. I believe that the Army Equitation School is an important and emblematic feature of the Defence Forces and that it plays an important role in the promotion of Irish horses and the Irish horse industry.

Agri-Environment Options Scheme Payments

161. **Deputy Patrick O'Donovan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when an agri environment option scheme payment for the two years that are outstanding will be paid in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Limerick; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4569/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named was approved for participation in the 2011 Agri-Environment Options Scheme with effect from the 1 September 2011. Under the EU Regulations governing the Scheme and other area-based payment schemes, a comprehensive administrative check, including cross-checks with the Land Parcel Identification System, must be completed before any payment can issue. The application was also selected for a Cross Compliance inspection which resulted in a penalty of 5% being imposed. Officials in my Department are finalising the application of the person named with the intention of issuing the outstanding 2011 payment as soon as possible. Following the issue of the 2011 payment the application of the person named will roll forward to 2012.

Agri-Environment Options Scheme Applications

162. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding an agri environment options scheme 2012 application in respect of a person

(details supplied) in County Mayo. [4584/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named was approved for participation in the 2011 Agri-Environment Options Scheme with effect from the 1 September 2011. Under the EU Regulations governing the Scheme and other area-based payment schemes, a comprehensive administrative check, including cross-checks with the Land Parcel Identification System, must be completed before any payment can issue. During these checks issues were identified in relation to the claimed areas on the Species Rich Grassland and Traditional Hay Meadow actions. The first instalment payment of 75% amounting to €999.99 issued in respect of 2011 on 7 December 2012. Officials in my Department are finalising the application of the person named with the intention of issuing the outstanding 2011 payment as soon as possible. Following the issue of the 2011 payment the application of the person named will roll forward to 2012.

Suckler Welfare Scheme Applications

163. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding an application for the suckler welfare scheme in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4587/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named registered 16 animals for the 2010 Suckler Welfare Scheme. According to the information submitted, the animals were weaned on the 25 October 2010 and 27 October 2010. Under the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme, for herds of more than ten cows, animals must be weaned in at least two groups with an interval of at least five days between the removal of each group. As these animals were not weaned in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme, they are not eligible for payment. The applicant was advised of the right to seek a review of this decision, and while correspondence was received in relation to other queries, a review has not been sought. If the person named now wishes to seek a review, he should write to the Review Officer, Suckler Welfare Scheme, Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Government Offices, Portlaoise, Co. Laois outlining the details of their case.

Agri-Environment Options Scheme Payments

164. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when payment under the agri-environment options scheme for 2012 will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Mayo; the reasons for the delay in issuing this payment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4606/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named was approved for participation in the Agri-Environment Options Scheme with effect from the 1st November 2010 and full payments totalling €800.35 and €4,802.45 issued in respect of 2010 and 2011 respectively. Under the EU Regulations governing the Scheme and other area-based payment schemes, a comprehensive administrative check, including cross-checks with the Land Parcel Identification System, must be completed before any payment can issue. During these checks for 2012 an issue was discovered in relation to the claimed areas on the Natura Owned action. Officials in my Department are currently investigating this issue with the intention of finalising the application of the person named and issuing payment as soon as possible.

Disadvantaged Areas Scheme Payments

165. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine further to Parliamentary Question No. 392 of 11 December 2012, when payment of single farm headage will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4609/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Further to the Deputy's previous Question on behalf of the person named, to which I replied on 11 December 2012, the issues relating to two of the land parcels declared were resolved following direct contact with the person named, thereby allowing processing of the 2012 Single Payment application, with payment issuing on 14 December 2012. With regard to the 2012 Disadvantaged Areas Scheme application, as processing has recently been finalised, payment will shortly issue to the nominated bank account. Payment had not issued previously as the holding concerned was only recently confirmed as having satisfied the scheme minimum stocking density requirements. An exercise to take account of December 2012 data, which was recently completed, established the definitive position of the holding.

Single Payment Scheme Appeals

166. **Deputy Noel Harrington** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the position regarding an appeal on penalties issued on a single farm payment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4623/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): In order to comply with EU requirements, the applicant was one of a number selected for inspection. This inspection resulted in findings of an over-declaration in area of between 3% and 20% under the Single Payment Scheme which, under the terms and conditions of the Scheme, resulted in reduced payment. The applicant was notified by letter dated 1st November of this outcome and the reasons for it. An appeal has been received and it is being examined. The applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Fisheries Protection

167. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when mixed stock fishing will be re-opened in Area VIa; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4625/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Council Regulation (EC) No 1288/2009 of 27 November 2009 established transitional technical measures for the period 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011. Subsequent measures were established by Regulation (EU) No 579/2011 of 8 June 2011 for the period 1 July, 2011 to 31 December 2012. In Area VIa, an effort regime, restricting the number of days at sea each year in the area is in place to protect cod. The effort levels available for 2013 were rolled over from 2012 and a reduction was not applied. Vessels must have access to fishing effort under the Cod Recovery Plan which is based on historic track record. A prohibition on the use of gillnets in the eastern part of Area VIa under the transitional technical measures Regulation ceased to have legal effect from the end of December 2012.

The Transitional Technical Measures Regulations amended Council Regulation (EC) No

850/98 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles or marine organisms and provided for the continuation of certain technical measures established in Council Regulation (EC) No 43/2009 of 16 January 2009. A new technical conservation measures framework is awaited in the light of the ongoing reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). In the interim an extension of the application of the transitional technical measures is necessary.

In October 2012 following triologies on the issue facilitated by the Cyprus Presidency, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers agreed a new extension to the transitional technical measures. The measures envisaged enable restricted fishing with gillnets including providing for a lesser spotted dogfish fishery, which was a specific request of Ireland. The measures also allow for a gill net fishery south of 59 degrees north. The Parliament has yet to formally ratify the new regulation on transitional technical measures by means of a vote. The measures as outlined in Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 now take precedence in terms of technical conservation measures pending the adoption of the transitional technical measures.

Fisheries Protection

168. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when cray and monk fishing will be permitted in Area VIa; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4626/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): Council Regulation (EC) No 1288/2009 of 27 November 2009 established transitional technical measures for the period 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011. Subsequent measures were established by Regulation (EU) No 579/2011 of 8 June 2011 for the period 1 July, 2011 to 31 December 2012. In Area VIa, an effort regime, restricting the number of days at sea each year in the area is in place to protect cod. The effort levels available for 2013 were rolled over from 2012 and a reduction was not applied.

The monkfish fishery is subject to a monthly quota limit set following advice from the Whitefish Quota Management Advisory Committee where the industry representatives provide advice to the Minister. In addition, vessels must have access to fishing effort under the Cod Recovery Plan which is based on historic track record. In relation to crayfish fished by means of gillnet, this fishery is also subject to fishing effort restrictions and available effort is severely limited because there is only very limited track record of gill net fishing in Area VIa. A prohibition on the use of gillnets in the eastern part of Area VIa under the transitional technical measures Regulation ceased to have legal effect from the end of December 2012.

The Transitional Technical Measures Regulations amended Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles or marine organisms and provided for the continuation of certain technical measures established in Council Regulation (EC) No 43/2009 of 16 January 2009. A new technical conservation measures framework is awaited in the light of the ongoing reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). In the interim an extension of the application of the transitional technical measures is necessary.

In October 2012 following triologies on the issue facilitated by the Cyprus Presidency, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers agreed a new extension to the transitional technical measures. The measures envisaged enable restricted fishing with gillnets including providing for a lesser spotted dogfish fishery, which was a specific request of Ireland. The measures also allow for a gill net fishery south of 59 degrees north. The Parliament has yet to

formally ratify the new regulation on transitional technical measures by means of a vote. The measures as outlined in Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 now take precedence in terms of technical conservation measures pending the adoption of the transitional technical measures.

Suckler Welfare Scheme Payments

169. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a person (details supplied) in County Roscommon will receive payment under the suckler cow welfare scheme; the reason for the delay in same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4658/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named registered one animal in his herd for each year of the Scheme. Payment has already issued in respect of the animals born in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Payment will issue in the near future in respect of the animal born in 2011. The calf born in 2012 was castrated within the four week period before weaning and as this contravenes the Terms and Conditions of this scheme, this animal is ineligible for payment.

Disadvantaged Areas Scheme Appeals

170. **Deputy Pat Breen** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a decision on a disadvantaged area scheme appeal will issue to a person (details supplied) in County Clare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4692/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): The person named is one of a number of applicants under the 2012 Disadvantaged Areas Scheme, whose cases were impacted by the requirement of a minimum stocking density of 0.3 livestock units per forage hectare and who applied for and were refused derogation in this regard. The person named subsequently availed of the option to appeal to the independently chaired DAS Appeals Committee. That Committee adjudicated on this appeal and the person named was notified of the unsuccessful outcome, in writing, on 13 December 2012.

Control of Dogs

171. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in view of the recent attack on, and mauling of, a family pet by hounds of a County Carlow based hunt and in view of the clear and present danger posed by hunting dogs to domestic animals, livestock, pets and so on, if he will ban all hunting of wild animals with packs of dogs in the countryside. [4725/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): I understand that this matter is currently being investigated by An Garda Síochána under the Control of Dogs Act 1986. In regard to the hunting of animals generally, this is a separate and distinct matter from the present case. The Animal Health and Welfare Bill makes provision for lawful hunting unless a animal is released in a injured, mutilated or exhausted condition.

Fish Farming

172. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding toxins found in mussels; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4790/13]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Simon Coveney): A comprehensive framework exists to deal with seafood safety in Ireland. The Marine Institute is responsible for monitoring shellfish for the presence of naturally occurring phytoplankton toxins. Toxicity can occur at any time during the year and the periods of closure can vary considerably from year-to-year. The monitoring programme is designed to detect toxicity in shellfish growing areas before harvesting, thereby providing the necessary information to restrict the placement of toxic shellfish on the market. Regulatory controls, which are enforced by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, exist to support these restrictions.

Cromane Bay has been on a closed biotoxin status on an almost continuous basis since July 2012 for azaspiracid toxins, with levels of azaspiracids detected occasionally up to 9 times the regulatory limit. Azaspiracid shellfish poisoning can cause diarrhoea, nausea, headaches and chills. I am advised that the azaspiracid toxicity event is expected to pass in the near future. I am aware of the difficulties that these naturally occurring toxicity events cause for shellfish fishermen and aquaculture operators. I understand that mussel farmers in Cromane have been unable to bring their product to market because of this toxicity event, but the State controls are there to protect public health and indeed the international reputation of Irish seafood thereby ensuring the future of this important sector.

While there are no specific funds available for operators affected by these natural occurring events, which are an inevitable occasional feature of operating aquaculture farms in Irish coastal waters, a range of financial support measures co-funded by the European Fisheries Fund are available to the seafood sector through the Seafood Development Operational Programme 2007-2013.

Child Care Services Inquiry

173. **Deputy Billy Timmins** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the position regarding cuts of Health Service Executive funding to the posts of Childminder Advisory Officer in the Wicklow constituency (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4715/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): The 1991 Child-care Act provided for regulation of the pre-school sector. However, there was a recognition at the time of the difficulties of regulating the childminding sector, given its scale and the strong view that women should not be subject to regulation if they minded a small number of additional children. As a result, the majority of childminders are exempt from the Regulations currently in place.

The 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare set out a plan for integrating the various strands of child care and education, including childminding. It made a number of recommendations aimed at overcoming the barriers preventing childminders from moving into the formal economy, most of which have been implemented. These included the introduction of a system for voluntary notification of childminders, and the introduction of Childcare Services Relief, which allows a voluntarily-notified childminder to mind up to three children without paying tax on the earnings and to make a PRSI contribution.

In 2002, the Health Service Executive (HSE) agreed to fund a Childminding Advisory Of-

ficer post in each county, who would work with the 33 City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) funded under the Childcare Programme, implemented by the then Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The role included notifying childminders of training opportunities, providing networking opportunities and supporting the voluntary notification system which was being developed by the CCCs. While Childminding Advisory Officers were established in most county areas, this was not always the case and they were not always located with the local CCC. Despite their presence and the additional supports including training, a small capital grant scheme and the introduction of a tax relief for childminding in 2006, the increase in the number of voluntarily-notified childminders since 2004, when the number was 500, has been relatively small and levelled off at 1,250.

In recent years, HSE funding for the Childminding Advisory Officer posts has gradually decreased, and is no longer in place in some areas. I understand that this is due to pressure on HSE resources and the need to prioritise funding to other areas of front-line services. While this is not a welcome development, I would point to the fact that the CCCs are now well-established and effective bodies at local level, and that supporting the childminding sector is an integral part of their work. As a result, childminders continue to have access to support, training and advice.

My Department provides annual funding to each CCC to enable them to support and advise all childcare providers at local level. In 2012, the total amount allocated to the CCCs was €11.3m. In addition, in 2012 my Department provided €220,000 to the CCCs for Childminding Development Grants. My Department also provides annual funding, totalling €2.85m in 2012, to seven National Voluntary Childcare Organisations to provide support at a local level to their members. This included €358,000 for Childminding Ireland, the representative body for childminders.

In 2007, the then Office of the Minister for Children published National Guidelines for Childminders which had been developed by its National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee. The Guidelines provide information to childminders on whether they are subject to the Child Care Regulations, the voluntary notification system, the tax relief for childminders, as well as guidance on good practice and other useful information on the role of the childminder in the provision of childcare services.

My Department has commenced work on Ireland's first Early Years Strategy. I have received Government approval for the approach I am taking in developing this Strategy as an innovative and dynamic blueprint for the future development of our Early Years sector, aimed at providing a coherent approach to seeking to improve the lives of children from birth to the age of six. One of the policy issues which I have identified for consideration in the preparation of the Early Years Strategy is the development of the childminding sector as a fully-integrated component of early childhood care and education, in particular for the under-one age group.

Under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006, services providing care for children who have not yet commenced primary school are required to notify their service to the Pre-School Inspectorate of the HSE, and are subject to inspection and report by the Inspectorate on a regular basis. Services covered by the Regulations include full-time, part-time and sessional services, as well as childminders taking care of more than three pre-school children from different families in the childminder's home.

Childminders taking care of not more than three pre-school children from different families are not covered by the Regulations. Decisions on how best to regulate and support the childminding sector will continue to form part of the ongoing work on the Early Years Strategy.

Foreign Adoptions

174. **Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the date that has been set for Russian authorities to visit Dublin to conduct bilateral discussions; and if she will confirm the persons that will be attending these talks on behalf of the Adoption Authority of Ireland and from her Department. [4566/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): As Russia has not ratified the Hague Convention future adoptions from Russia, beyond those provided for under the transitional arrangements, may only be possible under a bilateral agreement. The negotiation of bilateral agreements on intercountry adoption with states who have not ratified the Hague Convention is governed by Section 73 of the Adoption Act 2010.

It is the role of the Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI) to make an assessment of whether the intercountry adoption legislation and practices in a non-contracting state, in this case Russia, are in compliance with both Irish legislation and the principles of the Hague Convention. As part of this assessment the Adoption Authority has reviewed a draft bilateral agreement presented to it during previous discussions with its Russian counterparts and has provided me with an initial assessment in this regard. I have asked the Adoption Authority to have further exploratory talks with the Russian authorities focussing on areas of concern in order that the Authority may progress its assessment of the situation and provide a definitive recommendation to me on the feasibility of formally opening discussion with the Russian Federation under Section 73 of the Adoption Act 2010.

The Russian authorities indicated that they are in a position to meet the AAI in the first quarter of this year. The Adoption Authority, through the Irish Embassy in Moscow, have confirmed their availability for this meeting. A response from the Russian authorities to the Adoption Authority is awaited. The issue of official attendance at the proposed meeting will be dealt with when the meeting has been scheduled.

Adoption Legislation

175. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the position regarding changes in the adoption law in relation to declaration extensions (details supplied); the measures she will take to address this situation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [4610/13]

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Frances Fitzgerald): I am aware of concerns raised by prospective adoptive parents whose declarations for eligibility and suitability to adopt will expire on 31 October 2013. The Adoption Act 2010 requires that these applicants must apply to the HSE under Section 37 of the Adoption Act 2010 for assessment and issuance of a declaration of eligibility and suitability to adopt.

I have asked the AAI to advise me on what system improvements can be put in place to facilitate an appropriate and timely assessment process for applicants whose declarations of eligibility and suitability will expire. I have arranged for officials from my Department, together with officials from the HSE and AAI, to meet shortly to discuss the nature of the assessment process to be undertaken in these cases and the timescale for carrying out such assessments. I am willing to consider legislative amendments if required. In the meantime the AAI have advised me that the AAI and HSE will ensure that any applicant with a referral pending will be prioritised for assessment and issuance of a declaration of eligibility and suitability.

Hospital Waiting Lists

176. **Deputy Barry Cowen** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Westmeath may expect an outpatient appointment at the Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore. [4575/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Improving access to outpatient services is a key priority for the Government. Building on work already undertaken by the HSE, the NTPF has now taken over the reporting of outpatient waiting time data. The collation and analysis of outpatient waiting time data in a standardised format will reveal the distribution of long waiters across all hospitals. In the first instance, this will allow the SDU and NTPF to target their resources towards those patients who are waiting longest and ensure that they are seen and assessed. A maximum waiting time target has now been set of 12 months for a first time outpatient appointment by 30 November 2013.

In parallel with reducing the numbers of longest waiters, the SDU will also work with the HSE Clinical Programmes to reform the structure, organisation and delivery of outpatient services to ensure that the right patient is seen and assessed by the right health professional at the right time. Should the patient's general practitioner consider that the patient's condition warrants an earlier appointment, he/she would be in the best position to take the matter up with the consultant and hospital involved. In relation to the specific query raised by the Deputy, as this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Health Services Staff Issues

177. **Deputy Billy Kelleher** asked the Minister for Health the number of doctors or consultants who are on the payroll of the Health Service Executive who are currently suspended; the rate of pay they are receiving while on suspension; the length of time each of them is out on suspension; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4586/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The Health Service Executive has responsibility for matters relating to the suspension of any of its employees. I have asked the Executive to collect the information sought by the Deputy and to reply to him directly.

Disabled Drivers Grants

178. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Health if the full review of all motorised transport grant applications in County Donegal has been completed as recommended by the Ombudsman; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4624/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): The Ombudsman recommended that the Department should revise the definition of disability in the circular governing the Motorised Transport Grant having regard to the broad definition of disability set out in the Equal Status Acts. In addition she requested, among other things, the HSE to review applications previously made in Donegal having regard to the broad definition of disability in the Equal Status Acts. This recommendation is dependent on the Department amending the eligibility criteria for the Motorised Transport Grant to include a broad definition of disability as outlined in the Equal Status Acts.

The Minister is not in a position to amend the circular relating to the Motorised Transport Grant as recommended in the Ombudsman's report. Expansion of the definition of disability

would impose serious financial constraints on the Department, the HSE and the State generally. The recommendations, if implemented as outlined, would create liabilities that the State could not afford. In this context the HSE cannot review other applications in Donegal as the eligibility criteria for the grant has not changed. However, the Minister does accept that significant issues have been raised by the Ombudsman in relation to the Motorised Transport Grant and is considering them carefully.

Health Services Staff Issues

179. **Deputy James Bannon** asked the Minister for Health if he will adjust the proposal in respect of the employment of 1,000 newly qualified nurses and midwives at 80% of the first point of the staff nurse salary scale, which means in essence that they will incur a cut of €11,470 in just three years and reapply the salary scale as heretofore to the positions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4631/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Under the Initiative, graduate nurses and midwives will be paid 80% of the first point of the Staff Nurse Scale. They will also qualify for premium payments and allowances on a pro rata basis, bringing expected average pay to over €25,000 per year, excluding overtime. The employment of graduates in a specific graduate scheme is a widespread practice in other sectors of the economy. The salary level was set having regard to the norms for such programmes and the need to achieve significant savings on nurse agency and overtime expenditure. The scheme was agreed on the basis that significant savings would arise.

The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform has also agreed that participants in this initiative will not be counted for the purposes of the Health Sector Employment Ceiling. The initiative therefore provides a valuable opportunity for a substantial number of recently-qualified nurses and midwives to work in Ireland at a time when job opportunities in the public service are, regrettably, very limited. The initiative will enable them to gain valuable work experience and development opportunities post-graduation. Given the requirement to achieve reductions in staff numbers in the health sector and to maximise savings, it is not possible at present, other than in very limited circumstances, to offer employment positions.

Health Services Provision

180. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Health the extent to which support services of a medical/psychiatric nature are available in the case of a person (details supplied) in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4632/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): As this is a service matter this question has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Health Reports

181. **Deputy Denis Naughten** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding the implementation of the national emergency medicine programme report published in June 2012; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4638/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The Report of the Emergency Medicine Programme was published in June 2012, following extensive consultation with patients and

frontline staff across the health services. The aim of the Programme is to improve the safety and quality of care and to reduce waiting times for patients in emergency departments. The Programme is a blueprint for the future development of emergency care in Ireland, with new models of care for the treatment of patients, expanding the role of nurses and increasing consultant-provided care. The Report itself is a resource for frontline staff, to allow best practice to be shared and standardised nationally over the coming years. As implementation of the Programme is the responsibility of the Clinical Programmes Directorate and the Special Delivery Unit, I have asked the HSE to reply directly to you in this matter.

Disability Support Services Provision

182. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an impact assessment of the proposed 5% cuts to St. Michael's House and the Prosper Fingal service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4639/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): This Government currently provides funding of over €1.5 billion to the Disability Services Programme through the HSE's National Service Plan for 2013, and is committed to protecting frontline services for people with disabilities to the greatest possible extent. The Minister for Health is working to ensure that protection is afforded to the disability sector, and the Social Care area as a whole. In 2013 the HSE is seeking to maximise the provision of services within available resources and to maintaining a consistent level to that provided in 2012, by providing the following specialist disability services:

- residential services to over 9,000 people with a disability;
- day services to over 22,000 people with intellectual and physical disabilities;
- respite residential support for over 7,500 people with intellectual and physical disabilities;
- 1.68m hours of Personal Assistant / Home Support Hours.

In relation to the specific queries raised by the Deputy, as these are service issues they have been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Symphysiotomy Report

183. **Deputy Gerald Nash** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an update in regard to the status of the Walsh Report; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4643/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): As the Deputy is aware, an independent researcher was commissioned by the Chief Medical Officer in my Department to draft a report in relation to the practice of symphysiotomy in Ireland. The Report was conducted in two stages. The first stage is an independent academic research report, which is based on an analysis of published medical reports and research. The draft report contains information about how frequently symphysiotomy was carried out in Ireland and compares rates with other countries. The researcher experienced unforeseen difficulties in accessing information sources and as a result, submitted the first stage of the report behind schedule in late January 2012. The researcher informed my Department that this was due primarily to the challenges with accessing historical data from a time when records on the procedure were not routinely kept. The second stage in the research process, involved a consultation process on the draft report involving patient groups, health professionals and in particular the women who have undergone symphysiotomy. The

researcher is currently finalising the report based on the consultation and it is also planned to have a peer review process. It is hoped that the report will be published early in 2013.

Hospital Waiting Lists

184. **Deputy Ciarán Lynch** asked the Minister for Health the reason surgical appointments in respect of a person (details supplied) in the County Cork have been cancelled on three occasions at Cork University Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4644/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): With regard to specific complaints in relation to experiences of individuals in our hospitals, there is a formal complaints policy, details of which are on the HSE website, at www.hse.ie/eng/services/ysys/Complaint. In addition, advice and instructions for making complaints about a service or an individual may be found at www.healthcomplaints.ie. In accordance with this procedure, a complaint must be made in the first instance, to the hospital in which the incident causing the complaint occurred. If an individual is not satisfied with the response from the hospital, a review can be sought from the HSE Director of Advocacy and the Ombudsman, whose details are as follows: HSE Director of Advocacy, Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co Kildare, Tel 1890 424 555; Office of the Ombudsman, 18, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2, Tel 1890 223 030; Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie. I have asked the HSE to answer the specific queries you have raised and to reply to you directly.

Hospital Services

185. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health if he will outline the gynaecology services that are currently available in hospitals in County Louth and if there has been any reduction in services over the past year. [4649/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): In relation to the particular query raised by the Deputy, as this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy in this matter.

Health Services Issues

186. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health the level of funding or supports currently being provided to the Dignity for Patients group which is based in Drogheda, County Louth and deals with patients who have been victims of sexual abuse. [4650/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): On-going funding for any service is a matter for the HSE. In this regard, the HSE has had regular meetings with Dignity 4 Patients in 2012 and will continue to meet them in 2013. I have been informed that a grant of €22,500 was paid to Dignity For Patients in 2012 by the HSE and that the same amount will be paid in 2013.

Departmental Contracts

187. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Health if he is considering the use of social clauses in contracts for the construction of primary care centres and the national children's hospital, Dublin; and if he will consider including a quota in the contracts to employ jobseekers

who are long-term unemployed. [4700/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Job creation is a priority for this Government. The matter of social clauses in public contracts is being examined by the Minister Public Expenditure and Reform and his Department.

Social clauses can be used in public procurement in cases where they are targeted at factoring into the procurement process consideration of social issues such as employment opportunities, equal opportunities and social inclusion. In 2010, the European Commission issued guidance that identified a range of social considerations that could be relevant for procurement including promoting employment opportunities for young unemployed or long-term unemployed and promoting compliance with core labour standards. This guidance stressed that when incorporating social considerations into the procurement process one of the key challenges is ensuring compliance with the EU Treaty Principles and the Procurement Directives. However, challenges arise from the need to ensure that: value for money is not adversely affected; additional costs are not placed on domestic suppliers relative to other potential suppliers; and the targeted benefit is capable of being measured and monitored during execution of the contract. The main purpose of the public procurement process is to ensure that goods, services and works are purchased by the State in a manner that is legal, transparent and of high probity, and our key requirement is the achievement of value for money.

I support the deliberations of the Minister Public Expenditure and Reform and his Department. The outcome of these deliberations will, where appropriate, be reflected in construction tenders.

Proposed Legislation

188. **Deputy Anne Ferris** asked the Minister for Health his plans to introduce legislation to govern do not resuscitate orders; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4701/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): From a governance perspective, in the specific case of nursing homes, Regulations and Standards for End-of-Life Care require that the registered provider must have protocols and policies in place in relation to end-of-life care. The registered provider must ensure that there is an individual care plan for each resident and that this is formally reviewed and updated with each resident in accordance with the resident's changing needs and circumstances.

Decisions about do not resuscitate (DNR) orders relate to a complex medical intervention, namely cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Therefore, providing guidance as opposed to specific legislation would represent a better approach to governing the use of DNR orders. Guidelines would allow for greater flexibility to ensure that decisions relating to DNR orders are made on the basis of an individual assessment of each case. With this in mind, the HSE's National Consent Advisory Group has developed a specific policy for DNR orders as part of its National Consent Policy. The HSE's National Director of Quality and Patient Safety has approved the policy and it will be submitted to the senior management team in the coming weeks, after which it will be disseminated for implementation.

Hospital Staff Issues

189. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Health if he will confirm that the EU Working Time Directive, 2008/33/EC, is being implemented in relation to junior doctors in

all hospitals here ; if he will also review the conditions within which junior doctors are currently training and working; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4702/13]

196. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health his views on correspondence regarding junior doctors (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4786/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 189 and 196 together.

S.I. No. 494 of 2004 European Communities (Organisation of Working Time) (Activities of Doctors in Training) Regulations 2004, which transposed the EU Working Time Directive for doctors in training (junior doctors), provides for:

- A maximum 48 hour average working week;
- A 30 minute rest break every 6 hours during period on-site on-call;
- 11 hours rest every 24 hours or equivalent compensatory rest before return to work; and
- 35 hours continuous rest per week or twice a fortnight or 59 hours continuous rest per fortnight.

The 2010 Contract of Employment for junior doctors reflects these provisions. The contract also provides that junior doctors shall not be required to work more than 24 consecutive hours on-site. A related agreement between the HSE and the Irish Medical Organisation provides that the contract is subject to the requirements of the Directive.

The Government is committed to achieving compliance with the European Working Time Directive in respect of junior doctors by 2014 and I have emphasised to the HSE the high priority the Government and I attach to this issue. While there has been a significant reduction in the weekly hours worked by junior doctors in recent years, typically they continue to work approximately 55 hours per week. Further work is therefore required to achieve compliance with the requirements of the Directive.

In January 2012, a detailed plan for the achievement of compliance by junior doctors with the Working Time Directive was submitted to the EU Commission. The plan affirmed Ireland's commitment to achieving compliance with the Directive over a three-year time period. It committed to implementing the measures necessary, including: new work patterns for medical staff, transfer of work undertaken by junior doctors to other grades, and the organisation of hospital services to support compliance. The Health Service Executive's Service Plan for 2013 specifically recognises the need to address the issue as a priority, stating that there will be a particular focus in the acute hospital service on the achievement of compliance with the European Working Time Directive amongst the junior doctor workforce, in line with the Implementation Plan submitted to the Commission. The HSE is currently finalising its National Operational Plan to support the implementation of the National Service Plan 2013. This will specify in greater detail the actions to be taken during the year in relation to EWTD compliance. A key priority for the HSE in 2013 will be a further reduction of average weekly hours worked and also a reduction in the duration of shifts undertaken.

Home Care Packages

190. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Health if he will investigate the homec-

are package for a child (details supplied) in Dublin 9. [4712/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): 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 to the Deputy.

Dental Services Provision

191. **Deputy Derek Keating** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding dental treatment in respect of a person (details supplied) in County Dublin. [4713/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Alex White): Dental services to children up to 16 years are provided by the Public Dental Service of the HSE. The service is targeted at children at key stages in their development. Children are given dental examinations and any follow-up treatment required at these stages. When required, emergency dental treatment is available to all children up to 16 years. The HSE has been asked to examine the specific query raised by the Deputy and to reply to him as soon as possible.

National Children's Hospital Status

192. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide a time line for the various stages in respect of the construction of the new national children's hospital at St. James's Hospital, Dublin; when the facility will be opened to patients; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4727/13]

194. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide the best estimate of the time line for the various stages in respect of the construction of the new national children's hospital at St. James's Hospital, Dublin; when the facility will be opened to patients; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4782/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): I propose to take Questions Nos. 192 and 194 together.

On 6 November last, I announced the Government's decision to develop the new children's hospital at the campus of St James's Hospital in Dublin. The new children's hospital is a key commitment in the Programme for Government and the largest project within the current Capital Plan. This Government regards the building of the hospital as a priority and no effort will be spared in expediting its completion. Following the Government decision on the location, my first priority has been to address the necessary project management structures and governance arrangements to enable the delivery of the capital project as quickly as possible and to the highest quality. The scale, complexity and vital importance of this project means we must get this element right now, and I have therefore given this detailed consideration and intend to bring proposals to Government shortly.

Pending the implementation of revised project management and governance arrangements, work is continuing on the project through the existing mechanisms, including the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board. The terms of office of most members of the Board having expired on 5 December, I have appointed senior representatives from my Department and the HSE as an interim measure aimed at ensuring effective governance and decision-making for the project to ensure that work continues without delay during this transitional phase.

The Dolphin report concluded that the existing plan for the Ambulatory and Urgent Care

Centre in Tallaght would need to be revisited in light of a decision about the location. It is envisaged that there will be an urgent care centre or urgent care centres based on consideration of the geographical distribution of attendances and acuity of the patient. Following the Government's decision to locate the new hospital on the St James's campus, a review is now underway on the location and number of urgent care centres, which is expected to be complete in the coming weeks. Preliminary work in relation to the site and site preparation is ongoing, and immediate next steps will include the termination of existing contracts, following legal advice, followed by new procurement processes which will be fully compliant with statutory periods. In this regard, I welcome the fact that a significant proportion of the work that was done for the project on the Mater site, including the internal configuration and adjacencies, will be transferable to the new site, although clearly a new design for the new site is required.

In regard to the timelines, the estimation of the various stages of the project require to be developed, reviewed and validated and, once established, will be kept under scrutiny with strong and proactive project management. This Government regards the building of the new children's hospital as a key priority and no effort will be spared in expediting its completion.

HSE Properties

193. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health the organisation to which the Health Service Executive has leased and or rented a property (details supplied) in Dublin 11; if the premises is currently occupied; the plans the HSE has for the long-term use of the premises, including its disposal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4780/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Management of healthcare property estate is a service issue. Therefore your question has been referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply.

Question No. 194 answered with Question No. 192.

Hospital Services

195. **Deputy Finian McGrath** asked the Minister for Health the position regarding bilateral cochlear implants in respect of a person (details supplied). [4785/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): I am advised that Beaumont Hospital carried out over ninety cochlear implants in 2012 and that over seven hundred patients are currently under the care of the hospital programme which provides rehabilitation and programming on a recurring basis. In relation to the specific query raised by the Deputy, as this is a service issue it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply.

Question No. 196 answered with Question No. 189.

Mental Health Services Report

197. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health when he will re-establish an independent monitoring group to oversee the implementation of A Vision for Change in view of the recent seven year anniversary of the document, published to help develop mental health

services; the priorities that are in place to ensure the continued development of mental health services away from institutional-style care towards community-centred care; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4792/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Kathleen Lynch): This Government has prioritised the reform of our mental health services in line with *A Vision for Change* and is committed in particular to the delivery of more and better quality care in the community. In this regard, a special allocation of €35m was provided in 2012 primarily to further strengthen Community Mental Health Teams in both adult and children's mental health services, to advance activities in the area of suicide prevention, to initiate the provision of psychological and counselling services in primary care, specifically for people with mental health problems and to facilitate the re-location of mental health service users from institutional care to more independent living arrangements in their communities, in line with *A Vision for Change*. A further additional €35m for mental health was provided in Budget 2013 representing a total of €70m additional revenue available this year to continue to develop and reform our mental health services. Over 880 new mental health professionals will be employed to strengthen these services. I have been assured by the HSE that the recruitment process for the 470 new posts being funded in 2013 will commence immediately and any outstanding posts from the 414 approved in 2012, will also be filled in the near future.

The current priority is to review the Mental Health Act 2001, which is expected to be completed in the coming months, after which we will consider reviewing *A Vision for Change* and establishing independent monitoring arrangements. In the interim, the HSE continues to implement *A Vision for Change*, with the substantial additional funding provided in 2012 and 2013, and reports on this on a monthly basis, through the HSE National Service Plan.

HSE Expenditure

198. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide an analysis of opening balances in the books and records of the Health Service Executive at 1 January 2013, under headings (details supplied). [4794/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): Section 36 (2) of the Health Act, 2004 requires the HSE to prepare Annual Financial Statements (AFS) and to adopt the AFS on or before the 1st day of April in the year following the financial year to which they relate. All accrued liabilities must be disclosed in the AFS. The HSE is also required to prepare an Appropriation Account annually which is derived from the AFS and is audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General. The audited appropriation account is examined by the public accounts committee. The information for the AFS is currently being collated and will be published as soon as possible after its adoption by the Executive.

HSE Expenditure

199. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health the actions the Health Service Executive has taken to prevent the build up of tax arrears by way of delayed payments in organisations and bodies funded by it; if the HSE has written to any organisations or bodies funded by it in relation to the build up of tax arrears; the HSE's estimate of tax arrears due from such organisations or bodies, that is, the amounts other than taxes deducted but not yet due to be remitted; and if there has been any correspondence between the Revenue Commissioners and the HSE in relation to the general problem of tax arrears or in relation to specific bodies or

organisations funded by it. [4795/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): The Health Service Executive funds a number of service providers and bodies for the provision of health and personal social services on its behalf, in accordance with the provisions of Sections 38 and 39 of the Health Act 2004. Before entering into such an arrangement, the HSE determines the maximum amount of funding that it proposes to make available in the financial year under the arrangement and the level of service that it expects to be provided for that funding.

Accountability for the management of these service level agreements is a matter for the HSE to address within the ambit of its Vote (Vote 39). The HSE Annual Report and Financial Statements 2011, which is the latest information available, sets out the range of organisations which were in receipt of funding during that year. Details in relation to any accruals are set out in the annual financial statements of these organisations, which are provided to the HSE as part of the accountability arrangements in place with Section 38 and 39 Agencies.

I have asked the Executive to reply directly to the Deputy in this regard, when the information is available.

National Lottery Funding Applications

200. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Health if funding will be provided to an organisation (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4803/13]

Minister for Health (Deputy James Reilly): My Department administers a National Lottery Discretionary Fund from which once-off grants are paid to community and voluntary organisations, providing a range of health related services. If an organisation wishes to make an application for National Lottery Funding they should send in a formal application. Detailed procedures, along with the application form are set out on the Department's website - www.doh.ie

Rail Network

201. **Deputy John Lyons** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if a contract has been awarded for the upcoming preparatory works and construction works for the Luas BXD project; if the tender or part of the tender will include a social clause to consider those who are currently long-term unemployed for some of the positions under the contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4640/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. Following the establishment of the National Transport Authority (NTA) in December 2009, the implementation and development of infrastructure projects in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), such as the proposed Luas Cross City Line, comes under the remit of the NTA. Noting this I have referred the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

Rural Transport Services Provision

202. **Deputy Brendan Griffin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if the rural transport programme will be continued; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[4662/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Alan Kelly): With regard to the Deputy's question on whether the Rural Transport Programme (RTP) will be continued, I would like to assure the Deputy that since being given responsibility for Public and Commuter Transport, I have been actively working towards delivering on the commitment in the Programme for Government "to maintain and extend the Rural Transport Programme with other local transport services as much as practicable." Recognising its importance, €9.133 million has been allocated to the RTP in 2013 which represents only a small decrease on the 2012 allocation of €9.77 million at a very difficult time economically.

On foot of proposals from me, new arrangements were approved by Government for the development and implementation of integrated local and rural transport. Since 1 April 2012 the National Transport Authority (NTA) has been given national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport including the RTP. This has the effect of placing all State funded local and rural transport services in a broader transport context. I also established a high level committee of key stakeholders, the National Integrated Rural Transport Committee, chaired by the NTA, to oversee a more focussed and coherent approach to transport integration with a view to eliminating service duplication, better targeting of services at those with greatest need and the rationalisation of administrative structures.

A Value for Money and Policy Review of the RTP published in early 2012 made recommendations to achieve greater efficiencies, deliver value for money for the Exchequer and to ensure the on-going sustainability of the Programme. In this regard the NTA is currently devising an optimal structure for the delivery of rural transport from an efficiency and service perspective which will shortly be submitted to me for consideration.

Public Transport Provision

203. **Deputy Brian Walsh** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will provide an update on the progress made following the National Transport Authority's review of public service obligation bus routes in 2012. [4668/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): In respect of the future provision of bus services the Programme for Government contains a commitment "to establish a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Infrastructure to explore the benefits to the public transport passenger of a more diverse bus service provision". In line with this commitment the National Transport Authority (NTA) conducted a non - statutory public consultation in summer 2012. The report on the public consultation process is available on the NTA's website. The NTA has also briefed the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the process in October 2012.

The public consultation submissions will be considered and taken into account by the NTA in coming forward with proposals. Where the NTA proposes to enter into a further direct award contract or contracts for bus services it is obliged to carry out a statutory consultation under section 52 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008. Furthermore, the NTA may only enter into a direct award contract "where it is satisfied that the continued adequacy of the public bus passenger services to which the contracts relate can only be guaranteed in the general economic interest by entering into such direct award contracts." Accordingly the matter will require further examination before any decisions are taken.

Garda Equipment

204. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the number of Garda intoxicator machines purchased in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012; the cost of same; if additional intoxicator machines are to be purchased in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4773/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The purchase of evidential breath testing instruments is a matter for the Medical Bureau of Road Safety (MBRS). I have therefore forwarded the question to the MBRS for direct reply. I would ask the Deputy to contact my Office if no response has been received within ten days.

Road Signage

205. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the amount spent by the National Roads Authority on road signs and road markings for 2010, 2011 and 2012; the budget allocated for same in 2013; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4774/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): As Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, I have responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to the national roads programme. The planning, design and implementation of individual road projects is a matter for the National Roads Authority (NRA) under the Roads Acts 1993 to 2007 in conjunction with the local authorities concerned. Noting the above position, I have referred the Deputy's question to the NRA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

Tourism Promotion

206. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the additional steps being taken in the national print media, national radio stations and social media in the UK to attract additional visitors coming here; the budget allocated for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4775/13]

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Leo Varadkar): The matter raised is an operational one for Tourism Ireland as the body responsible for promoting the island of Ireland as a visitor destination overseas. I have referred the Deputy's Question to Tourism Ireland for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within ten working days.

Sports Capital Programme Applications

207. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the reason a sports capital programme 2012 application from a club (details supplied) in County Cavan was deemed invalid; if his attention has been drawn to the fact that this club submitted a very detailed application with all the appropriate accompanying documentation; if his further attention has been drawn to the fact that the club understood that its application met all the criteria of the scheme; the reason the application was unsuccessful; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [4801/13]

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Michael Ring): The club referred to by the Deputy applied for a grant under the 2012 Sports Capital

Programme. When the 2012 Programme was advertised my Department issued a guide to filling out the application form which clearly set out the Department's minimum requirements that applicants had to meet to be considered for funding. Regretfully, this application did not meet these requirements on two separate grounds and hence was deemed invalid and could not be considered for funding.

As stipulated in the application form and the guide to completing the form, applicants applying for grants greater than €25,000 must provide evidence of title. A solicitor's letter is required confirming that s/he is acting on behalf of the applicant and that the applicant either owns the site for the proposed facility or that they hold it under a lease; the leasehold or freehold title is registered with the Property Registration Authority (PRA) (if registration is pending then a dealing number from the PRA must be included); if the title is leasehold, the lease must have at least 15 years remaining; the title must be capable of supporting a charge.

The applicant's letter from the solicitor submitted as part of the application did not confirm title as outlined above. On 5 June 2012 further documentation in relation to the title was received from the club, however as this was after the closing date for the programme it could not be considered as forming part of the application. In addition, the application did not satisfy the requirements in respect of planning permission for all aspects of the project. A letter setting out the reasons why the application was deemed invalid has been sent to the club contact.